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Artmaking in school and its Impact on student Wellbeing

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Abstract

Research into the wellbeing of young Australians has found that many students are struggling with their mental health. This can have a negative impact on their quality of life. The Australian government has acknowledged this issue and has provided funding through the BeYou program to develop wellbeing resources that can be used in schools.

The wellbeing programs that utilise these resources can be both proactive and reactive in nature. As students spend a significant amount of their school time within their various classes, attention has turned to how various school subjects can impact student wellbeing. One such subject is Visual Arts, and this paper reports on a study that explored the impact that studying Visual Arts at school has on students' wellbeing.

Based on the qualitative paradigm, the study explored the relationship between Visual Art and student wellbeing using a combination of case study and micro-ethnography methodologies. It found that involvement in Visual Art had a positive impact on the students' mental health and overall wellbeing. Through the semi-structured interviews, the students discussed multiple ways artmaking has helped them counteract negative aspects of their lives. The study's findings aligned with past wellbeing research in finding that Art was able to provide students with positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, accomplishments, meaning, grit, management strategies and a connection to nature. At a time

when students are struggling with low levels of wellbeing, it would seem that Visual Arts is one subject that could play a role in improving the wellbeing of students in schools.

Introduction

The wellbeing of young people is currently a concern in Australia. Almost half (45%) of the Australian population is likely to experience a mental health condition within their lifetime (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018). The latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows nearly 40% of young Australians aged 16 to 24 experienced a mental health disorder in the previous year, up from 26% in 2007 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The 2023 State of the Nation Report found that 35% of secondary school students report high levels of anxiety, depression, or both and 50% of students reported high levels of disengagement and falling levels of hope, across all ages and genders (Kohler and Reece, 2023). Young Australians are concerned about this issue, and they have identified mental health as one of the top issues facing young Australians (McHale et al., 2024).

Secondary students have significantly lower levels of wellbeing compared to primary students, and anxiety is a greater issue with female students than male students (Tommasi et al., 2022). What is most alarming is that youth suffering from mental health issues are less likely to seek help than any other age group (Slade et al., 2009).

The Australian government has looked towards schools to help students struggling with their wellbeing (Scott & Kearney, 2018). Government supported initiatives such as BeYou and Mindmatters received funding to provide both independent and public schools with programs and

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resources to improve students' mental health and overall wellbeing (Scott & Kearney, 2018). Schools are responding, and the NAB Education Insights Special Report 2023 found that students reported that 66% of the schools surveyed had wellbeing programs in place (National Australia Bank, 2023).

The most effective school-based wellbeing programs have adopted a whole of school approach to help positively influence student wellbeing based on multiple inputs (Mindmatters, 2018; Norrish, 2015). As students spend a significant amount of time in class for each key learning area, it is important to consider how this time in class, in their various subjects, could positively impact their wellbeing.

Involvement in the Arts has been shown to influence a person's wellbeing. Art therapy has been used to improve mood, cognition and behaviour of dementia patients in nursing homes (Rusted et al., 2006) and positively influence subjective wellbeing (Zhang & Zhao, 2024; Reynolds, 2010). Involvement in the Arts has also been found to positively impact college student anxiety (Sandmire et al., 2015) and improves individual's wellbeing through relieving negative aspects like stress, anxiety and mood (Staricoff, 2006; Rusted et al., 2006; Potash et al., 2014). It appears that simply looking at art can improve your wellbeing (Cotter et al., 2022, 2023; Nanda et al., 2011). Nature art appeared to have a positive effect on children's wellbeing and improved their blood pressure and respiratory rates (Eisen et al., 2008). When the children were provided with activities such as artmaking, people benefitted not only from the activity itself but from the social support associated with the activity (Eisen, et al., 2008).

The artmaking process can encourage the artist to endeavour on a journey of self-development and can benefit them through a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment, providing an escape from "everyday routine and anxiety" (Selk, 2016, p. 83) and promotes mental health by restoring "a sense of balance and perspective" (Selk, 2016, p. 79). Artmaking also enhances levels of satisfaction, positive emotions, social connections and provides opportunities to learn and develop (Reynolds, 2010).

Not all studies have found a positive link between art and wellbeing. Artmaking is "often filled with self-doubt" and can be a long process (Grushka, 2009, p. 248), which could be viewed as a battle between your fears and "your own work" (Bayles & Orland, 2001, p. 1). Self-doubt and low confidence can impact students perceptions of their abilities and possibly further participation in Art (Miraglia, 2008).

Art has also been found to have a positive effect in school settings. Artmaking can help students with self-regulation, engagement, participation in school and improve levels of wellbeing (Zhang & Yan, 2025; Kindekens et al., 2013) and can significantly decrease students' anxiety (Sandmire et al., 2015).

The research literature supports the importance of art in today's society and educational institutions. Research has highlighted the impact of art through its ability to impart valuable skills and improve people's wellbeing. These studies provide strong evidence that art can benefit an individual's wellbeing in a variety of settings.

Methodology

This research inquiry was designed around a bricolage (Rogers, 2012) of methodologies that utilised both case study and micro-ethnography methodologies to provide a multi-perspectival approach to uncovering the meaning behind people's everyday life experiences with visual arts (Given, 2008). The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between studying Visual Arts at school and student wellbeing by focusing on the experiences of two students. In this way, the study aimed to create a descriptive account of the participants' experiences of a phenomenon (Mills et al., 2010) within a social setting (Given, 2008). By collectively using semi-structured interviews, a reflective journal and the tools of grounded theory, which included various types of coding and member checking, the research inquiry gained a holistic and accurate interpretation of the participants' accounts (Charmaz, 2014). These methods combined to ensure the research inquiry accurately identified what occurred within the participant's experiences with visual arts, and helped transition their tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014).

Findings

Art and Wellbeing

Through the interview process, the students were asked about their wellbeing and artmaking journey, and if they believed their artmaking had any effect on their wellbeing and their quality of life. Unfortunately, both students in this study have experienced anxiety and depression in childhood and throughout high school. Student B was able to overcome these mental disorders in his senior years at the school, however, Student A still struggles with these conditions and finds it can be a constant battle throughout her day.

During the interviews, Student A kept referring to her anxiety and depression as negative

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headspaces. She described these headspaces as either anxiety headspaces, where she felt panicked and worried, or depression headspaces which made her feel destructive and upset. When asked what triggers her anxiety and depression, Student A responded by saying she was not 100% sure and had been trying to figure out what her trigger was. Sometimes she finds she can be anxious for seemingly no reason. Student A, however, did identify that social conflicts, arguments, or general social situations can trigger her anxiety and/or depression.

“Sometimes when you feel anxious, there’s too much going on and your brain’s spinning and your thoughts are all over the place”. (Student B Interview)

Student B discussed that he struggled with anxiety and depression during his days in high school. He believes that his anxiety and depression came on around high school because there were a lot of changes in his environment and the people around him. At school, he was bullied and isolated, which resulted in the development of his anxiety.

However, both students were able to find a way to help manage and reduce these mental disorders through art. Past studies that explored the concept of art impacting wellbeing, indicate that art has an ability to help people improve their emotions, health and overall wellbeing (Ross et al., 2006; Sandmire et al., 2015). Both the students in this study discovered a similar effect on their anxiety and depression. When feeling anxious or depressed, the students will use art to help bring them into a positive space and either distract them from their negative thoughts or help release them.

Student A found a way to help her disorders through art and the comfort it provides. She uses art to relax and to manage her stress. When using it to relax, she does it for fun or to explore a new idea. When using it to manage her stress, art will be used as a distraction from her negative headspaces. For instance, when she is feeling anxious, she seeks to do something productive to boost her mood and uses art as that productive activity to counteract her anxiety. In class, if she feels anxious or stressed, she will begin to doodle on the edges of her paper. Usually, when combating her anxiety, her drawings will be more detailed, as they require more focus and attention and, in this way, they take her mind off the negativity and onto something that is productive, that gives her a sense of achievement. Using art as a distraction does not make her feel instantly better, but does help bring her back to a neutral emotional state. In particular, art enabled her to engage to a point where she experienced flow. This enabled her art to be a great

distraction as she could place all her focus and observational skills on her artmaking and cancel out her surroundings. Art has now become her favourite distraction and has become a habit and an instinctive response to distracting herself from negativity.

Student B also found that art was a great escape from negativity. He discussed how he could use art as an escape from negative situations. In particular, when he felt anxious or depressed, he would use art as an immediate response to help control or release the negativity. Sometimes, he would even use art before anxiety or depression issues occurred. Student B found that art was also a great way to meditate and reflect on his negative emotions. He could learn about his emotional tendencies and individual stresses by exploring them through visuals. This process was also quite calming for him, and he felt it helped release a lot of tension. His art became a way to release his emotions and relax by channelling the positive emotions brought on by art.

Why this Result?

But why does involvement in art have these outcomes for these students? It may be that by being involved in art making at school, students are immersed in an environment in which they experience the elements of Seligman’s (2011) PERMA model that enables them to flourish. We will now consider how student involvement in art at school may help students to experience each of these elements.

Emotions and Art

Positive emotion is also the first element in Martin Seligman’s (2011) PERMA model. Throughout the interviews, both students identified a wide variety of positive and negative emotions they have experienced when immersed in their artmaking. Through past studies, we know that art can affect a person emotionally and can help increase people’s positive emotions (Reynolds, 2010; Walsh, Martin & Schmidt, 2004). The students in this study concluded that art did help them enhance their positive emotions and learnt that they could use art to bring them into a positive headspace.

Student A identified that through art she experienced a range of positive emotions that made her feel happy, enthusiastic, determined, proud, accomplished, appreciated and passionate. Often, she can feel enthusiastic about her art, and when she is about to work on an artwork, she will feel a sense of anticipation and excitement. She also has a strong sense of determination and can develop a drive to create and express her ideas.

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Painting or drawing works that involve great detail or realism make her feel happy and proud of what she has achieved.

Student B also experienced similar positive emotions. He identified that he could feel happy, enthusiastic, accomplished, appreciated, satisfied, assured, encouraged, relieved, courageous and loved. Like Student A, he finds joy in art and gets excited and is enthusiastic to be involved in artmaking. He found that doing art provides him with a sense of comfort and relief. It also makes him feel assured in who he is and provides him with courage and meaning. He believes it also gives him a large sense of satisfaction and a sense of achievement, especially after completing an artwork he is proud of and which the audience understands.

Even though art has provided both students with positive emotions and experiences, it has also been accompanied by some negative ones. Student A identified that during artmaking, she can feel upset, annoyed, embarrassed and fearful. If she does not get a great result, she can experience an upset feeling like she, or her skills, have let herself down. If her artmaking ends with a bad result, she usually gets embarrassed and self-conscious, which makes her hide it away. However, she claims that the negative emotions are only a small part of artmaking, and generally, she experiences positive emotions during the artmaking process.

In a similar way, Student B has also experienced some negative emotions through his art journey. He identified emotions like disappointment, stress, feeling jittery and unsure, judged and hurt. When participating in the artmaking process, sometimes he can find it stressful, and he can be unsure about an artwork. Sometimes he feels that he lets himself down and gets disappointed with the result of the artwork. Furthermore, he can also fear the judgment of others and be hurt by what they might say about him or his artwork.

We have known for many years that many artists can feel self-conscious, fear making mistakes and fear the judgment of others (Bayles & Orland, 2001). Their interest in art and an ability to persevere against internal and external judgement, is referred to as grit. Angela Duckworth (2016) defines grit as being comprised of two components, passion and perseverance. The students demonstrated this through their ability to work towards and complete goals, and also showed determination when faced with challenges.

Both of these students have experienced these emotions; however, they believe there is so much more positive emotion in art that they wish to continue art throughout their lifetime. They

identified feeling happy, enthusiastic, determined, proud, appreciated, accomplished, satisfied, relieved, courageous, love and passion. These findings correlate with Reynolds' (2010) study uncovered that his participants experienced an enhancement of positive emotions through their artmaking. Zimmermann and Mangelsdorf (2020) also found that their participants had an increase in positive emotions when participating in artmaking activities. Both students in this study appear to recognise that involvement in art enables them to experience positive emotions, and this positively impacts their wellbeing (Seligman, 2011).

Engagement and Art

The second element of Seligman's PERMA model is engagement, which involves engaging in a meaningful activity that provides you with a sense of enjoyment and flow (Seligman, 2011). Li and Xue (2023) discussed the connection between engagement and wellbeing and found that engagement in an activity can result in higher levels of wellbeing and better academic performance for students. During the interviews, the students discussed feeling a positive sense of engagement when participating in artmaking. Reynolds (2010) found that female participants reported having an enriched mental life and finding connection through engaging in artmaking. Similarly, it was Student A who discussed engaging in artmaking to the point where she feels a sense of flow. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) refers to flow as fully engaging in a meaningful activity that challenges a person's skills. The students used artmaking to experience flow and move themselves into a positive space. Selk (2016) discussed the idea that art can enable an individual to escape from everyday life and anxiety. Past studies also had similar results. Ross, Hollen and Fitzgerald (2006) found that artmaking improved their participants' levels of depression. While Sandmire, Rankin, Gorham, Eggleston, French, Lodge, and Grimm (2015) found that artmaking activities also improved the anxiety of college students around the exam period. It would seem that immersing oneself in an engaging activity can positively impact wellbeing.

Interestingly, the students had different viewpoints on where to immerse themselves in art. Student B wanted a place that gave a sense of community, while Student A wanted a comfortable and familiar space for relaxation. Having a sense of belonging and connectedness to others is important and has a positive effect on students' learning and mental health (Littlefield et al., 2017). Throughout the interviews, Student B discussed the concept of belonging and how he went on a journey to discover

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it. Due to the lack of this sense of belonging in his past, he appears to be continuously searching for positive community environments. His passion for art was able to help him find communities where he could discover a sense of belonging. It also allowed him to communicate with others through his own visual language. He often uses his art to try and promote belonging and community by drawing people together. He wants the audience to find meaning and connect with each other.

“Also, I found there’s a universal feeling of belonging in your art when you find people with similar feelings”.
(Student B Interview)

Being in an art class also allowed him to meet other artistic people who shared his passion. Together with other art students, he was able to appreciate art and share their ideas. When sharing his abilities and artworks with others, he feels ecstatic. He has an urge to help others and wants to share his art skills and knowledge. It makes him happy when others seek his help with their own artmaking. He believes people can detach themselves from art when they cannot share with other artists. He believes that art can help our understanding of each other, and that is why he loves the idea of having social art groups or spaces in schools and in the wider community.

In contrast to Student B, Student A appears to gravitate towards environments that provide her with a sense of comfort. As she has experienced negative social interaction in the past, she preferred areas of solitude or spaces that do not demand a high amount of social interaction. This can also be seen in her artistic practice as she prefers areas that are familiar and comfortable. During school, she discovered a love for realism and being able to draw her subject matter in realistic detail. To create her realistic artworks, she will mostly use pencils or graphite, but has also branched out into watercolours and acrylic paint. During school, she discovers surrealism, which distorts the real and experimented with a surrealism styled artwork of an apple, which was cracked like an egg with yolk spilling out. She believes that without art classes that encouraged experimentation and helped guide students, she would not have been able to try new styles. However, even with exposure to so many different art styles, she keeps coming back to realism.

Her subject matter also provided a sense of familiarity and comfort. At the beginning of her art journey, she really enjoyed drawing animals. She especially loved drawing horses and was stuck in a period where she only drew horses. Another subject matter she regularly explores is eyes, and she became strict about her capability to draw them

realistically. In high school, she experimented with drawing the human form but struggled with drawing hands. She liked experimenting and trying new things, but always came back to her familiar subject matter. These subject matters were something she could easily draw on the spot and get into whenever she needed to.

Relationships and Art

Martin Seligman (2011) reported that healthy relationships make a key contribution to our wellbeing and can enhance our wellbeing. During the interviews, both students identified that they had experienced negative relationships that had impacted their wellbeing. Both students reported that through art, they were able to meet like-minded people and form positive relationships. Throughout Student A’s art journey, she was able to share and create art with a multitude of other people. She enjoys being in class with other art students and being able to see their different creative ideas. She also feels inspired by her enthusiastic art teachers who encourage her to be creative and to experiment with her artmaking. Sometimes, after finishing an artwork at school or at home, she will give it away as a present, which she believes people appreciate and enjoy. Her mum sometimes displays them in their home and even takes pictures to show her work colleagues and friends. This makes her feel that her art is appreciated, but she also feels that her mum goes overboard. However, if an artwork does not work out, she will only show one person, who is her best friend. Often, after showing her mum, she tucks her artworks away or puts them up on social media. She uses an Instagram account to upload her artwork for the public to see. Through this process, she was able to make connections with like-minded artists who also use Instagram to showcase their artworks. She also gains a lot of positive feedback from others who see her work on social media.

During the interviews, Student B stated that he has a great family environment and believes it is an important factor in his life. His family were the ones to encourage him to explore his interest in art and helped him feel supported throughout his art experience. He often feels joy when his family show appreciation for his artworks. Another group of people who have supported him throughout his art journey have been his art teachers. They have also encouraged him to explore his passion for art and have encouraged him to challenge himself. He believes they have all helped to provide him with direction and provide him with mentor figures. Being in an art class has also enabled him to share his passion with other students and bond with other creative minds.

“It makes him happy when others seek his help with their own artmaking.”

Meaning and Art

People crave meaning and purpose in their lives. Martin Seligman believes that to have a meaningful life, an individual must feel a sense of belonging to, and serve something greater than their selves (Seligman, 2011). Student B reported that he originally struggled with his identity and meaning in life. On his journey to forming his identity, he found that art was able to aid in his discovery. Through his artmaking, he was able to explore concepts that had meaning to him by using himself as subject matter. Artmaking also exposed him to an art community, which provided him with a sense of belonging. He experienced meaning by sharing his art and his art skills with other art students. In the interviews, he discussed the idea of art being a possible career choice or lifelong hobby in his future. He would love to generate an income from his passion and make meaningful commissions for others. Student A also reported that she found meaning through her artmaking and believes it is a big part of her life. Student A was able to feel a sense of appreciation through sharing her art with friends and family, and also discovered liked minded artists in her art class and through social media. She would like to continue art throughout her future and has already begun taking the steps towards a meaningful career as an artist. Both students have used art to find meaning and develop a sense of purpose in the relatively early stages of their lives.

Accomplishment and Art

Artmaking is one activity that can help provide an individual with a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction (Selk, 2016). Seligman (2011) believes that accomplishment is a key element for wellbeing, and it is “often pursued for its own sake” (p.18). He found that people still seek accomplishment even when it holds no meaning, no positive emotions and no positive relationships. Student A mentioned she felt a similar way in her interviews. She found that after completing a work she felt proud and pleased with a sense of achievement. Even if the artwork was not a success, she still felt a sense of completion. Student B experienced a real sense of satisfaction on completion of a piece of art. The students also reported feeling a sense of accomplishment after learning a new artistic skill. Reynolds (2010) found that artmaking enhanced his participants’ levels of satisfaction and provided them with opportunities to learn and develop. It would seem that artmaking is a versatile activity that provides students with a sense of accomplishment when completing an artwork, even when the end product of the artmaking is different

than initially expected. It also provides a multitude of learning opportunities for individuals to explore, which creates opportunities for students to gain a sense of accomplishment.

Overall, Artmaking helped both students to experience positive emotions, high levels of engagement, good relationships, meaning and helped them to experience accomplishment.

Conclusion

What has the study found?

This study utilised both case study and micro-ethnography methodologies to explore whether artmaking could impact the wellbeing of students in schools. While the authors are cautious about extrapolating results that are based on the experiences of two students, the data from the study does support the notion that artmaking can positively impact student wellbeing. Artmaking was found to be a meaningful activity for the students, and this enabled them to experience a range of positive and negative emotions. They were passionate in their artmaking, and this enabled them to continue with their artwork and push through and achieve a sense of accomplishment. Artmaking was also found to be a great management strategy to either escape or move past stress, anxiety or depression. Artmaking also helped students to form connections to others and build positive relationships, which provided them with a sense of belonging and identity. It was also able to connect them to elements of our world, such as nature and spirituality. Lastly, it gave them a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. In this way, they feel that they can contribute to the world through their artmaking, which has provided them with a pathway to a successful future.

Recommendation for Schools

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed for schools to consider:

1. Schools should measure the wellbeing of students

Schools need to collect and use qualitative and quantitative evidence to inform and guide school planning for the wellbeing of students (CESE, 2025). Both students in this study struggled with their wellbeing, and the school was not always aware of their level of wellbeing. Research has shown whole-school wellbeing interventions can improve levels of student wellbeing and academic performance (Edwards et al., 2024); however, results from different programs vary. Good data is required to give feedback to allow programs to be modified and adjusted so that

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they are giving students and schools maximum benefit.

2. Provide quality subjects for students

Gore, Lloyd, Smith, Bowe, Ellis and Lubans (2017) expressed the need for quality in school subject areas, as this will help students experience higher levels of engagement, accomplishment and academic performance. This study has found that students benefit from engagement in a quality subject at school, and this engagement helps to strengthen their wellbeing. From this study, we know that the Visual Arts can provide students with a sense of engagement and accomplishment, which are key factors for achieving a high sense of wellbeing. In a similar way, other school subjects could offer experiences that can enhance their wellbeing (Konstantinidis, 2024). Other subjects may enable students with different intelligences to engage and find their passion (Robinson & Aronica, 2009). Students do not experience this impact on their wellbeing as a matter of course, but rather, it occurs as a result of intentional activity by schools and school teachers (Bundick et al., 2014). In this study, students reported that they enjoyed their subjects in school, particularly Visual Arts, and both expressed their gratitude for having passionate teachers.

3. Make good strategic use of art education

Artmaking positively impacted the wellbeing of the participants in this study. For those students who are 'picture smart' (Gardner, 1983), involvement in art and artmaking could significantly enhance their wellbeing. As schools are commissioned to holistically develop their students (White, 1903), art education could make a significant contribution to the lives of some students and should not be taken for granted.

4. Promote art as an extra curriculum activity

Australian schools have always had a passion for sport and performing arts, and many schools provide extra curriculum activities for students in the areas of sport and music (Chesters & Smith, 2015). But what about the students with multiple intelligences who have interests outside of these areas? Schools should be looking to provide a breadth of extra curriculum activities to engage as many students as possible in an activity they are passionate about. This study explored

how artmaking as an activity has a positive effect on students' wellbeing and found it had positive impacts on their sense of happiness, relationships and meaning. As an outcome of this study, Schools could look to incorporate art as both a curricular and extra curriculum activity for students.

During the interviews for this study, students discussed how they enjoyed having art spaces made available to them to explore their passion for art during school. Often, their teachers would allow the students to come in and use the space during their free time. Student A, in particular, found this helpful when she felt there was nowhere to go at lunch or was having trouble with other students. Having the art rooms available would allow her to go to a space where she felt comfortable and could utilise her passion for art to increase her wellbeing. This was not advertised as an art club or extra curriculum activity by the school, just something the art teachers were providing for the students. If this availability were more intentional, more students could benefit. Therefore, schools should consider the idea of providing room availability and extra curriculum activities such as art clubs, for students who have other interests in art and artmaking.

5. Increase student connectedness through art

Student B expressed that he liked having art spaces available due to the way they can enhance the art community. He thought art clubs in schools were a great idea, as people could come in and share their skills and help each other develop in a shared passion. In this way, students formed an art community with an enhanced sense of belonging. The level of school connectedness that students experience at school is important, as connectedness directly influences student wellbeing (Riekie, 2016). As previously reported, having a sense of belonging and connectedness in school can engage students in learning and enhance their mental health (Littlefield et al., 2017). Art classes, clubs and events are great for bringing like-minded or similar people together to participate in a shared interest or activity. This can provide students with opportunities to build positive relationships and gain a sense of belonging. As mentioned above, Student B believes that art can be a great social activity that can help for a sense of community. If other students also experienced this, schools may see increased engagement at school,

“connectedness directly influences student wellbeing”

higher levels of academic achievement, school completion, reductions in anti-social or disruptive behaviours, and lower rates of health-risk behaviour (Wang & Fredricks, 2014).

6. Students may need help to develop management strategies

As many students in schools today report that they have experienced anxiety and other factors affecting their wellbeing, it is important that schools teach students how to manage and possibly overcome these issues. Walsh (2011) believes it is important for a person's wellbeing that they have management strategies for stress and relaxation. This study found that art was being used as a management tool to help the students manage and escape from their negativity. Student A was able to use art as an effective management strategy, while Student B was also able to use art to explore his obstacles and surpass them. Therefore, schools could help students utilise artmaking or other activities of interest as management strategies for when they are experiencing negativity in their lives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study's findings suggest that artmaking can be used in schools and in general life to positively affect a person's wellbeing as it seems to deliver the elements of Seligman's PERMA model for some students. Artmaking was found to have many positive factors that helped the participants of the study to achieve a higher sense of wellbeing. In particular, the subject of Visual Arts in schools may provide some students with opportunities and resources to help improve their wellbeing. At a time when many students are struggling with low levels of wellbeing, it would seem that Visual Arts is one subject that could play a role in improving the wellbeing of some students in schools in Australia. **TEACH**

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