

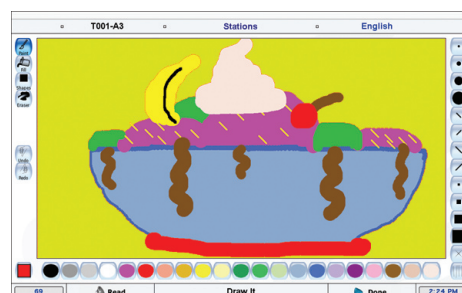
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Overview: The visual arts is one of the most popular subject areas in the New Zealand curriculum, but performance levels on tasks do not always match student enthusiasm. Tasks involving art-making produced fairly consistently low scores at year 4, with very few scores seen in the “very good” to “excellent” range on overall ratings, but there was a substantial increase in performance from year 4 to year 8. The skills in using the medium involved in the task (e.g. working with clay) and capturing finer detail tended to receive the lowest scores, whereas expressiveness and composition received higher scores. In comparing performance on art-making tasks to the 2003 administration, there is little change in the scores at year 4, and a small net improvement at year 8.



Tasks requiring a response and explanation of art presented a somewhat more complicated picture. Students fared well on tasks that called for personal reactions and opinions, with year 4 students often doing nearly as well as year 8 students. However, on tasks calling for analysis and explanation of works of art, year 4 students struggled, but solid growth was seen from year 4 to year 8. In comparing art-responding tasks to the 2003 administration, very slight gains are seen at both year 4 and year 8.

Performance in both art-making and responding to art showed strong differences by ethnic group and by socio-economic status. Pakeha students scored somewhat more highly than Māori students at both year 4 and year 8, with art-responding tasks generally showing a bigger difference than art-making tasks. The difference between Pakeha students and Pasifika students was substantial (favouring Pakeha students), especially at year 4, and especially on art-responding tasks.

Students were surveyed as part of the monitoring, and their responses to the survey provide an interesting contrast to their performance on the tasks. Year 4 students love the visual arts, do “heaps” of it at school, and would like to do more. They believe that they are quite good at art and want to learn more as they grow up. They report that they are doing more art and more different kinds of art than did comparable samples in the 2003 or 1999 assessments. Year 8 students are slightly less enthusiastic, but still quite positive about art. Pasifika students, who have the lowest levels of performance on the tasks, are the most positive about art. Thus, there is a bit of a “disconnect” between students liking the subject area and their performance.



THE NEMP APPROACH TO NATIONAL MONITORING

New Zealand’s National Education Monitoring Project commenced in 1993, with the task of assessing and reporting on the achievement of New Zealand primary school children in all areas of the school curriculum. Children are assessed at two class levels: year 4 (halfway through primary education) and year 8 (at the end of primary education). Different curriculum areas and skills are assessed each year, over a four-year cycle. The main goal of national monitoring is to provide detailed information about what children know, think and can do, so that patterns of performance can be recognised, successes celebrated, and desirable changes to educational practices and resources identified and implemented.

Each year, random samples of children are selected nationally, then assessed in their own schools by teachers specially seconded and trained for this work. Task instructions are given orally by teachers, through video presentations, on laptop computers, or in writing. Many of the assessment tasks involve the children in the use of equipment and materials. Their responses are presented orally, by demonstration, in writing, in computer files, or through other physical products. Many of the responses are recorded on videotape for subsequent analysis.



The use of many tasks with both year 4 and year 8 students allows comparisons of the performance of year 4 and 8 students in 2007. Because some tasks have been used twice, in 2003 and again in 2007, trends in performance across the four-year period can also be analysed and reported.



In 2007, the first year of the fourth cycle of national monitoring, three areas were assessed: science, visual arts, and the use of graphs, tables and maps. This report presents details and results of the assessments of students’ knowledge, skills and ideas in the visual arts. It is important to note that, for the purposes of this report, “art” is understood to be visual art.

ASSESSING THE VISUAL ARTS

Visual Arts is that part of the curriculum which offers opportunities for developing abilities of personal and social expression through a range of media, forms and techniques. Education in the visual arts is also concerned with developing an appreciation and understanding of the art of others, the ways artworks are looked at, thought about, used and valued. A framework for visual arts education and its assessment is presented in **Chapter 2**. This framework lists important approaches, skills and attitudes appropriate to the two main content strands of making art and responding to art.



RESPONDING TO ART

Chapter 4 examines achievement relating to responding to art. The 14 tasks reported in this chapter involved students in responding to a variety of tasks, including looking at photographic reproductions of works of art, watching videos of artists talking about their craft, and responses to students' personal favourite works of art.



The ability to respond to and discuss art varies greatly among New Zealand school children. At both year 4 and year 8, the whole spectrum of marks is well represented in the tables of results. Although year 8 students generally received higher marks than year 4 students, an interesting pattern emerged with regard to the particular tasks involved. Where tasks call for opinion and affective response to art, the scores for year 4 and year 8 students are quite similar. Where tasks call for explanations and understandings, year 8 students perform substantially better.

Six tasks in the administration had been held back from complete publication in 2003 to be re-administered in 2007. At year 4, three tasks showed slight improvement over 2003, and three tasks were fairly constant over the time period. The gains over 2003 are small, and no particular pattern of gains by task type emerges. At year 8, three tasks show a slight gain over 2003, two show a slight decline and one shows no change.



MAKING ART

Chapter 3 examines achievement relating to making art. Seven of the 21 art assessment tasks involved students making artworks. The art-making tasks included pencil drawing, pastels, painting, computer-based drawing and clay modelling. Students drew from live and inanimate models, as well as using poetry and video for inspiration.

Students' art-making efforts produced a wide variety of results. Students at year 4 produced works that received global ratings of fair, poor and very poor about 75% to 90% of the time. Year 4 students rarely received global ratings of very good or excellent. Year 8 students fared somewhat better,

receiving marks of very good or excellent 10% to 20% of the time, and marks of fair, poor or very poor about 50% to 70% of the time. Students at both years tended to receive higher marks in terms of composition and expressiveness, and lower marks in details and use of the medium. Furthermore, students typically performed better on art-making tasks when they could look at their efforts and then modify them, such as clay modelling and computer drawing, and somewhat less well on tasks where making changes was more difficult, such as drawing (without a rubber) and pastels.

Three trend tasks were administered to year 4 and year 8 students in both the 2003 and 2007 assessments. At year 4, there is very little difference between the 2003 and 2007 assessments. At year 8, some differences can be seen. Students in 2007 showed improvement over the 2003 cohort on the pastel drawing and the clay modelling, whereas the 2003 cohort received higher marks in the pencil-drawing task. In each of these tasks, the differences were only modest.



ART SURVEY

Chapter 5 presents the results of the visual arts survey, which sought information from students about their curriculum preferences, their engagement in visual arts activities, and their perceptions of their achievement and potential in the visual arts.

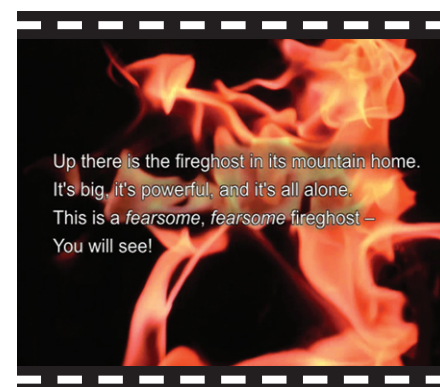
Visual art remains one of the most popular subjects in New Zealand schools, particularly at year 4. Children report enjoying art, wanting to do more of it at school, having positive self-images with regard to their artistic ability and doing a lot of art on their own at home. At year 4, students report engaging in a wide variety of art activities in school to a greater degree than in 2003 or 1999; otherwise, responses are quite similar to previous surveys. At year 8, a gradual decline in enthusiasm and perception is seen on a number of questions compared to previous years, although the absolute levels are still quite high.

When children were asked to select their three favourite school subjects, visual arts was the second most popular choice for year 4 students (behind physical education) and third most popular for year 8 students (behind physical education and technology). It should be noted that music, dance and drama also received moderate to strong ratings at both years.

Children were asked how often they engage in various aspects of art-making in school (painting, drawing, working with clay, collage, etc.) In year 8, there appears to be little change from prior administrations. At year 4, we see an increase in painting, drawing and collage, and a decrease in group activities. For working with clay and printmaking, more students than in previous samples say they are doing “heaps” of it, but more students are also saying they “never” do it. At year 8, however, there is a slight

decline from the previous two surveys in terms of liking art in school, wanting to do more art, thinking one is good at art, etc.

It should also be noted that Pasifika and Māori students tend to give more positive responses to a variety of questions on the survey. Their enthusiasm for art does not align with their scores on the tasks, particularly in the area of responding to art.

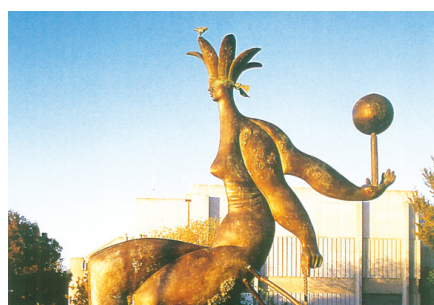


PERFORMANCE OF SUBGROUPS

Chapter 6 reports the results of analyses that compared the performance of different demographic subgroups. Five of the subgroups were school-level groupings and the remaining three were individual-level groupings. The school-level groupings of school size, school type (full primary, intermediate, or 7-13), geographic zone and community size were not particularly important in terms of impact on performance. The socio-economic status (SES) of the schools as determined by school decile groupings (high, middle and low), on the other hand, was an important determinant. For year 4 students, there were differences among the three subgroups on 15 of the 21 tasks, including both art-making and art-responding tasks. The basic pattern was the same in almost all instances: students in high decile schools scoring the highest and students in low decile schools scoring the lowest. Students in middle decile schools tended to be slightly closer to high decile schools than low decile schools in performance. For year 8 students, there were differences by

decile on eight of the 21 tasks, with a similar pattern of performance seen at year 4, only not as strong. The eight tasks where differences were found were all in responding to art.

The individual-level groupings looked at gender differences, ethnic differences (Pakeha, Māori, Pasifika) and differences by home language (English as compared to a language other than English). Gender differences were small at both years, with girls outperforming boys by a slight margin overall. Pakeha/Māori comparisons showed a mean effect size of 0.28 at year 4 and 0.17 at year 8. These differences are considered to be in the small to moderate range. Differences were larger for responding to art



than in making art. Pakeha/Pasifika differences were more substantial. The mean effect size at year 4 was 0.51 and at year 8 was 0.32. These are in the moderate to large range. Again, differences were larger in the area of responding to art than in making art.

There were differences by home language at both year 4 and year 8. At year 4, the mean effect size was 0.24, with students speaking English at home having higher scores. At year 8, the mean effect size was 0.15, again with students speaking English at home having higher scores. Differences at both years were slightly stronger for art-responding tasks than for art-making tasks.

Finally, there were a number of differences on the art survey. Girls tended to be more positive about art than boys. Students in low decile schools reported somewhat fewer opportunities to engage in art than students in high decile schools. At the same time, Pasifika and Māori students reported engaging in a variety of art-making activities at school more than Pakeha students.