

the STAR Project and Initial Teacher Training: an evaluation

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Executive summary

Introduction

As part of the Wednesbury Education Action Zone (WEAZ), the STAR Project (schools, teacher training and the arts) was created through a partnership between the WEAZ and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, both having an interest in raising standards of teaching through the arts. This partnership was joined by three local higher education institutes (HEIs), namely Newman College, University of Central England and Wolverhampton University.

The mission statement of STAR was:

To develop and implement strategies, based on a partnership between the WEAZ and local training providers, designed to improve the quality of teacher education in the arts for present and future primary school teachers both locally and, through dissemination, regionally and nationally. To impact on the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards in schools through the arts.

The project aimed to:

- focus on initial teacher training (ITT) in the arts and its impact on primary schools
- develop a locally based programme of activities that is replicable and of national significance
- create a mutually beneficial partnership that embraces schools, training institutions, artists and arts organisations
- impact on children's learning and raise standards through the arts.

The project worked mainly in primary schools in Wednesbury, West Midlands, supporting and developing arts teaching expertise and developing arts resources. Promoting subject leadership was a central plank of this work. Perhaps a quarter of STAR's work involved a direct relationship to ITT.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by the STAR Project, with funding from the Gulbenkian Foundation, to evaluate its activities pertaining to the initial training of primary school teachers, with particular reference to a series of

modules, each entailing one afternoon for five weeks, in specialist art form areas. These modules, offered to students to access voluntarily in their own free time, took place in WEAZ premises or in school arts bases developed with STAR support. Each module focused on a particular aspect of an art form, for example painting and drawing skills, musical composition, drama and storytelling, ceramics, and dance from different cultures.

The impact of the modules on the participating students

The majority of the students interviewed had been motivated to participate in the modules by a desire to acquire skills they perceived to be missing, rather than to build on existing skills in teaching the arts. The student perception of all the modules was that they incorporated practical delivery methods and placed a great deal of emphasis on the practical application of the arts in schools. This differentiated them from their ITT arts provision, which the students felt concentrated more on theory. There was a degree of overlap between the STAR and HEI courses in terms of content, although students did not feel this was necessarily intentional on the part of STAR or the HEIs. The HEI interviewees agreed that, whilst positive and beneficial as a voluntary extra, the modules were free standing and did not relate structurally to their internal provision. Despite a number of strategic and logistical problems associated with the modules, the students' perception of their value was overwhelmingly positive. Participating students themselves reported the following outcomes:

- improved art form skills for themselves
- improved ability to plan schemes of art teaching
- greater confidence to teach certain elements of arts subjects
- a range of arts teaching techniques and awareness of available resources
- insights from working with practising artists and school children
- marginally enhanced career prospects and evidence of addressing areas of weakness

- increased awareness of the potential of the arts in education for some, and the tools with which to implement an existing desire to include the arts for others.
- enhanced career prospects as students could refer to the modules as evidence of a commitment to go beyond the minimum requirements of the ITT course.

Whilst it was clear that students felt equipped to deliver particular schemes of work as a result of the modules, one might question whether their theoretical understanding, the basis on which they might develop their own schemes of work, had been similarly developed. However, follow-up interviews with students after subsequent teaching practices suggested that they were more able to adapt the skills acquired on the modules than they had originally perceived. This limited data suggests that the modules may have had a more substantial and sustained benefit than earlier data had indicated.

HEI staff were, for the most part, unaware of the detailed content of the modules. Where HEI staff did feel able to comment they identified the following elements of the modules as particularly valuable:

- the opportunity to develop certain practical skills in more depth
- the leadership of dedicated art form specialists
- the extra time that students can spend on an art form
- working with practising artists
- working with children in demonstration lessons.

Communication between HEI staff and their students regarding the benefits of involvement in the modules had been limited and informal. Outcomes that were identified by HEI staff included:

- an increase in transferable skills, such as speaking in front of an audience or class
- the ability to work in a more creative and practical way, not just in arts lessons
- increased practical skills to back up existing theoretical knowledge
- increased enthusiasm for incorporating the arts into their practice

The impact of STAR on ITT in the participating HEIs

Some of the STAR activities (including the five-week modules) were planned from the outset, while other engagements emerged through dialogue between STAR and HEI staff. The latter were more tailored to the particular needs of each HEI, while some difficulties were experienced where the 'one fits all' services were offered. A broad range of engagements were developed:

- involvement in a training course for early years teachers
- arts training for teacher mentors who support students on teaching practice
- the co-ordination of a Pedagogical Debate within the partnership
- involvement of the advanced skills teachers (ASTs) in college-run arts foundation and general practice modules
- lectures to PGCE and BA students on the place of the arts in the curriculum
- co-leadership of school-based student learning projects
- access to the STAR conference on the arts in primary schools
- demonstration lessons with primary pupils
- the facilitation of 'Top Dance' courses for ITT students.

While these relationships were perceived to fulfil acknowledged needs, the five-week modules were perceived to be much less integrated into HEI thinking, and consequently attracted less critical attention from the HEIs than they may have deserved. The enthusiastic response from students was not generally matched by that from HEI staff, not because they were critical of the

courses, but because they were detached from them. The lack of shared ownership of the modules and an apparently limited amount of dialogue with HEI staff about the content or approaches of the modules resulted in a lack of shared evaluation of them.

Though regarded as useful in their own right, there was little evidence to suggest that the modules themselves would inform HEI thinking and planning. Lack of time to accommodate more inputs was the main reason given for not embracing the modules or their approaches more fully. (The consistently excessive demands on students and staff time in HEIs was a frequent refrain, making accommodating any external input difficult.)

Logistical problems, especially concerning the availability of time, made recruitment for the modules uneven throughout the project's lifetime. Arranging a single product for three different HEIs meant that the modules were not equally accessible for all HEI cohorts. While this limited the amount of uptake, the satisfaction level of those who attended was high, perhaps enhanced by them being able to work in smaller groups.

It emerged that some of the more collaboratively conceived engagements were more influential than the modules on HEI thinking and planning and that the wider

STAR/HEI relationship was more likely to have a sustained impact. The introduction of work on creativity, the inclusion of the arts in an early years training course and, in the case of one HEI, an increase in the time allocated to the arts, were all cited as, at least in part, being stimulated by the STAR project.

Conclusions

Promoting change in education is a complex and challenging task. STAR clearly provided services that were valued by students and some staff in HEIs. There is evidence that the work of STAR had some influence on planning for the arts as part of ITT, but also evidence that this was not as far-reaching as might have been hoped. The short-term nature of the project, the initial conception and planning process and the need to establish more effective communications may well have contributed to this shortfall.

However, it was planned that the five-week modules would be offered to the HEIs beyond the initial lifespan of STAR, and as models of effective arts training for primary teacher trainees they have much to commend them. The STAR project as a whole has been an important learning process and should inform the establishment of further initiatives to enhance provision for the arts in ITT.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of STAR

As part of the Wednesbury Education Action Zone (WEAZ), the STAR Project (schools, teacher training and the arts) was created through a partnership between the WEAZ and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, both having an interest in raising standards of teaching through the arts. This partnership was joined by three local higher education institutes (HEIs), namely Newman College, University of Central England and Wolverhampton University.

The mission statement of STAR was:

To develop and implement strategies, based on a partnership between the WEAZ and local training providers, designed to improve the quality of teacher education in the arts for present and future primary school teachers both locally and, through dissemination, regionally and nationally. To impact on the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards in schools through the arts.

(STAR action plan)

The project aimed to:

- focus on initial teacher training (ITT) in the arts and its impact on primary schools
- develop a locally based programme of activities that is replicable and of national significance
- create a mutually beneficial partnership that embraces schools, training institutions, artists and arts organisations
- impact on children's learning and raise standards through the arts.

In collaboration with training providers, the programme activities set out to:

- provide sustained opportunities for ITT students, in partnership with serving teachers, to develop their skills in teaching the arts

- develop teaching and classroom management techniques in the arts for trainee teachers and their mentors
- develop the innovative use of information and communication technology (ICT) to promote the arts in initial teacher education
- enhance the status of the arts in both the ITT curriculum and in the school curriculum.

Much of the impetus for the project stemmed from *The Disappearing Arts?* (Rogers, 1998). That report described the extent to which the provision of an arts element in teacher training had been eroded over recent years. The capacity of school teachers to assist students in developing subject knowledge and understanding of (specifically) art teaching, as envisaged in Circular 14/93 from the DfE (1993), was at that time being explored by Green and Mitchell (1998). The STAR Project thus addresses a perceived need to develop the arts element in the initial training of primary school teachers beyond that which is possible within the constraints of ITT courses, or the current capacity of teachers in schools.

STAR staff involved in conducting the programme activities comprised a project director and two Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs), one specialising in visual arts and the other in performing arts.

At the time of this report, the full WEAZ programme had already come to an end. However, financial provision had already been secured for a continuation of aspects of the STAR programme, and through the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) AST scheme, the two STAR tutors were continuing to work with the three HEIs.

1.2 The research brief

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by the STAR Project, with funding from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, to evaluate its activities pertaining to the initial training of primary school teachers, with particular reference to a series of modules, each entailing one afternoon for five weeks, in

specialist art form areas. These modules, offered to students to access in their own free time, took place in WEAZ premises or in school arts bases developed with STAR support. Each module focused on a particular aspect of an art form, for example painting and drawing skills, musical composition, drama and storytelling, ceramics, and dance from different cultures. This report is based on data gathered throughout the lifespan of STAR, from the Spring of 2002 up to the summer of 2003. It follows an interim report submitted to the Advisory Group in October 2002. That earlier report indicated where there had been initial successes, and identified aspects of the project that might benefit from further consideration as the second half of the work commenced. The findings of that initial report, updated in the light of subsequently obtained data, are revised in this report and additional material, particularly concerning the process of change in education, has been added.

The ambition of the STAR project to have an impact on the role of the arts in ITT could only be realised over a period of time. Whereas the interim report described some of the outcomes for those students who had directly engaged with STAR modules up to that point, and the initial impact of STAR's activities on the development of the arts in teacher training institutions, this report provides a view of the entire initial lifespan of the STAR project.

Thus, this report is divided into two parts, directly following the two aims set out in the research proposal:

1. To ascertain the value derived, and outcomes ensuing for students, from the five-week modules delivered by STAR for ITT students in HEIs (Chapter 2).
2. To evaluate perceptions of the appropriateness and value of the scheme as a contribution to ITT, with a view to informing the development of its further and wider application (Chapter 3).

1.3 The wider context

This report is presented at a significant time for the development of the arts in education. Recent policy

developments in the national education context may have substantial impact on the arts and their place in both the primary school and the ITT curriculum.

HEIs are having to adjust to the new demands of 'Qualifying to Teach', the latest standards set out for ITT. The previous standards for ITT as set out in circular 4/98 required that 'For non-core (foundation), non-specialist subjects, trainees must acquire a secure knowledge to a standard equivalent to at least level 7 of the pupils' National Curriculum.' The new standards require that newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are 'able to teach them in the age range for which they are trained, with advice from an experienced colleague where necessary.' Although not watertight in its specificity, this would seem to suggest the requirement for a greater ability to actually teach the arts in primary schools, rather than simply to have a knowledge of them equivalent to that of a GCSE pupil.

This requirement for greater arts teaching skills resonates closely with the requirements from teachers and headteachers in schools. According to recently published research from NFER (Downing *et al.*, 2003), schools are expressing the need for more arts expertise than is apparently available in the skills market. They seek to re-balance the curriculum, acknowledging the important contribution that the arts make, and claiming that in recent years there has been an excessive concentration on the core subjects. However, both headteachers and class teachers recognise that the arts teaching expertise available to them, and to NQTs joining them, has diminished over recent years.

The ambitions of schools to provide a more thorough arts education is recognised in *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003), a new strategy for primary schools. In part a response to consultation with primary school headteachers, it offers schools the freedom to 'take a fresh look at their curriculum, their timetable and the organisation of the school day and week, and think actively how they would like to develop and enrich the experience they offer to children.(ibid 1.14)' The arts are specifically mentioned in the document as part of 'the richness of learning (ibid 1.3)' and had been highlighted by head-

teachers during the consultation, for attention as an area for development.

The arts education lobby has a history of working through any available initiatives and projects, exploiting any funding opportunities (from Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in the 1980's onwards) that might enhance the resources for the arts, either human or material. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, with its established record of supporting the development of arts education, worked in partnership with WEAZ to set about raising school standards through the arts, a focus shared with other EAZs including Plymouth, East Middlesbrough and North Southwark. The resources thus attracted by the WEAZ were also targeted at supporting arts education training for ITT students who might well eventually be recruited into WEAZ schools, given that a high proportion of ITT students choose to begin their teaching careers close to their initial training institution. That the decision of WEAZ to focus their efforts in this way should turn out to be so timely was based on a clear reading of the emerging context, supported by the groundswell of support for the arts from schools and the political reaction to it.

1.4 The STAR/HEI interface

Given the scale of the evaluation, it was always accepted that not all areas of STAR activities could be covered in the NFER research, even within the parameter of STAR and its relationship to ITT. While this research did not investigate these other aspects of STAR's work directly, their relationship to the five-week arts modules is referred to where appropriate.

Other support offered by STAR staff to the initial training of primary school teachers included:

- involvement in a training course for early years teachers
- arts training for teacher mentors who support students on teaching practice
- the co-ordination of a Pedagogical Debate within the partnership

- involvement of the ASTs in college-run arts foundation and general practice modules
- co-leadership of school-based student learning projects
- access to the STAR conference on the arts in primary schools
- demonstration lessons with primary pupils
- the facilitation of 'Top Dance' courses for ITT students.

Some of these activities were offered by STAR from the outset, while others emerged as the relationship developed between STAR and individuals or departments within the HEIs. Although the series of five-week modules for students were the most substantial and sustained investment by STAR, many of these other interventions were also regarded as very significant, by both STAR and HEI staff.

1.5 Research methodology

STAR provided a programme offering modules of study to students engaged in initial training as primary school teachers. The programme of modules was offered to ITT students in simultaneous pairs, giving a choice broadly between the performing arts and the visual arts in each pair of modules. Although planned to begin in February 2002, the first modules took place in the Summer term of 2002, followed by others in the Autumn of 2002, and the Spring and Summer of 2003.

The data that forms the basis for this report has been gleaned during four research visits to WEAZ, timed to coincide with the completion of four pairs of modules. Each visit involved interviews with the STAR course tutors and a sample of participating students. The two course tutors were each interviewed at each visit, and a total of 26 students were interviewed, the majority face-to-face, but with a few interviews conducted by telephone. Three of these also agreed to follow-up interviews. In addition, two extensive face-to-face interviews were conducted with the STAR manager and 11 inter-

views were conducted with staff from the participating HEIs, both at operational and management levels. Thus, 50 interviews were conducted in all.

During the visits to interview staff and students, opportunities were found to observe the modules in operation, although this was not planned as part of the research methodology.

Researchers wrote up these interviews which were entered into a computer programme (MAXQDA) designed to assist in the analysis of qualitative research material.

Chapter 2 of this report will summarise the views of the students who have taken part in STAR modules, and the outcomes that are perceived to have been derived from them.

Chapter 3 will address the progress of STAR's ambition to contribute to ITT by relaying the views of HEI and STAR staff concerning the activities, management and dialogue involved in the relationship.

Chapter 4 offers a summary and conclusions, and discusses the implications of the STAR experience for the arts in HEIs in the future.

2 The impact of the modules on the participating students

This chapter considers the impact of the STAR modules on the participating students from the perspectives of HEI staff and the students themselves, based on the data collected through interviews up to June 2003, as set out in Chapter 1. It investigates the impact of the modules on the students in accordance with issues surrounding objective one in the research proposal:

- What was the background and motivation of the students in undertaking the course?
- What were the overall perceptions of the modules, from HEI staff and participating students?
- How have the modules augmented their ITT courses?
- What skills, understanding and confidence have resulted from participation in the modules?
- What contribution do they think the modules will make to their careers?
- What has been the modules' impact on students' attitudes and values?
- Where there any other outcomes and impacts on the students resulting from the STAR project as a whole?

2.1 The background of the students and their motivation for participation

The final sample consisted of 23 participating students, three of whom also took part in follow-up interviews to ascertain their longer-term perceptions. Participation in the interviews was voluntary for all students. The sample included both mature students and students who embarked on ITT courses directly from A-levels or first degrees. Whilst the majority of the students interviewed were mature students, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not this is an accurate representation of the students participating in the modules or a result of self-selection for interviewing. The data revealed the following characteristics of the interviewees.

- None of the students interviewed felt that they had

a great deal of previous arts experience.

- Nine felt that they had very little or no previous experience in the arts other than through compulsory education and only one student had taken his/her academic involvement in the arts as far as A-level.
- For the remaining students, their arts experiences consisted of past personal interests or hobbies, including involvement in theatre groups and learning musical instruments.

Based on this evidence, it appeared that students were not choosing to participate in the modules because they were already actively involved in the arts. Moreover, none of those interviewed were training as arts specialists within their ITT courses. (However, those who were training as specialists were doing so in humanities subjects rather than subjects such as maths and science.) The majority had chosen to study the modules in order to gain training in an area in which they felt they had missing or deficient skills, rather than to build on existing areas of expertise.

- 15 interviewees chose to participate in the modules to fill in the gaps in their knowledge and therefore increase their confidence and ability in teaching particular art forms.
- Two interviewees commented that, being in their final year of ITT, they were very aware that they would be receiving no more arts input and that the STAR modules would be a last chance to gain these skills prior to graduating.
- Six students had embarked on the modules in order to increase their career prospects. However, in most cases, this went hand-in-hand with the desire to increase their skills and knowledge, or to show prospective employers that they had addressed their identified areas of weakness.
- The voluntary nature of the course appealed to the majority of the interviewees. However, a number of them thought the lack of encouragement from their HEI to participate may have been a factor in the ini-

tial low uptake in the first set of modules in the spring term of 2002.

The students were further motivated into participation by the recruitment strategies employed by STAR staff, in collaboration with HEI staff. Leaflets and posters were sent to the relevant HEIs and presentations were made by STAR staff to various student cohorts. The most successful approach in recruiting students, from the interviewees' perspectives, was the latter presentations. These allowed both the students and the HEI staff to gain a better understanding of what the modules would be offering and highlighted the benefits in attending. The other recruitment strategies used had little effect on the students' awareness of the modules or their desire to participate:

Last year there was a notice up on the notice board but nobody came in to talk about it. That's what made the difference this year.

(student)

Three of the students interviewed in May 2003 commented that fellow students had recommended the modules after their own participation, suggesting that informal dissemination had been taking place amongst the student cohort. This word of mouth recommendation implies a recognition of quality and value from the students.

Students were restricted in the modules they could attend, as in every case they had to choose between two modules that were running concurrently, and in some instances the modules clashed with their teaching practice or other mandatory course commitments. Students were more inclined to take part in the modules if they fitted in easily with their existing schedule:

In the first year you weren't sure what the course was going to consist of or how much time it was going to take up. This year you had a bit more of an idea of how much work to expect from the course, so it wasn't as much of a problem. Also, at this time of year, it is a lot easier to fit things in.

(student)

Difficulties in finding the time to attend the first modules may have been compounded by problems in communication between STAR and HEI staff, which were referred to by both HEI staff and students. One HEI tutor's frustration with the difficulty of joint planning for additional activities for students spilled over:

We would have wanted to say "If you put it on a Friday we can plan our timetable around it". But by the time it got to us it was "It's happening on Wednesday, take it or leave it". And because it was a Wednesday, we had to leave it.

(HEI Staff)

However, it is worth noting that STAR staff expressed a similar frustration, believing that they had made considerable efforts to engage the HEIs in planning.

Meeting the needs of three different HEIs, each with their own structure and timetable, presented logistical difficulties for the management of the STAR programme. The modules can be seen as fulfilling the STAR project aim of providing opportunities for ITT students to develop their skills in the arts, an opportunity that the students clearly felt they needed. However, the fact that they were not always scheduled at times convenient to the students limited their uptake, in one instance to a single student. This may well have implications for the potential for such modules to be viable or sustainable in the future, especially where a course is offered to more than one HEI. For this, and other reasons discussed in Chapter 3, it may be more appropriate to arrange courses for single HEIs. While such courses are additional voluntary extras for students to access in their often very limited free time, generating uptake may remain a problem.

2.2 Perceptions of the modules

Although each module had a specific art form focus, the student interviewees, who had attended different modules, shared common perceptions of the modules' structure, form and content.

- All interviewees commented on the applied nature of

the courses, describing the teaching methods as practical activities, often group work, backed up by discussion. In all but one of the modules the students worked, for one session, with a professional artist experienced in using their art form in an educational context.

- This practical approach to working was welcomed by the participants. It gave them a chance to learn by doing and also gave them an opportunity to experience the work as learners, so that they could better understand the situations in which they would be putting children:

A lot of it is like 'Right, now you do it' – very hands on. That is great, because until you try it yourself you don't know what it's like. If you ask a class to compose a piece of music and you haven't done it yourself then you don't know what the problems are.

(student)

- The modules' content covered basic themes in each of the art forms, presented simple technical skills, highlighted national curriculum links and introduced the participants to relevant materials and resources.
- The majority of interviewees felt that the limited amount of theory that they covered was aimed at relating the practical activities to the national curriculum requirements. They did not indicate that the modules addressed the theoretical background of the individual art forms, or arts education concepts. It had been agreed between STAR and the HEIs that a practical approach would be most appropriate.
- A recurring theme, which many interviewees found useful, was the emphasis placed on classroom management when teaching the arts, including classroom organisation and techniques for progressing schemes of work. For example, these skills were demonstrated in context for the students on the Storytelling module when they had the opportunity to observe a professional artist working with children.
- For many students this relevance to classroom application was the most important part of the modules.

Many saw the modules not just as a way of improving their own skills in the individual art forms, but as a way of learning how to transfer these skills into the classroom:

It's not just about getting me to do something. It is about how you would actually use it in the classroom. For example, it's no good if I am brilliant at playing the drums, I need to be able to teach that to the children.

(student)

- No interviewees found the modules too difficult in terms of applying their own art form skills. The skills and techniques covered were taught to the students with the intention that they could then be used directly with children, and not on the assumption that the students were, or would become, skilled artists.
- The overall perception of the pace of the modules was that a great deal was covered in a relatively short time. However, as the students were keen to accumulate a catalogue of ideas, this was not seen as a fault in the structure of the modules.
- Overall the interviewees had enjoyed their participation in the modules, highlighting the practical activities as particularly rewarding. In three cases, interviewees commented that they had experienced initial embarrassment at joining in these practical activities, but this was something they overcame as the modules progressed.

These perceptions of the modules are consistent between students participating in the initial courses and those involved further into the project, regardless of the course under discussion. The STAR course tutors, who were also responsible for planning, shared common aims and expectations for all the modules. All modules were based on a practical approach, involving opportunities for students to develop their own art form skills as well as their ability to teach their skills in the primary classroom context:

[...] for trainees and participants to become confident in the skills, knowledge and understanding that they

need, and to become competent and able to teach that specific area in schools (STAR course tutor).

Some practical aspects of the course changed as a result of reviews, for example painting and drawing became two separate modules after the first year. Other aspects remained the same as a result of their success, for example accessing professional artists.

We looked at how it went last year, reviewed it and carried on from there really.

(STAR course tutor)

Therefore, despite the diverse art form skills covered, a commitment to a shared pedagogical approach, predefined by the STAR team, accounts for the congruent perceptions of the modules from the students' perspectives.

The innovative use of information and communication technology to promote the arts in ITT was a key aim of the STAR project activities as a whole. However, the students' description of their experiences suggests that the link between arts and ICT was not a significant feature of these modules (with the exception of the music and ICT module).

Observations of four sessions, within four different modules, were carried out by researchers. These were opportunistic observations and were not intended in the initial methodology.

The observations yielded the following characteristics of the sessions.

- Frequent references were made to the cross-curricular uses of the art forms being studied.
- The teaching styles employed were highly interactive, encouraging students to participate in both discussion and the practical activities.
- quality handouts, with reminders of the session's content and further lesson ideas, were readily available to the students.
- ICT was touched upon in relation to the arts but,

with the exception of music and ICT, it was not a major focus of the observed sessions. It was usually referred to as a potential source of teaching material.

- The course leaders referred to specific examples, from their own practice, which placed the work they were doing in the sessions into the school context.
- Frequent references were made to the age and ability groups for whom the activities were deemed appropriate or could be adapted.

The overall impression gained from the observations was of an informal learning environment, with high enjoyment levels and scope for student-led discussion and practical participation. The description given above is congruent with the responses from both students and STAR staff concerning the module's structures and the pedagogies employed.

HEI staff perceptions

There was a limited amount of data available on HEI staff's perceptions of the STAR modules, due to a general consensus amongst HEI interviewees that they were under-informed about the form and content. This was an opinion shared by the student interviewees. The majority reported little or no response from HEI staff regarding the modules or their participation in them. As one student remarked:

They realise that they are happening but I don't think they know how good they are.

(student)

Where opinions were available, albeit from a small number of interviewees, HEI staff were, on the whole, complimentary about the modules.

- HEI staff, in line with the students, perceived the modules as mostly concerned with practical learning. However, where one HEI tutor referred to these practical approaches as 'snapshots of skills delivery' students welcomed them as 'more than tips really, they are sort of great big helping hands'.

- Working with professional artists (a feature of all but one of the modules) and working with children in demonstration lessons (a feature of some of the modules) was seen by HEI staff as particularly valuable.

A further positive aspect of the modules, from HEI staff perspectives, was the opportunity they provided for the students to work with specialists on particular aspects of art teaching over a significant period of time. A member of one HEI teaching team referred to the motivating effects of such inputs and the benefits of these being made available:

Because we have to stick so closely to the guidelines of what they have to cover, the opportunity to do these inspirational things goes.

(HEI Staff)

It would appear that more involvement of HEI staff themselves is needed in the planning and designing of such modules, or in their evaluation, if they are to be fully aware of the nature of what is being offered to students. Increased awareness of the modules could also lead to increased uptake levels as HEI staff would be in a better position to 'sell' the modules to their students:

As it was, I couldn't give them enough information about the content for them [the students] to see how they [the modules] would be beneficial.

(HEI Staff)

Issues concerning the communication between STAR and the HEIs are discussed further in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.3 The STAR modules in relation to the ITT arts modules

For all of the students in the sample, arts provision within their ITT had consisted of music and visual art. In some cases it had also consisted of dance programmes. The art forms had, in each case, been approached as part of short, compulsory modules addressing all the foundation subjects. Drama had been addressed within English modules. Two students in the sample had revisited visual art as an optional module in their final year.

Overall, students saw the STAR modules as very different from their ITT arts modules, particularly in teaching style and form. However, there were some areas of overlap in the content. These differences and areas of similarity are outlined below.

- The focus of the learning in the STAR modules concentrated on practical ideas and applications within the classroom environment. A few students had participated in practical work in their ITT arts modules, but the majority felt that the STAR modules dedicated more time to hands-on activity and put less emphasis on theory.

University has been more about professional studies, curriculum requirements and current debate. Whereas the modules gave you ideas for practical applications – you in the classroom as opposed to you as a teacher.

(student)

- The STAR modules were taught in smaller groups and three students remarked that this created a less intimidating environment to learn about a subject in which they felt initially apprehensive.

It's a smaller group. You get more of a one to one experience. If you're having problems she [the course tutor] can come and help.

(student)

- This created a more informal atmosphere than the ITT courses and a number of students commented that knowing the modules were not assessed and would not culminate in an assignment took a lot of the pressure off and allowed them to enjoy what they were learning.

The way she [the course tutor] puts it together, it hasn't felt like work as such – it is just an enjoyable gathering of people with a similar interest.

(student)

- Only four students felt that the STAR modules recapped on existing knowledge, although a number of students commented that they had difficulty in

recalling exactly which areas their foundation modules had covered. Where there had been duplication, and students had been unable to gain any new knowledge, interviewees did express a sense of having learnt new ways of applying existing knowledge, or saw the modules as useful revision.

- Whether or not the STAR modules duplicated, built on from or recapped the students' ITT arts modules was seen by the students as inadvertent, and was not perceived as being an intentional element of the course.

I suppose she must have considered it, but I don't think that was the main reason for studying the course, to build on from what we had done.

(student)

- The majority of the students interviewed claimed that they had benefited from the STAR modules more than their ITT arts modules because of their practical nature and the sense that they had gained practical skills, easily transferable into a classroom situation.
- Those students who participated in the visual arts modules found more similarities in the content covered than students on other modules. The course tutor for these STAR modules had been involved in both the devising and teaching of the visual arts foundation modules within one HEI, in a previous role, but at the same time that the participating students had been studying them. Perceptions of the modules building on or following on from the foundation modules were greater amongst this cohort of students.

Overall, the students in the cohort saw the modules as an addition to their ITT provision. In terms of augmenting their ITT courses, it would seem that the students gained more practical skills, increased confidence and, in a few cases, a chance for revision of the subject areas in their final year. Overall, the students felt that their ITT courses and the STAR modules had complemented one another, though perhaps not intentionally. The modules offered

further opportunities for practical application, building on from the theory and debate offered in their HEI courses.

This has built on from the music we did at university, just taken it one step further because we didn't have a lot of time at university. It does relate well.

(student)

The three students involved in follow-up interviews noted that, whilst they had been able to use elements of the modules in teaching practice, they had not been able to transfer the learning to their ITT courses. However, they saw this as a result of the timing of the modules, as opposed to low levels of congruency in what was being offered.

It would personally have been more beneficial had I done the module in my first year. I would have been able to then fit more modules in and it would also have helped me with college assignments. We had to submit mock lesson plans in art in the first year. Having not been into schools, I was unsure of what was required of the curriculum. Had I done that drawing module before that, or concurrently, it would definitely have been of benefit, but as it was we didn't do any more arts after the modules.

(student)

Again, the data concerning HEI perspectives on the modules relationship to the ITT arts courses is limited due to a lack of awareness of the modules content amongst this cohort (explored in more detail in Chapter 3). There was a general consensus that the modules could augment and complement the ITT courses by their nature, although the extent to which they do was seen to have been inhibited by poor communication between the HEIs and STAR. As a result there was a concern amongst the HEI staff interviewed that the modules may well have duplicated and repeated what was offered within the ITT courses.

There was little consultation on the modules, so that the risk of duplication was substantial.

(HEI Staff)

This fear would appear to be largely groundless accord-

ing to the perceptions of the students, but may have contributed to a cautious attitude by HEI staff to the modules. The lack of consultation may have been aggravated by HEI managers' understandable reluctance for their staff to invest time in planning the STAR modules, preferring them instead to concentrate on statutory ITT provision.

In a way I don't want to have designed the modules; our staff are already too busy. I would be uptight if they were designing the modules as they will only ever effect 20% of the student population; thus they would be working for that 20% and not for the other 80%.

(HEI Manager)

2.4 Outcomes derived from the modules

One of the aims of the STAR project, of which the modules are a significant part, was to develop the teaching and classroom management techniques of trainee teachers in the arts. The majority of the students interviewed felt that this had been achieved, commenting that the skills and knowledge they had acquired from the modules were concerned, for the most part, with how to teach the arts, classroom management and lesson planning.

- All student interviewees stated that they felt more confident to teach the arts than they had prior to the modules. This increase in confidence was attributed to the practical nature of the modules and the pool of ideas which they acquired. The majority also noted an increase in their personal confidence as a result of working practically in group situations.
- Ten students referred to an increase in both practical skills and subject knowledge related specifically to the art form they had studied.
- However, despite this increase in confidence to teach the arts and the new arts skills acquired, a number of students commented that they were still limited to teaching the areas covered by the modules they had studied. They felt more confident to teach what they

had been taught, but not necessarily to extrapolate from their experience. They felt that they would still struggle in teaching an arts curriculum that went beyond the pool of ideas they had gathered in the modules.

If I was given a plan that was completely different, not musical composition, a QCA document that was completely different, I might go 'aahh' still.

(student)

I've learnt how to teach children art activities. I've got more confidence as well – as long as I've got my notes with me.

(student)

- Classroom management skills appeared to be the main transferable, longer lasting benefits to the students in their future role as teachers. Most of the students noted that they felt they could apply the skills for organising practical work and progressing schemes of work, including their application across a range of subjects.
- Other changes in the students' approaches to teaching in general included recognition that learning can be fun and practical and that it is acceptable to try out new ways of teaching and learning, even if they do not always work out.
- Those students who worked with an artist as part of the STAR modules found it, for the most part, a valuable experience, which had provided them with practical ideas as well as enthusiasm and inspiration. They saw this as resulting from the artist's own passion for their art form. One student felt that the visiting artist had pitched the level of the session too high. However, this was a single perception and for the majority the use of a visiting artist was a welcome feature of the courses.

In the majority of cases the student interviewees expressed the belief that they would be able to use the

ideas they had accumulated, either in subsequent teaching practice or in their future roles as teachers, as they had developed both the confidence and the enthusiasm to implement an arts-based scheme of work. These predictions are substantiated by the data collected in the follow-up interviews. All three interviewees in this cohort were able to give examples from their own teaching practice in which they had been able to use elements of the modules. One student had taken a lesson idea from a drawing module, drawing free-hand flowers, and incorporated it into a science lesson on his teaching practice, thus using the arts for cross-curricular teaching. The other two students had not been able to use lessons or schemes of work from the modules, as the art curriculum was predefined by the schools in which they spent their teaching practices. However, they were able to apply teaching strategies and ideas which they had developed through their participation. One student introduced the use of a sketch book to accompany a QCA scheme of work, an idea presented to them on the drawing module. The second student incorporated ideas into their overall approach:

I was able to apply a bit of the STAR module, I encouraged the children to look and think about what they were drawing more, using ideas I had picked up from the module.

(student)

In conclusion, there was a marked uniformity in the student's identification of the practical outcomes of the modules, matched by an equally widely held view that pedagogical theory had not featured strongly. Whilst they felt equipped to deliver particular schemes of work, one might question whether their theoretical understanding, the basis through which they might develop their own schemes of work, has been similarly developed. When the students were interviewed at the time of the modules they were more inclined to see themselves applying whole schemes of work or lesson ideas in their future practice. However, data from the three students interviewed again after spending time on teaching practice, albeit a very limited sample, suggest that, once in the classroom context, participants may be more adaptable in their approach to arts teaching than they perceived at the time of the modules.

HEI staff's perceptions

Again, due to an apparent lack of communication between HEI staff and both the students and STAR, their perceptions of outcomes derived from the modules are limited. Whilst attention has been paid within the institutions to the uptake and logistics of the modules, the actual outcomes in terms of the benefits for the students had not been formally evaluated.

I am only aware that they have been positive. I don't know enough to be specific.

(HEI Staff)

Despite this, HEI staff were aware of the potential benefits which can arise from participation in modules of this nature. The possible outcomes cited included:

- strengthened practical skills, building on from established knowledge
- the advantages of being involved in something voluntary and 'extra', including possible benefits for students' careers (impact on career prospects is discussed in more detail in Section 2.4.1)
- increased awareness of arts teaching in the classroom context, including access to professional artists.

It is important to note that these are assumed or predicted benefits from HEI staff and not based on formal evaluation with their students.

Some HEI staff did not feel that the modules were key to the development of their students' practice in art teaching. This view was particularly prevalent in one HEI that felt it was already committed to providing a strong arts programme:

I know that when we turn them loose we don't rely on the STAR project. We are sure of their quality and we know they will get jobs, we know they are good artists or good musicians or whatever because of our course. We couldn't rely on the STAR modules to sufficiently fill gaps. I can see lots of both actual and potential benefits from the STAR project but if STAR wasn't there then the effect on our students would be minimal.

(HEI Staff)

For others, the impact and outcomes of the modules were seen as more significant. HEI tutors were able to describe discernible differences in the students' 'performance' as a result of the modules. These outcomes were deduced from tutor/student conversations and included:

- an increase in transferable skills, such as speaking in front of an audience or class (related specifically to the story-telling module by one HEI tutor)
- the ability to work in a more creative and practical way on teaching practice, not just in arts based lessons
- increased enthusiasm for incorporating the arts into their practice.

The degree to which HEI staff valued the outcomes and impact of the modules depended, to an extent, on the number of students participating and their perceptions of the quality of their own arts provision. As discussed, meeting the needs of three different HEIs presented a number of problems for STAR and the perceptions of outcomes vary according to the degree to which HEIs felt their needs, and the needs of their students, were being met. Perceptions of actual outcomes and impacts are limited. One HEI tutor cited strategic weaknesses as the main reason for this, as opposed to the quality of the modules themselves. Overriding any discrepancies, however, was a uniform acceptance that no formal evaluation had been undertaken, discussion with participating students had been limited and overall, awareness of the modules was not as extensive as it could have been.

2.4.1 The modules' contribution to student careers

As well as believing that the learning derived from the modules could be used in practice, students also sensed that their participation in STAR activities may play a role in improving their career prospects. For the majority, it was not the specific arts experience that they felt would be most useful, but the voluntary nature of their involvement:

I would feel confident in putting the modules on my CV; to show I am taking steps to do something about the

areas I don't feel as confident about.

(student)

However, the significance of developing their arts skills was picked up by a number of students.

- One interviewee commented that she had been encouraged at a recent job interview because of the school's dedication to the arts. She felt that part of her decision to accept a post in such an arts-enthusiastic school had been influenced by her enjoyment of a STAR module
- Two further interviewees who had participated in the modules felt that they would view as more appealing job prospects, those schools showing a commitment to the arts
- The three students involved in the follow-up interviews stated that, although the modules had had no direct impact on their career prospects to date, they felt that the voluntary nature of their participation was a positive when applying for jobs. Two of the three noted that the modules had encouraged them to see specialist roles, such as arts co-ordinators, as realistic possibilities.

I feel a lot more confident about teaching the arts and I am more aware that you don't need to be an artist to teach arts.

(student)

Evidence from arts education research (Downing *et al.*, 2003) might suggest that the students underestimated the appeal to schools of NQTs with specific arts expertise. However, one student interviewee commented that schools were often keen to employ NQTs in foundation subject co-ordinator roles, for which additional training in arts subjects would be of direct benefit.

HEI staff's perceptions

HEI staff agreed that participating in the modules could be beneficial to the students' career prospects as it shows enthusiasm and a commitment to go beyond the

minimum course requirements:

Students who have been able to engage in arts activities through the college, schools or out in the community take something special into school when they begin their careers.

(HEI staff)

In one case an HEI interviewee referred to a particular student who had been able to discuss his/her involvement in the modules at a recent interview as an example of the way in which the modules could impact on students' careers:

They had something recent, relevant and extra to talk about at interview.

(HEI staff)

2.4.2 The modules' impact on students' attitudes and values

The voluntary nature of the modules suggests that participants already had a desire to incorporate the arts in their teaching and the majority commented that they hoped the skills acquired on the modules would make a positive impact on their practice. The majority of students interviewed already had, or had developed, a perception of the arts as 'the fun part of learning':

I have seen somewhere, on one of the STAR leaflets that the arts are the fun part of learning and I can see that now.

(student)

The modules had reinforced, or in a few cases created a belief, that the arts could provide a welcome break for children from the rigours of the core subjects. Those students who had worked with, or observed work with children during the modules were more inclined to mention the role the arts can play in raising self-esteem and allowing less academic children to shine:

She [the course tutor] actually told me how it improves confidence in low achievers and their attitudes to learning.

(student)

- Eight of the interviewees felt the modules had increased their understanding of the cross-curricular use of the arts and the important role they can play as teaching tools:

I can see how it links with other subjects and how it should be more important, not just squeezed in at the end of an afternoon.

(student)

- Six students commented that, although the modules had not changed their attitude towards the arts in education, it had given them the tools with which to implement an already strong desire to include them:

I have always known I wanted to do things this way but never had the knowledge or the confidence to do it.

(Student)

Thus, it seems that the practical nature of the modules gave new meaning to existing theoretical understanding.

Whilst there is little evidence to suggest that the modules had changed the participants' overall attitudes towards the value of the arts as subjects in their own right, the students interviewed appeared to have an increased awareness of the impact that the arts can have on children's learning, and of the potential cross-curricular uses of the arts. One HEI tutor commented that the students she had worked with, who had recently participated in the modules, were 'keen and enthusiastic' about the things they had learnt. The tutor felt that the students were beginning to see teaching as more than just literacy and numeracy and 'structured sessions of talk, talk, talk' (HEI Staff).

2.5 Outcomes and impacts resulting from the STAR project as a whole

Although the NFER was commissioned to evaluate the five-week modules, the research team were keen to set these modules in the wider context of what STAR offers to ITT students and HEIs (the wider work of STAR is set out in more detail in Chapter 3). The student, HEI and STAR staff interviews were designed to ascertain per-

spectives on the five-week modules. However, a limited amount of data was collected concerning other aspects of STAR's work and general perceptions relating to this.

- All but two of the students interviewed had not previously been aware of STAR prior to the modules. The main reason given for this, cited by four students, was the fact that they lived and had spent time on teaching practice outside of the WEAZ in which STAR operates.
- One student interviewed had worked with a STAR mentor whilst on teaching practice, prior to the modules, and had found it to be a rewarding and inspiring experience. As well as picking up ideas, he/she commented that the experience provided him/her with a bench mark by which to measure their own future practice.
- A second student had attended the STAR conference on the arts in primary schools, set up to disseminate STAR's activities mid-project. The student concerned did not recall the modules being discussed at this conference. However, he/she did find the event inspiring and when the modules were advertised again he/she made the connection with the conference and was motivated into participating as a result.

Because of the limited contact the students had with STAR, outside of the modules, it is difficult to ascertain any student's perceptions of impacts resulting from the wider context of STAR's work.

HEI perceptions

HEI staff involved in the research were more aware of the wider context in which the modules operated. Their views are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, however, their perceptions of the impact on students is outlined below.

- The pedagogical debate (see Chapter 3) set up within the HEI and STAR partnership, was welcomed by those HEI staff that were aware of it, but was not seen as directly impacting on the students.

- The STAR conference received mixed responses in terms of its value and impact on students. One HEI tutor commented that it provided a valuable opportunity for students to see the standards primary school children can achieve in the arts, and a further HEI tutor stated that it was lacking in its description of process, and therefore did not impact on students' learning.
- ASTs were employed through STAR to work in the HEIs, to deliver arts based programmes and assist with foundation modules within the existing courses. Although the AST role of STAR was welcomed in the HEIs involved, this research did not collect evidence of the impact this was having on the students.

2.6 Conclusion

The majority of the students interviewed had been motivated to participate by a desire to acquire skills they perceived to be missing, rather than to build on existing skills in teaching the arts. Thus, they appeared to approach the modules as a deficit model of provision. The student perception of all the modules was that they incorporated useful delivery methods and placed a great deal of emphasis on the practical application of the arts in schools. This differentiated them from their ITT arts provision, which the students felt concentrated more on theory. There was a degree of overlap between the courses in terms of content, although students did not feel this was necessarily intentional on the part of STAR or the HEIs. The majority of the HEI interviewees agreed that, whilst positive and beneficial as a voluntary extra, the modules were free-standing and did not relate structurally to their internal provision. Whilst not all HEI staff comments were positive, despite a number of strategic and logistical problems associated with the modules, the students' perception of their value was overwhelmingly positive. Participating students themselves reported the following outcomes:

- improved art form skills for themselves
- improved ability to plan schemes of art teaching

- greater confidence to teach certain elements of arts subjects
- a range of arts teaching techniques and awareness of available resources
- from working with practising artists and school children
- marginally enhanced career prospects and evidence of addressing areas of weakness
- increased awareness of the potential of the arts in education for some, and the tools with which to implement an existing desire to include the arts for others.

Whilst it was clear that students felt equipped to deliver particular schemes of work as a result of the modules, one might question whether their theoretical understanding, the basis in which they might develop their own schemes of work, had been similarly developed. However, follow-up interviews with students after subsequent teaching practices, suggested that they were more able to adapt the skills acquired on the modules than they originally perceived. This limited data suggests that the modules may have a more substantial and sustained benefit than earlier data indicated.

HEI staff were, for the most part, unaware of the detailed content of the modules. Communication between students and their HEI lecturers regarding the modules had been minimal. Where HEI staff did feel able to comment they identified the following elements of the modules as particularly valuable:

- the opportunity to develop certain practical skills in more depth
- the leadership of dedicated art form specialists
- the extra time that students can spend on an art form

- working with practising artists
- working with children in demonstration lessons.

However, the absence of any structured joint analysis of the modules by STAR and HEI staff, and an apparent weakness in sufficiently informing HEI staff about the content or approaches of the modules, may have resulted in the modules not receiving the critical attention they deserve. The outcomes identified were:

- an increase in transferable skills, such as speaking in front of an audience or class
- the ability to work in a more creative and practical way, not just in arts lessons
- increased practical skills to back up existing theoretical knowledge
- increased enthusiasm for incorporating the arts into their practice
- enhanced career prospects as students could refer to the modules as evidence of a commitment to go beyond the minimum requirements of the ITT course.

HEI staff interviewees and the student cohort shared congruent perceptions of the modules. Apart from an increased awareness of their content amongst the students, and an enhanced perception of their value, no conflicting perceptions emerged.

In conclusion, the modules were perceived as a positive and useful addition to the students' ITT courses. They were described as enjoyable, useful and relevant to their training. However, the overall outcomes and impact were limited by poor communication between HEIs and STAR, low levels of uptake and by other managerial issues discussed in Chapter 3. The overall impact of the modules on the HEIs themselves will be discussed in Chapter 4.

3 The impact of STAR on ITT in the participating HEIs

3.1 The process of change in ITT

Generating an impact on individuals, as had been achieved in the delivery of the modules for students, is a much easier and quicker process than generating or supporting institutional change. The STAR project demonstrably provided opportunities for ITT students to develop their skills in teaching the arts, if perhaps not for the numbers of students that had been hoped. However, having an impact on the status of the arts in the ITT curriculum presents different challenges. With a mission statement that seeks to 'improve the quality of teacher education in the arts for present and future primary school teachers both locally and, through dissemination, regionally and nationally' and with aims, amongst others, to 'develop a locally based programme of activities that is replicable and of national significance' and 'enhance the status of the arts in both the initial teacher training curriculum and in the school curriculum', the STAR project clearly set out to contribute to change in ITT. It is therefore appropriate to consider some of the issues that might have some bearing on the capacity of an external agency to contribute to change.

HEIs and change

HEIs that deliver ITT have been coping with a sustained period of change. Fundamental changes in their mandate from central government have emerged since the introduction of the National Curriculum. The nature of their responsibility for the training process has changed radically, as has the content of what they are required to provide in the curricula they offer. The level of prescription has increased (if perhaps slightly reduced by the new standards for ITT, Qualifying to Teach of 2002), as has the amount of material that has to be squeezed into the curriculum time available. Changes to the way schools operate have resulted in changed demands from schools concerning the expertise of NQTs.

Indeed, the extent and sustained nature of change has itself led to major research projects, such as the ESRC Modes of Teacher Education (MOTE) project (Furlong *et al.*, 2000). This is currently being followed up by a three year project by the Institute for Education at the University of London which among other functions will

log all ITT courses undergoing change. Meanwhile there is a plethora of research and journal articles addressing the issues faced within ITT resulting from the constant experience of change, including those by Dunne *et al.* (1996) and Furlong *et al.* (1996). An analysis of the process of change in education is offered by Fullan (2001), and although addressing change in the school system, with particular reference to North America, the concepts would seem to be equally applicable in the context of this project and are addressed in the conclusions of this report.

Partnership as a catalyst for change

Much of the research and debate has focused on the requirement for ITT institutions to transform their practice to one of partnership with schools. The STAR project chose to place itself in the centre of such a partnership approach, itself seeking to establish partnerships both with schools and with HEI institutions. The principle of partnership has become increasingly important to the world of education over recent years, with a range of purposes in mind. Some have concerned themselves with making the school experience more relevant to the wider world (e.g. education business partnerships), some have been more about managing the deployment of limited financial resources (e.g. public/private finance initiatives), and others about providing a more coherent and effective service for young people (e.g. extended schools). Central to the development of education is the improvement of teaching skills and of the curriculum that young people will experience. This latter purpose has been the primary concern of the STAR project.

Change through partnership might take a number of forms, and for the purpose of analysing the processes of the STAR project, the following three forms are identified in order to contrast their differing characteristics.

- **Change mandated by national policy.** All HEI institutions, in order to sustain their existence, were obliged to enter into the partnership relationship with schools, and to adjust their *modus operandi* accordingly. Time consuming and sometimes challenging as the process may have been, all HEIs instituted such changes.

- **Change generated from within.** Responding to their own perception of what their students need, and to the external context of employer demands and resource availability, most HEIs would maintain that they are constantly reviewing their provision, making changes to it and sometimes entering into partnerships voluntarily to bring them about.

We're working now with one of the networked learning communities, and there are seven schools and an LEA and ourselves. It's having tremendous outcomes because all the participants sat down at the beginning to see what they wanted to happen and what could happen. They did look at a bigger vision, but spelt out what they could achieve and were very realistic about resources and time, and the result was that something that started small has become mainstreamed and is having a significant effect on staff development.

(HEI manager interview)

- **Change in response to external stimuli.** In a national funding context where fixed-term initiatives aimed at stimulating change have gained headway, perhaps relatively more so than the enhancement of longer-term base funding, there has been a substantial increase in opportunities to benefit from 'extra' funding sources. This has been especially the case with schools, which have been able to bid into an array of Standards Fund schemes, as well as other schemes pursuing particular change agendas. The pattern of such schemes is well established, as far back as schemes such as the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) which made considerable resources available for schools to upgrade their technology and through TRIST (TVEI related in service training), the expertise needed to use it. More recently, and specifically in relation to arts education, schools have been able to receive enhanced funding and activity through schemes such as Creative Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), the Arts Education Interface (AEI) and Creative Partnerships (CP).

These latter schemes relating to the arts, though they are available to schools themselves rather than to HEIs, have certain features that make them substantially different

from the first two models. They quite clearly purport to be partnership models, and share quite distinct partnership features. These features, it is argued, are shared with the STAR project and therefore are enumerated here.

- The partnerships are funding-led and come about, in their particular manifestation at that particular time, because of the existence of a funding stream.
- They are based on an externally determined agenda not originated by all the prospective partners.
- They involve unequal partners, in terms of scale and responsibility.

Such a combination leads to a relationship that contains inherent challenges (Doherty *et al.*, 2000). The funding is vested in the agency charged with the change agenda. This is usually the smaller partner, which either has been established to deliver the agenda, or has been transformed to do so. This partner therefore finds itself with flexible financial resources, a distinct (usually single) mission and a limited time scale in which to deliver change. The other partner, in whom it is intended that change will be forthcoming, is likely to be larger, with an ongoing and largely pre-determined agenda and responsibility, with very limited flexible funding, its budget being largely accounted for in advance through staffing and resource maintenance.

In short, the 'time equals money' equation appears very different to both parties. For the change agency, money can buy time, but for the institution (school or other) the time is already bought and accounted for. The staff within the institution may already perceive themselves to have full workloads, and may already themselves be identifying change needs that they cannot find time to address. If the agenda of the fund-holding agency is pre-determined and the flexibility of the institution is limited, the process of negotiating the partnership requires time or very lateral thinking. If the timescale for delivery by the change agency is finite and relatively short term, the challenges are multiplied. This dichotomy may well have affected the nature of the STAR/HEI relationship.

3.2 The STAR/HEI relationship

One of the central elements of the WEAZ plan was the formation of a project that would support the objectives of an EAZ through arts development.

As part of the action zone the STAR project was created through a partnership between the zone and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, both having interest in raising standards in teaching through the arts.

(STAR development plan)

The first target for action identified in the plan was to 'establish the active involvement of HE institutions,' with an aim to 'improve the status of the arts in the ITT curriculum'. This aim was formulated with the desire to address some of the issues arising from the report concerning the deteriorating status of the arts in ITT as revealed in *The Disappearing Arts* (Rogers, 1998). This report revealed a national picture in which arts specialist courses in ITT were disappearing and the amount of time afforded to the arts in generalist courses was being eroded.

To bring about this involvement a Steering Group was formed that would advise and support the formulation of plans, and ensure the development of the relationship. A number of meetings were held with representatives of the three HEIs, one of them becoming actively involved at a later stage than the other two.

Each of the three HEIs had a different relationship to the arts as part of their ITT provision. Differences have become apparent between the three HEIs, pertinently in the following areas:

- the availability of courses for those wishing to specialise in the arts
- the availability of tutors with specialist arts expertise
- the amounts of time made available within the curriculum for arts teaching
- their intentions concerning the future development of their arts provision.

Consequently, the STAR project was working with institutions that had different needs and aspirations concerning the arts, and given its limited planned lifespan, STAR needed to generate outputs in relation to those institutions quickly. As had been the case with other projects aiming to bring about change through the arts (e.g. CAPE UK) it was intended that contracts would be made with the partners (according to the STAR action plan) presumably with the intention that these were for the delivery of services to the HEIs by STAR. It would appear that such an approach was based on certain assumptions that may have been generated by the evidence produced in the *'The Disappearing Arts'*, indicating an arts deficit in ITT provision nationally. While this assumption may have been based on sound national evidence, it may not have been agreed that such a deficit applied to these prospective and particular partners.

We were told we would be queuing up to pay for these services... It was a failure to involve us. It was also fire in the belly about 'The Disappearing Arts'. But it's a mistake to treat all higher education as if it's all represented in the final figures, and not to involve the people you want to work with at the start.

(HEI manager)

Whether or not the assumption was correct in the case of these three particular HEIs, as opposed to the generality of HEIs nationally, it would appear that the relationship started with some discomfort.

The project was developed without a great deal of reference to HEIs at the beginning. And if we had been more closely involved with the evolution of the project under the Action Zone, I think it would have been more effective.

(HEI manager)

I think that the project needed better and clearer planning from the beginning with shared aims and outcomes couched in terms of learning. I think there was a big vision, and what it needed was for that to be translated early into something quite tightly structured into partnership and collaboration from the beginning.

(HEI manager)

It is notable that although a Steering Group, involving STAR staff, HEI and school representatives met to support and advise on the formulation of plans, there remained a perception within the HEIs that joint planning had not been effective. This may indicate that strategic level communications were not fully translated into operational outcomes.

This having been the perceived state of play at the start of the relationship, it is interesting to note the extent to which the relationships with the three HEIs did in fact develop. Much was achieved and this is summarised in the following section.

3.3 Engagements between STAR and the HEIs

Although the brief of this evaluation was to focus on the five-week modules described in Chapter Two, and their impact on students and the HEIs, it was felt appropriate for this report to set the five-week modules for students in the context of the broader engagement. Staff at STAR and within each of the HEIs were asked to identify the range of engagement and the impact that they felt these had achieved.

Some of the activities were offered by STAR from the outset, while others emerged as the relationship developed between STAR and individuals or departments within the HEIs. Although the series of five-week modules for students were the most substantial and sustained investment by STAR, these other interventions were also regarded as very significant, by both STAR and HEI staff. Whereas the modules were offered as set packages to all three of the participating HEIs, some of these other engagements emerged over the lifetime of the STAR project as the product of dialogue between STAR and tutors in individual HEIs, fulfilling specific needs identified at the local level. Others were provisions available to all three HEIs, but may not have been taken up by all of them.

The following may not be an exhaustive list of engagements, but they are the ones that have emerged in dialogue with interviewees.

The co-ordination of a pedagogical debate within the partnership

A series of discussions involving various partners in the STAR project considered pedagogical issues around the arts. This was in part in response to a perception that up to that point communication between the partners had not been as thorough as it could have been. The debate was wide ranging and included the place of the arts in the ITT curriculum, how the arts work in the classroom, how they are assessed and how schools can work with ITT to improve the arts training available to students. It raised substantial questions especially concerning the place of the arts in primary education and its relationship to cross-curricular work and learner-centred approaches. The debate was reported (Rogers, 2002) and disseminated by the project.

HEI managers valued the debate largely because it promoted discussion within their institutions and greater interaction between the three HEIs involved.

I regard the three HEIs as part of STAR. We've talked with each other, and we've made different decisions about how we take the curriculum forward, but those discussions have been happening. I think the second outcome is that staff who were involved in this debate have now come up with a full degree in creative arts which they want to deliver. It's always been an area of interest, but one effect of being involved in the partnership is that they've gone away and said 'It would be great if...' I think it's accelerated it, and this may be a bit perverse, but I think at times that both of them were a little frustrated that some of the things they wanted to take advantage of in the STAR project they couldn't because of timetables. But what they have said is that if they develop this creative arts project, they could do a very inventive PGCE to follow on from that.

(HEI manager)

Such an outcome, even if brought about partly through the frustration of a 'creative irritant', ranks as a very clear achievement for the project. However, notwithstanding the attempts to disseminate the outcomes of the debate, most operational staff interviewed as part of this research were unaware of the debate or any outcomes resulting from it.

Access to the STAR conference on the arts in primary schools

STAR organised a mid-project conference to disseminate its activities and achievements, and invited a wide range of interested parties, both local and national, to attend. Many HEI students from the participating HEIs attended this conference and learned not only about the activities of STAR itself, but also saw performances by pupils who had worked with STAR ASTs, and attended seminars on issues such as the role of galleries in primary education, African masks and creativity across the curriculum.

Responses from interviewees to the experience were mixed. For one HEI manager, the exposition of the various achievements of the STAR project demonstrated that the whole was greater than the sum of the parts, and an indication that what can be achieved in two schools in the arts could equally be achieved in twenty. One tutor referred to the amazement of her students at the quality of work that could be achieved by primary school pupils. Another referred to the capacity of such a conference to overcome the sense of isolation experienced by many who seek to work in arts education, and to create an awareness of the wider context in which they were working. A third tutor, along with his students, was disappointed that the conference did not provide significant leads on 'how the arts were done' rather than simply displaying good quality end products. However, this frustration led to further discussions and plans for a day course for students on the role of creativity in the classroom. Staff from one HEI claimed that that the work done by the HEIs in the arts was not acknowledged, and was even belittled by a student speaker on the platform.

Other enhancements made available to ITT students

Demonstration lessons became an established feature at the beginning of the STAR project for ITT students starting their first year. The STAR ASTs taught a class of primary school pupils with ITT students observing. It was intended that this opportunity would continue to be offered by the ASTs even after the lifetime of STAR. For those HEIs that made use of such opportunities, they were valued by staff as a way that students could see how their own art form learning could be translated into

teaching activities. One tutor reported that students who had observed arts lessons were then required to report their observations to other students, thus maximising the value of the experience.

Other enhancements involving the shared leadership of projects involving ITT students working with pupils in schools were regarded as significantly useful, but had not been practised extensively. STAR tutors worked with staff at one of the HEIs to develop an African mask project in which the tutors worked alongside students and school pupils. In another HEI, students were enabled to work over three sessions on a project in schools funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Though there was considerable interest in working in such a way, time constraints within the HEIs clearly made this problematic.

Although it is more than possible that some students from the partner HEIs benefitted from being placed in schools that had enhanced arts provision and practices as a result of their own involvement with STAR, no evidence to quantify such benefits to ITT students was forthcoming. The logistics of tracking ITT students through their various activities were understandably not manageable within STAR resources. It was felt by HEI managers that involvement with the STAR project had not significantly increased their access to partner schools.

Lectures were delivered by STAR staff to 350 students in one of the participating HEIs, on issues including the place of the arts in education and the potential role of artists.

Involvement of STAR staff in HEI courses

As might be expected, this varied greatly between the three HEIs depending on their own needs and interests. In response to a request from one of the HEIs, the two STAR tutors offered arts sessions tailored to the needs of early years teaching. A tutor suggested that practical sessions on creative learning, delivered jointly by the HEI and STAR staff, had brought out one particularly reticent group and also provided the impetus to plan more creative sessions for this cohort in the future. This input was planned to continue in this particular HEI beyond the lifetime of WEAZ, programmed within the curriculum

hours allocated to the course. It is envisaged that this will be a regular and integral feature of the early years course, and as such represents a very tangible and sustained intervention by the STAR Project. In another HEI joint lectures to PGCE students, with the STAR tutor bringing in more practical activities, had been valued. Another interviewee referred to plans that had been considered for the creation of an MA involving a STAR input, but believed that such plans had apparently not reached fruition.

There is also evidence of the involvement of the STAR ASTs in college-run arts foundation and general practice modules. This aspect of STAR's work has developed progressively during the course of the project. While this may be essentially a TTA initiative, STAR's nurturing of ASTs and the development of their relationship with the HEIs was a necessary precursor to this particular involvement. It is interesting to note that one of the ASTs was using her performing arts teaching skills to provide sessions to trainees on 'presence in the classroom' rather than specifically on arts teaching techniques. This integration of arts skills into the overall process of teaching might be seen as an outcome beyond STAR's initial ambition. However, the involvement of external ASTs in HEI courses was not universally welcomed, there being the assertion in one case that the expertise available within the HEI was at least equal to that being imported via the TTA scheme.

The provision of ICT and web-based material to support arts teaching

There were a number of strands to this work. At the time of this research, one of the STAR ASTs, in collaboration with a tutor from one of the HEIs, was generating a CD ROM that set out the content of all of the five-week modules that had been delivered during STAR's lifetime. It was planned that this would eventually be made available through a website. It was envisaged by the HEI tutor that this would be used by students as homework exercises, or as a distance learning opportunity. Teachers' lesson plans and presentation material were also planned to be made available, along with work from the ALICE Project (art, literacy and ICT), also part of the WEAZ. Such resources could provide a considerable enhancement to the training opportunities for ITT students. The

WEAZ ICT tutor had also provided support for both students and tutors in HEIs on the potential contribution that ICT can make to arts education.

The above engagements between STAR and the three HEIs were not evaluated by NFER as part of their research brief. They are described above in order to establish the context in which the five-week modules for students were taking place. Several of these engagements were the result of dialogue and negotiation between STAR and an individual HEI, or an individual tutor within one. The effectiveness of such an approach is only possible where time is taken to engage in such dialogue and contrasts with the early approach of STAR, itself possibly inevitable because of the need to generate immediate impact.

One of the major frustrations was that the HEIs were not involved from the start. The message coming from the STAR project in the early days was, 'We're going to do something amazing, groundbreaking, world-shattering, entirely different from anything that's ever been done before'. I think the HEIs were saying, 'Hang on, we've been doing this for a long time and maybe if you talk to us you'll find that some of this ground breaking stuff was something people were doing 40 years ago'.

(HEI manager)

This somewhat dramatised description of STAR's attitude may not correspond with STAR's actual utterances or intentions, but may well indicate a perception from the participating HEIs that they were not entirely engaged in the partnership processes. Generating shared ownership of partnership projects is known to be problematic, and will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

That a range of engagements was developed over the period of the project, after what some saw as an inauspicious start, may be seen as a testament to the commitment of all partners to make a difference to the state of the arts in ITT.

3.4 The impact of the five-week modules on ITT in the partner HEIs

Chapter 2 summarised the engagement of students in the five-week modules, and the outcomes perceived to have been derived from them. Most students reported very clear and immediate effects from their voluntary involvement.

The following sections address the second and third research objectives as set out in the Research Proposal:

What contribution have the modules made to ITT?

- a. Do they relate conceptually to the courses being delivered by the HEIs to students?
- b. Are such modules manageable in terms of student and HEI logistics?
- c. Do they represent a potentially valuable contribution to the continuing development of ITT courses?

In what ways does the wider STAR Project support the effectiveness of the modules and promote the status of the arts in the ITT curriculum?

- a. Are the modules supported by other elements of the STAR project (such as teacher/mentor training)?
- b. Are the modules supporting and/or supported by, teaching practice in STAR schools?
- c. Is the STAR project promoting the arts in the ITT curriculum?

3.5 What contribution have the modules made to ITT?

The research brief specified a number of questions to be addressed concerning the relationship between the STAR modules and the wider ITT experience.

a. Do the modules relate conceptually to the courses being delivered by the HEIs to students?

The research sought to ascertain how the modules related to the arts courses on offer to students within their own institutions. STAR staff reported that it had been agreed with the HEIs that the courses would be essentially practical in nature, leaving the theory of arts in education in the hands of the HEIs. As described in Chapter 2, data from the participating students indicated that while the modules complimented and enhanced their college courses to a certain extent, they did not perceive a deliberate integration of the approaches offered by STAR or their own HEIs. At an institutional level it has been difficult to obtain a clear view about the relationship of the modules to college courses beyond the understanding that they would be of a practical nature.

Evidence from interviews with the various parties involved might suggest some reasons for this lack of clarity. The probably inevitable (and possibly desirable) free-standing nature of the modules, as voluntary extras for those students choosing to use them, created the potential for a fresh and different type of input, but may also have resulted in isolation from the attention of the HEIs.

Although it was subsequently addressed more rigorously, the extent of communication between STAR and the HEIs leading up to the delivery of the first STAR modules may have contributed to that isolation. It was generally felt by HEI staff that there had been insufficient consultation during the planning stages concerning the purpose, content and pedagogical approaches of the modules.

There was so little consultation on the modules that the risk of duplication was substantial, and that they could be largely irrelevant.

(HEI manager)

This seemed to follow from a more general weakness in the early stages of consultation and collaboration between STAR and the HEIs referred to above. Both HEI and STAR staff referred to the fact that, prior to the first modules taking place, their respective course descriptions had not been requested by each other:

The college's arts modules were not called in by the STAR project to look at.

(HEI manager)

The HEIs had not been sent copies of the overall aims and objectives of the STAR modules in the early stages of the project. This weakness in communication may partly have been the result of the inherent difficulty faced by an external agency when communicating with a large and compartmentalised organisation. It was asserted by more than one HEI manager that lack of familiarity amongst the STAR staff with the structures and operations of HEIs may have hampered early communications.

The full course booklet from STAR was eventually distributed to the three HEIs at the end of the initially-planned sequence of modules, with the intention that the delivery of further modules could be negotiated. At the time of the research, the HEIs had not had time to absorb or discuss the content of this course booklet, but there was nonetheless a willingness to proceed, especially since there was the possibility of resources being made available under the Creative Partnerships scheme. However, even at this stage one HEI manager continued to express concern about the planning and consultation process.

We're now seeing new modules being developed under Creative Partnerships without sufficient consideration of what HEIs can and cannot do logistically. It's a similar pattern, though the content and approach are fine.

(HEI manager)

The evidence from interviews with HEI staff would indicate that more diligent attention to planning and more listening to what HEI staff had to say about their needs and their potential to absorb additional inputs, may have overcome some of the earlier difficulties and may have resulted in more valuing by the HEIs of the contribution from STAR. More sharing of course details may not have altered the way the modules were planned, or the content of them, but may well have sent a clearer signal that a partnership approach was sought, and may have encouraged an earlier commitment to, or interest in the modules.

While communications clearly improved over time, the process of designing the modules did not alter in any

perceptible way during the course of the relationship. Prior to the recruitment process, staff within the colleges felt under-informed about the nature of what was being offered to the students. For some, their knowledge was based largely on the marketing and presentations deployed by STAR to recruit students. Consequently, most felt unable to comment with authority on the relationship of the modules to their own work in ITT. The sharing of information appeared to have improved considerably during the later cycles of modules, but STAR staff expressed the view that they still needed to improve their communication with HEI staff.

The perhaps inevitably limited extent of dialogue between HEI and STAR staff concerning the modules left important questions unanswered. What aspect of teacher training would most benefit from enhanced attention through the STAR modules – classroom management techniques; student confidence in their own competence in art form techniques; knowledge of techniques, models and language for teaching the arts; knowledge and understanding of the place of the arts in relation to the child's whole education; the capacity to assess and evaluate pupils' creative work; the capacity to evaluate their own performance as teacher trainees? All of these might be regarded as candidates for additional attention and all were raised as issues for consideration in the pedagogical debate. Assessing the approach and content of the STAR modules in their manifestation to date could inform their future development both within and beyond STAR. Evidence from interviews suggests that technique had taken priority in the modules, with pedagogical understanding and assessment issues playing a secondary role. While this was welcomed by the students, there may have been more scope for appraising the value of this balance through a dialogue between STAR and HEI tutors.

b. Are STAR modules manageable in terms of student and HEI logistics?

Researchers explored the time and resource implications of undertaking the modules.

The recruitment of students to undertake voluntary courses in their own (often scarce) free time presented some difficulties. Even with continuous and diligent attention

to the issue of student recruitment, numbers of students taking up the courses remained very uneven. Numbers attending ranged from one to 30. Factors causing the unevenness may have been the nature of the courses on offer and the clash with other student commitments. Recruitment of students to undertake the first modules proved difficult, and only one of the HEIs provided students. In that HEI, initial information was deemed insufficient to persuade students to give up their free time, but following a face-to-face presentation, more success was achieved. Particular timetabling difficulties contributed to the non-recruitment of students from the other two HEIs.

The second set of modules recruited only from those HEIs that had not participated in the first modules, and generated no 'repeat business' from the HEI that had sourced students for the first modules. Again face-to-face contact helped recruitment, as did an increased period of notice for the students to enroll. In the case of the non-participating HEI, it would appear that the year group selected for recruitment proved inappropriate because of their other commitments.

The disparate time commitments of students in different year groups in the different HEIs presented logistical difficulties for recruitment. HEI staff were at pains to report the time pressure that students were under, especially in their final year, the group targeted in the first modules. However, it is also clear that other year groups were subject to periodic pressures that may have inhibited their involvement in the modules. Some students had considerable distances to travel to STAR bases, and many mature students, who account for a considerable proportion of students on ITT courses, had pressing family commitments in what would normally be their free time. That said, those students that did choose to avail themselves of the opportunity felt that the investment of their own free time was very worthwhile.

The extreme pressure of time facing HEIs, caused by the volume of material that they are obliged to cover under the current requirements for Qualified Teacher Status, has been a primary motivator for STAR in offering these courses. For the HEIs there was effectively no investment of curriculum time, although staff in all HEIs did commit

time to encouraging students to partake in the recruitment exercises undertaken by STAR staff. It was widely acknowledged that providing courses in the students' free time was an effective and welcome way of enabling the delivery of additional arts teaching to students. Although participating students regarded the voluntary nature of the modules as a plus, it inevitably meant that only a fraction of eligible students benefited from them.

It is planned that the modules will continue to be offered with Creative Partnerships funding. Whether recruitment will increase or be more consistent is yet to be seen. The pressures, not only on students but also on the staff whose cooperation is needed to promote the courses, are considerable.

There is a dichotomy between how these things are viewed in a place like ours where we've all got lots of different responsibilities, lots of things going on. 'Here's another one that's come along – add it to the list.' At the STAR project, it's really a very important part of their work, quite high up. It's what they want to spend a lot of time and energy on, and I think that creates a little bit of a dichotomy between the two. It does appear to staff in our organisation as though it can come across a bit heavy, whereas it's just another one of the many things that are going on. It can just create a little bit of anxiety. I can't speak for the students, but I think that can come over with the staff.

(HEI tutor)

The very palpable enthusiasm and efforts of STAR to work in partnership with the HEIs may at times have obscured a need to recognise sufficiently the constraints under which HEIs deliver ITT. While the opportunity to make use of such inputs may have been valued, HEI tutors referred to the problems they had in planning such involvement.

They would need to know what was on offer very early. The best use you can make of it is if you know what is on offer and what is possible, and you can get that into your planning. It was better this year, but last year it was ad hoc. You need to sort that out in advance... The main difficulty is that you don't know what is happening from year to year.

(HEI tutor)

Institutions characteristically are not instantly responsive organisations. Their scale and on-going burden of responsibility reduces their instant manoeuvrability. Agencies charged with delivering a programme of change, over a fixed and usually fairly short term, therefore need to assess very carefully the points at which they can have an impact. While STAR staff made strenuous efforts to identify the best opportunities for enabling student participation, factors beyond their control continued to result in uneven recruitment.

c. Do they represent a potentially valuable contribution to the continuing development of ITT courses?

The STAR project sought to contribute to the development of ITT courses, and in particular to generate enhancement of the arts element in those courses. Efforts were made to ascertain to what extent the STAR modules might have had such an effect. Where STAR tutors worked alongside HEI staff to support them in developing their own ITT courses, tutors were able to give an informed view of the impact of such contributions. However, in the case of the more stand-alone STAR modules, which had not been the subject of substantial joint planning, ascertaining HEI staff perceptions of impact was more difficult. Institutions operate at a number of different levels, and one HEI manager, for example, was able to state categorically that the modules had had no effect on the institution as a whole, though indicating that one art form department had a positive assessment of the modules, while another did not.

One HEI manager took a cautious approach to the impact of the modules.

If it means that we think carefully about developing more arts-based learning for intending teachers, it will have had its desired impact.

(HEI manager)

The contribution of the modules could potentially occur in one of two ways: either as contributions in themselves as courses, or as examples that might inform the future development of HEI provided courses. The former contribution, according to the perceptions of the stu-

dents, was achieved. That judgement was largely echoed by HEI staff, although some regarded them as duplication. Even though based on very informal evidence, most staff who worked with the students who had participated in the modules were positive about the outcomes, though some HEI staff remained sceptical about their value. The variable nature of the perspectives concerning the five-week modules from the different HEIs doubtless resulted from the fact that they were starting from different points. Had there been a longer lead-in time before the modules were to be delivered, and had there been greater dialogue concerning their content or organization perhaps allowing them to be tailored to the needs of each specific HEI, there might have been greater involvement.

Instead of a coherent shared evaluation of the modules, it appeared that the HEIs saw them as free-standing and independent of the need of their attention. At the same time, it appeared that STAR saw the modules as a product that they were delivering for the HEIs, with apparently little strategy in mind to ensure that they would have an impact beyond their own existence.

There is a disparity between the activities as twilight sessions and a strategic analysis of work in partnership with HEIs.

(HEI tutor)

Although it was planned that the modules would continue to be delivered under the auspices of Creative Partnerships, there appeared to be some confusion in the minds of some HEI tutors concerning any continuing wider involvement with STAR.

I was hoping to continue with STAR, but having spoken to [STAR tutor] a couple of weeks ago, I think they've had new priorities given to them. I've got a feeling her role has been changed slightly and she won't be able to come and do the teaching with me as a part of the PGCE.

(HEI tutor)

Thus, the perception of the modules as an 'extra' seemed to result in them being welcomed, but not critically

appraised. This latter stage would have been necessary if the STAR modules were to contribute more effectively to the continuing development of ITT courses. That STAR staff increasingly became involved in ITT within the HEIs in other ways may well have resulted in further development, but the impact of the five-week modules on the arts in HEIs is itself questionable. It would appear that STAR made little demand on the HEIs to be involved in the evaluation process, possibly to avoid making extra demands on HEI staff time other than to facilitate recruitment. Thus it may be that a preoccupation with recruiting sufficient numbers for the viability of modules obscured the need to ensure an impact from the modules on the practice within HEIs.

3.6 In what ways does the wider STAR Project support the effectiveness of the modules and promote the status of the arts in the ITT curriculum?

The final objective of the research was to explore ways in which the wider STAR project supports the effectiveness of the modules and promotes the status of the arts in the ITT curriculum. The first two research questions under this heading are addressed together.

- a. Are the modules supported by other elements of the STAR project (such as teacher/mentor training)? and**
- b. Are the modules supporting and/or supported by, teaching practice in STAR schools?**

Researchers sought to discover the extent to which the students taking part in the five-week modules were also engaging with other aspects of STAR activities, or benefiting from the extensive arts development work being undertaken by STAR in the primary schools in WEAZ.

The sample of students interviewed generated little evidence of cross-referencing between the modules and other STAR activities. One student in the first sample had become closely involved in STAR, having been initially pointed in STAR's direction by her teaching parent. She

had grasped a number of STAR opportunities. In the second sample, only one student had worked with a teacher mentor trained in the arts by STAR, although a number of them had chosen to take the opportunity of attending more than one of the modules. Although it has not been possible to assemble data concerning the range of multiple engagements by individual students with STAR, one of the STAR tutors noticed that this was happening.

I'm starting to see students now in different situations, which is good, so I recognise students and say, 'Ah you did my course in dance!' or whatever. And I've seen students in the zone on teaching practice, such as [named student]. He's been at two separate schools in Wednesbury. And students coming to more than one course. I'm not aware of students coming from the early years course to the modules.

(STAR tutor)

It may well be that there was more cross-fertilisation than came to light, but it was understandably difficult to track the experiences of all of the students involved in the modules.

c. Is the STAR project promoting the arts in the ITT curriculum?

Concerning STAR's progress in promoting the arts in the ITT curriculum, the picture is complicated by broader changes within the HEI context. The new framework for initial teacher training, 'Qualifying to Teach', was deemed by some HEI staff to offer greater opportunities for developing arts elements in teacher training. One of the partner HEIs was pleased that it was increasing its arts provision. A tutor in another HEI appeared to be relieved that his/her institution would not be reducing the level of arts provision in response to the new standards. In the national context, the policy statement from the Secretary of State for Education 'Excellence and Enjoyment', the TES campaign 'Target Creativity' and the expansion of Creative Partnerships all seem to signal a more fertile environment for the development of the arts in ITT. Research evidence (Downing *et al.*, 2003) suggests that such shifts in direction favouring the arts are welcomed by schools that are seeking higher levels of arts teaching expertise from students emerging from the HEIs.

Evidence presented throughout this chapter suggests that there were marked differences both between HEIs and within individual HEIs concerning the extent to which STAR has made an impact upon their approaches to the arts.

One HEI manager was definite about the impact of the overall STAR experience on the development of the arts in the institution.

It brought us into a very valuable partnership – not without its difficulties. It stimulated a conversation, certainly within our own college about what sort of training we ought to be giving our students to prepare them to work with the arts in schools. There have been two very direct results, though achieved tangentially. The first is that there has been a complete review of how we deliver the broader curriculum. We have now restructured our primary education course to give more time for the arts. It's in part in response to this relationship [STAR and the HEI]. The new standards from TTA gave the opportunity to reconsider our courses. Because staff

had begun to talk about how we provide students with the skills to deliver an arts curriculum, people were more receptive to the idea of change. We've now doubled the amount of time going into the arts. I have to say it was terribly limited before, but we have doubled it!

(HEI manager)

It would appear that where activities have been the product of negotiation and shared planning the impact has been greater. Where the need for additional inputs had been jointly identified, or there was an acknowledgement of deficits in provision, there was a greater welcome for STAR services. It is possible that the ambition to have an impact on three institutions simultaneously, and the attempt to provide some elements of 'one fits all' services, may have been less effective. It was very clear that the HEI managers interviewed shared the belief that STAR should be ambitious in its planning. In the circumstances described at the beginning of this chapter, it is both laudable that such progress was made, and understandable that one HEI manager lamented the missing of what could have been an even greater opportunity.

4 Conclusions

4.1 Introduction

At an operational level, the nature of the partnership between STAR and the three participating HEIs evolved gradually. The initial action plan of the project was ambitious and wide ranging. It was estimated by the STAR manager that the work with HEIs amounted to only about a quarter of the whole STAR project. Working with three HEIs, all with different approaches to the arts in their ITT and all with different staffing and communication structures, presented considerable challenges. As the project progressed new engagements between STAR and the HEIs evolved, increasing the volume and complexity of the relationships. The involvement of STAR ASTs in HEI courses through TTA initiatives; contributions to an early years course; partnership in WEAZ school-based projects between STAR teachers, college tutors and their students, and participation in demonstration lessons all suggest that the work of STAR was welcomed and valued by the HEIs. Although the five-week modules were the primary focus of this evaluation, these other elements provided a fertile context in which those modules took place.

The modules themselves provided clear and tangible positive outcomes for the students involved, as Chapter 2 reveals. This was the perception of the students themselves and the HEI tutors responsible for them. The provision of arts experiences that were not only additional to those which HEIs could offer in the time available, but also were of a very distinct nature, was highly valued.

However, largely because of the factors identified in Chapter 3, the potential impact of the modules on the provision of arts elements in HEI courses may not have been fully realised. These factors centred on the way in which the partnership between WEAZ and the HEIs came about, the communications that cemented the relationship, and the logistical difficulties of introducing new and extra experiences for students on ITT courses.

4.2 Concepts of change in education

The process of institutional change in education has been the subject of considerable study for some time.

Michael Fullan's work in this field is highly illuminative, and might usefully inform future projects that seek to promote curriculum change or provoke a re-thinking of the place of the arts in ITT in the future.

Fullan (2001) identifies three stages of educational change, these being instigation, implementation and continuation. He suggests that external agencies play a particularly important part in the instigation stage. He distinguishes between mandatory and voluntary change. While STAR mandated itself to address the aims set out above, the HEIs with whom it was in partnership had only a voluntary relationship to the agenda. Whether their earlier involvement in the design and planning of the project would have committed them to a mandate similar to that of STAR is unknowable, but the way the project was constituted inevitably led to STAR and the HEIs having different relationships to the endeavour.

Fullan (2001) also suggests that education change is not fast. 'The total time frame from institutionalisation is lengthy; even moderately complex changes take from three to five years'. Given the short initially-planned lifespan of STAR, it is therefore appropriate to think of STAR's involvement as being the instigation stage, with some involvement in the implementation stage. Any continuation would inevitably be in the hands of the HEIs themselves. But Fullan asserts that change is very dependent on the uniqueness of the individual settings, and given that STAR created a partnership with three separate HEIs, it would be reasonable to suppose that the extent to which it was able to tailor different activities to the needs of the three different HEIs would be a critical factor in the success of the endeavour. It might be questioned whether the broad ranging ambitions of the project, in partnership with three different HEIs, were appropriate or realisable within the limited lifetime of STAR.

The management of STAR were very conscious of the expectations on them to deliver substantial change in a limited period and were perhaps not able to reconcile those expectations with the reality of a very limited timescale, and the limited time allocated to ITT work within their programme.

Fullan (2001) identifies two possible institutional responses to the external initiation of educational change: a bureaucratic response to an opportunity to obtain extra resources (in this case teaching resources targeted at their students) or a problem-solving response, 'a stimulus or reminder to work in a desired direction'. Elements of both were discernible within the STAR project. Where a service was simply being provided by STAR, such as the five-week modules, it would appear that the HEIs gratefully accepted the offering, without there being any particular need to invest resources or commitment. Where services developed as part of a partnership endeavour, (such as the work on early years training courses,) through negotiation between STAR and HEI staff as the project progressed and in response to a pre-existing 'desired direction', there appeared to be a greater willingness in the HEIs to go beyond their own ITT mandate and engage more actively in a change or development agenda.

It would appear that greater commitment developed as the project progressed.

Ownership is something that develops over time if the ideas are good and if people have the capacity or the opportunity to make informed judgements, which they may not be able to early on.

(Fullan, 2001, p. 67)

Evidence from both students, and from HEI tutors involved with those students, would suggest that the ideas for the five-week modules were good. It is possible that more could have been done to ensure that the HEIs had 'the opportunity to develop informed judgements'.

It is not only a question of whether a given need is important, but also how important it is relative to other needs...The 'fit' between a new programme and institutions is essential, but may not be clear until implementation is under way.

(Fullan, 2001, p.76)

While good ideas matter, so do perceptions of good ideas. Given the short lifespan of STAR, it was essential that the 'fit' be achieved early and that seems to have

been achieved better where the HEIs were more directly involved in the tailoring of the garment. Where there was greater interactivity between STAR and the HEIs there was perhaps a greater opportunity to promote ownership and thus ensure continuation.

4.3 Making good practice influential

STAR was a relatively small part of the overall picture for HEIs. It was suggested that there had been a perception of 'WEAZ bringing gifts' (HEI manager) and a suspicion that WEAZ personnel thought that the HEIs were 'looking a gift horse in the mouth' (HEI manager). All parties acknowledged that HEI staff had invested time and commitment in facilitating the modules and STAR activities, and if uptake had not been as extensive as might be wished, this was due largely to pressures and constraints rather than lack of interest. However, there was also the view that because of lack of consultation and partnership approaches, the services on offer from STAR were not as relevant or appropriate as they could have been.

It is undeniable that the modules were 'extras', both for the students and for the HEIs. But since they appeared to be so valued by the students who participated in them and those tutors that had promoted them, it would seem important that HEIs had the fullest access to an understanding of the qualities and features generating that perceived value. This equally applied to other engagements between STAR and the HEIs, but in most of those cases the more collaborative nature of the relationship inevitably led to greater understanding between the two parties. Only discourse between STAR and the HEIs, or a more direct exposure of HEI staff to the experiences on offer could lead to the possibility of STAR's work informing future development of the arts in the participating HEIs.

An HEI manager expressed some concern in the early stages of the project that the strategies for creating an impact may have been underdeveloped.

There's an enormously rich resource there, not yet fully incorporated. But I have seen great changes over a peri-

od of time in how we are talking to each other. I am sure great things can come out of it, but the question is whether it will be able to run long enough for those benefits to accrue. But we must all have learned from it. I think there is some learning happening – about how to take a great vision and how to really map out the journey from the tiny start to get to the grand vision. If you want to have more than candy floss, you have got to have some very clear structured work.

(HEI manager)

Evidence presented above would suggest that some progress was made, through specific engagements between STAR and the HEIs, and often with specific tutors, that might lead to the development of arts provision in ITT, and in some instances already has done so. However, the lifespan of STAR as a fully-funded project has come to an end, and some partners were left questioning whether the project was ‘able to run long enough for those benefits to accrue’.

Much was achieved in the lifetime of the project. If the project did not achieve all that was hoped of it, one might question whether this was a result of poor use of the time available, or insufficient time in the first place. Was this too short a period in which to have an impact on HEIs? Were the ambitions of the project too dispersed or were the strategies for creating an impact inappropriate? Is it reasonable for a project with such a short lifespan to ‘provide sustained opportunities for ITT students’ (if sustained means beyond the lifetime of the project) or ‘enhance the status of the arts in the ITT curriculum’? Although the five-week modules provided enhancement for a limited number of students for a limited period of time, one must question the extent to which they achieved these objectives. It would appear that the wider relationship between STAR and the HEIs may have had a more substantial impact, especially on thinking about the arts for some staff in some of the partner HEIs.

But could a greater impact have been achieved? Although the STAR project was scheduled to continue to work with the HEIs, albeit in a limited form, it is worthwhile to look to the future potential for the development of the arts element in ITT.

4.4 Perceptions of future needs and potential

Interviewees were asked to identify what they saw as the potentials and obstacles for further development of the arts in ITT.

While there was considerable variation concerning the potential impact of the new standards for ITT on the arts element of the ITT curriculum, there was widespread agreement that more attention needed to be paid to the arts and the support that they are attracting in schools.

We have to mirror schools and there is strong interest in schools, growing. More and more headteachers see a strong creative arts as part of a strong school as a whole. I deal with a lot of good schools and they are interested in this. People can now handle Ofsted and are moving towards creative education more.

(HEI tutor)

The use of the range terminology from ‘the arts’ to ‘the creative arts’ to ‘creativity’ has been evolving over recent years at a considerable pace. ‘The arts’ remain to some extent definable (as dance, drama, music and visual art), although contemporary art practice challenges definitions quite fundamentally. The definition of creativity remains much more elusive (Robinson Report, 1999) and is increasingly seen as an attribute that can and should pervade all teaching and learning, across the curriculum. Although often seen as closely related to the arts, creativity can and does also flourish without reference to them. Maintaining a distinction of meaning, and maintaining a place for the arts within a creative curriculum, may require continued vigilance. It would be mistaken to assume that because the curriculum has embraced creativity, the place of the arts is secure. The focus on creativity in ‘*All Our Futures*’ (Robinson Report, 1999) and in the Creative Partnerships scheme that was partly born out of ‘*All Our Futures*’ stemmed from a desire to promote the role of the arts, but also to give them a wider rationale. Transferring attention to creativity because that is a potential growth area may not result in an enhanced status or provision for the arts.

One of the STAR tutors alluded to the dilemma. She described plans to provide modules on creativity, embracing all of the art forms.

The curriculum is swinging back from subject narrowness and is hopefully becoming more topic based...HEIs don't do that at the moment so we would be unique. Instead of trying to mimic what they do, which is sort of what we do at the moment, we are looking to broaden things out and that might have more of an appeal.

(STAR tutor)

She went on to point out that each art subject has its own agenda, which might present challenges for this approach.

We have to be careful if we do go down that route to ensure that they are still getting the skills.

(STAR tutor)

As well as a desire to influence the wider curriculum by disseminating the creative aspects of arts teaching and learning, it would appear that shortage of time is part of the motivation for moving in the direction of creativity as opposed to separate art form teaching. Both HEIs and external change agencies are faced with difficult decisions concerning the use of time, and whatever the financial resources that may become available through specific change initiatives, time for STAR staff, individual HEI tutors and students is not an expandable resource.

It's actually making sure it's manageable as a project run by a small number of staff. I think it's about being realistic. We had a mammoth agenda to deal with, with many audiences. So you have to provide information at all those levels. It really needs looking at. Taking smaller projects through is probably a better approach.

(STAR manager)

When students asked for more arts, other staff also offered or suggested the STAR option, but some staff may not have known the full range. STAR promoted a desire for more arts work – we would love to but it's the time constraints. We'll think on it and see if there is any other way even if at the moment we can't do anything about it.

(HEI tutor)

They need twice the time – but every subject would say that.

(STAR tutor)

Part of the solution to the time problem would be the capacity to plan ahead. HEIs are charged with delivering a very full curriculum to students, and absorbing additional 'extras', especially at short notice, presents problems. While STAR quickly learned this lesson, and gave as much notice of the timing of its modules as possible, the problem of longer-term, consistent planning remains.

What is the long term viability of something like WEAZ? If it's to become a secure part of our course, in course material, in validated modules, it has to be sustainable. We can't say ok for next year only – we have to know we can deliver over a period. A 'toe in the water day' of creativity in teaching we can do as a one-off, but if it were to go into the course we would need to know we could deliver on a continuous basis.

(HEI tutor)

But this view is based on the notion that it is the function of STAR to go on delivering modules for the HEIs. The real prize would be for the HEIs to take on that responsibility themselves and provide more arts (or creativity) experiences themselves, based partly on what they have learned from the STAR experience. This may not have been the philosophy either from STAR or the HEIs; STAR may have been perceived (and conducted itself) as a provider of arts training opportunities rather than a catalyst to promote more arts training experiences. Given the tendency of short term initiative funders to set performance targets based on measurable outcomes rather than credibly potential impacts on future practice, this is hardly surprising.

Whether or not the content or pedagogical approaches of the STAR modules could ever become part of the ITT curriculum itself, the STAR project appears to have stimulated and contributed to the debate about the place of the arts in ITT. HEI managers expressed their views on what was needed or possible if the arts were to be better served.

One referred to a possible development whereby an HEI embarking on an innovative development in its curriculum might then be exempted from the inspection regime for a period of time.

We could develop an arts PGCE and have three years to get it right.

(HEI manager)

While this might not directly create more time to carry out the work, a reduction of the pressure to respond to inspection would release some time for staff to spend on course development.

Another HEI manager was instantly and forcefully clear about the primary need in terms of developing the arts in ITT.

Having non-generalist subject-based routes into teaching. Primary teachers have to have a subject background if you are going to significantly impact on the curriculum. That applies to all subjects. I think that is the worry. Once you create generalists you turn primary teaching into very much a technical business. I think people are nurtured by their subjects. The nature of 'subject' has changed, but unless you give time for people to study a subject in depth post A level, you have a job keeping them inspired and committed.

(HEI manager)

Only one of the three participating HEIs offered an arts specialist course for primary teacher trainees, and it may well be that the STAR project has stimulated interest in others to do likewise.

One HEI manager indicated the specific aspect of STAR's work that had most informed future planning and development within the HEI, but also welcomed the potential of further projects that could enrich HEI provision.

We need to address students' own lack of confidence, and that's where I think the modules from STAR were terrific because I think they do instil confidence. I'd like us to offer the appropriate components so they do increase their confidence to teach the arts. I'd say we

also need to move quickly to get results from the next stage of the Gulbenkian Project, HEARTS [Higher Education, the Arts and Schools]. I think that's going to be quite significant.

(HEI manager)

This statement illustrates the two forms of impact of an intervention seeking to bring about change. This manager expressed the desire to use the STAR project as a model that could influence curriculum change within the HEI, the most highly prized outcome of a change intervention. She also looked forward to the next intervention, presumably not only because it will deliver the next round of new curriculum experiences for ITT students, but also because it will provide the next stimulus for change within the HEIs. Thus, the delivery of services for the institution is important because it offers the hope that it might affect change within that institution rather than for its own ends as an experience for a limited number of students.

4.5 Conclusions

The delivery of new and innovative curriculum models, whether within or as an extension to the existing curriculum, will not necessarily bring about change within that curriculum. To effect changes requires other conditions to be met.

Researchers identified a number of questions that a change agency might usefully ask of itself when seeking to work with larger institutions.

- Where fixed-term projects are subject to deadlines for the delivery of outcomes, is sufficient time allocated for planning with partners that are larger institutions?
- Are the objectives of an agency seeking to bring about institutional change realistic within the context of a limited time frame?
- Has there been sufficient research and recognition of the practices already in place in the institutions before activity is undertaken?

- Where more than one institution is involved, is there sufficient recognition that each may be operating with different needs and aspirations?
- Where the aim is institutional change, what strategies can be devised that allow the institutions to feel ownership of the proposed changes?
- Are the steps towards realizing a grand vision realistic for all parties concerned?
- Where the change is to be brought about through the actions of the change agency, what strategies are in place to ensure that the actions taken are evaluated by the institution that is being encouraged to change?
- For change agencies with a fixed-term life expectancy, is there a balance between the strategies to deliver services and outcomes quickly and strategies that address the potential to bring about institutional change?
- Is the communication system, recognising the need for multi-level communications from the outset, robust and agreed with the institutions?

Some of these questions came to be addressed and answered during the course of the project, but the obstacles raised by not addressing some of them at the start proved to be a major hindrance to fully realising the potential of the project. However, much was achieved, and much was learned that could inform future initiatives involving change agencies and HEIs providing ITT with an arts element.

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