

Canadian Network for Arts & Learning

Supporting Arts and Learning in a time
of Crisis

Summary of Findings

National Digital Roundtable Discussion Series with
Canada Arts and Learning Community During the
COVID-19 Pandemic.

November – December 2020

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 - Programs and organizations had been forever changed.

Blended learning will be provided due to its positive engagement and accessibility. The importance of building connections and relationships within collective physical spaces, and finally.

Continuing to foster unique experiences and connections (similar gains through a pandemic, online learning).

Part 4: The Utility and Function of the CNAL *Digital Map for Arts & Learning*

Qualitative Data, Third Roundtable Discussion Series

Quantitative Data, Third Roundtable Discussion Series Follow-Up Survey

Part 5: Limitations and Considerations for the Future

Qualitative Data, Common Experiences in the Digital Roundtable Discussion

Quantitative Data, 5-point Rating Scale (Engagement and Remote Learning)

Overall Summary

Project Overview

Purpose and Description

The Canadian Network for Arts & Learning (CNAL) was born out of a shared belief that arts and learning, formally, informally, and non-formally “enrich, empower, and sustain the lives of individuals and communities” (Larry O’Farrell and Tiina Kukkonen, 2017, Transformative Action and Arts Education). CNAL believes that if decision makers understand the intrinsic value of the arts, then arts program will return to the core of Canadian education and be accessible to children, youth, adults and the older age population.

The overarching purpose of the digital roundtable discussion series were to gain a better understanding of participants’ experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and effects of physical distancing on their work in arts and learning. The first series of digital roundtable discussions took place in March-April 2020 and a follow up series occurred in May 2020. At that time, arts and learning stakeholders were adjusting to the early phases of the pandemic characterized by province or city-wide lockdowns, physical-distancing, and learning how to pivot to carry out their work remotely and/or virtually. As an extension of this work, in November-December 2020, CNAL hosted a third series of digital roundtable discussions entitled, “Navigating arts and learning through a global crisis: building digital capacity and connections.” The objective was to understand if and how the experiences of artists, arts educators, and arts organizations had changed after enduring six more months of the pandemic. More specifically, these digital roundtables examined how participants had been carrying out virtual programming over the last six to nine months, the technology used to support their programs, and how these individuals envisioned their work moving forward in a post-pandemic world.

The national digital roundtable discussion series was made possible by the Canada Council for the Arts and the Azereli Foundation.

Methodology

Considering travel restrictions imposed for the health and safety of all Canadians, the roundtables were held digitally on Zoom, a video conferencing platform. Zoom was successfully used in the previous roundtables and brought participants together, virtually, from across the country. The following list shows the dates of these sessions as well as the province/territory invited to participate in each session.

- November 24th, 2020: British Columbia and Yukon
- November 26th, 2020: Saskatchewan and Manitoba
- November 27th, 2020: Greater Toronto Area
- November 30th, 2020: Albert and Northwest Territories
- November 30th, 2020: Ontario
- December 2nd, 2020: Quebec, Atlantic Canada, and Nunavut
- December 3rd, 2020: National Bilingual Discussion

Sessions were recorded and posted online for the public at the following link:

<https://www.eduarts.ca/navigating-arts-and-learning-through-a-global-crisis-building-digital-capacity-and-connections>

Focus Group Questions

During the digital roundtables, a series of questions were asked of the participants. These included:

1. How are you doing, how are you feeling, and what are you doing currently?
2. What platforms are you using? Are there digital tools that you particularly like?

3. How do you see things progressing post-pandemic? Are you going to continue to use digital platforms and products? Are these changes in programming permanent? What are we preparing for?

Follow-Up Survey

A follow-up survey was distributed to all participants to gather qualitative and quantitative data about the experiences engaging in the digital roundtable discussions. The survey included:

Quantitative Component

The quantitative component of the survey asked questions related to:

1. Experiences engaging in digital roundtable discussions.
 - i. Engagement with other arts and learning professionals
 - ii. Remote learning (technology)
2. The CNAL Digital Map of Arts & Learning utility and functionality
 - iii. Presently
 - iv. Future

Respondents were able to provide feedback in the following ways:

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Qualitative Component

To generate more data, we conducted a follow-up survey about 1) improvements to the Digital Map of Arts & Learning, 2) experiences of the digital roundtable discussions, 3) recommendations and next steps for CNAL during the pandemic and in the future. Participants were asked to answer these questions:

1. Do you have any suggestions for improving The Map or Directory of Online Arts Instruction?
2. Please let us know the most interesting or useful part of the roundtable discussion.
3. Do you have any suggestions for how the Canadian Network for Arts & Learning can continue to support you through the pandemic and into the future?

Participants

A total of 169 people participated in the discussions overall. The non-CNAL participants represented a variety of backgrounds (e.g., visual arts, music, theatre) and positions (e.g., teachers, gallery owners, program coordinators, artistic directors, musicians, dance instructors, etc.) across Canada. In this paper, they may be referred to as artist-educators, teaching-artists, arts organizations, or arts stakeholders.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was generated through the responses to the follow-up survey. Responses were calculated and made into pie charts. Qualitative data was collected through the roundtable discussions. The recorded sessions were reviewed and transcribed. Recurring themes and phrases were noted and categorized by question. Notes from the Francophone discussion were completed by the translator for CNAL, Dominique Denis.

Sections of this Report

Part 1: Experiences of Canadian Arts Stakeholders Eight Months into COVID-19 Pandemic

Part 2: Working Digitally

Part 3: Future Considerations for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning

Part 4: The Utility and Function of the CNAL *Digital Map for Arts & Learning*

Part 5: Limitations and Considerations for the Future

Part 1: Experiences of Canadian Arts Stakeholders Eight Months into the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the third series of roundtable discussions in November and December 2020, The Canadian Network for Arts & Learning (CNAL) team's main objective was to understand the experiences of artists, artist educators, and arts organizations who had endured the last eight months of the COVID-19 global pandemic. More specifically, questions related to 1) what these individuals were doing for work eight months into the pandemic, if anything, and 2) how these individuals were doing emotionally readjusting to life in a global pandemic. Precautionary measures such as social distancing and lockdowns forced many participants to pivot to the remote context and offer programming virtually. This was reported by many, but not all. The roundtable discussions with arts stakeholders illuminated both negative and positive outcomes associated with adjusting to life in these unprecedented times. The following discussion will elaborate on these experiences and findings more closely.

Negative Experiences

A profound sense of loss was shared by participants. The following quote emphasizes the disarray caused by the pandemic in the lives of some artists, artist-educators, and arts organizations.

Prior to the pandemic, I work mostly as an art-educator. I do workshops with kids, summer camps, classes, schools. Basically, I would be the super-spreader if I was at work. I typically bring a whole whack load of instruments such as drums. It is loud and interactive, and the kids touch everything and bang. Over the summer, I tried a few Zoom workshops, but it took the soul out of the work and now it's like this plastic being. No schools are biting at workshops either. I have a very small business but when it was busy, I could hire three or four artists to supply teach for me because I also do workshopping through an arts organization in Ottawa. The artist organization is transitioning artists online, but it is taking a very long time. Everyone is frozen, the schools, the teachers, the artists. So, I am turning into recording and using the funds from COVID-relief to focus on my personal music making because I just don't have enough work.

This participant from Quebec explains the vulnerable position he is still experiencing eight months into the pandemic. Although Quebec, much like other provinces across the country, experienced lockdown and reopening over these eight months, precautionary measures associated with keeping children apart at school and sanitization of communal spaces and/or objects have put many artists or artist-educators in limbo. This participant is not alone in their experience or their emotions towards burn-out and mental health concerns. Other Canadian art stakeholders shared comparable stories explaining losses in clientele, funding, programs, staff, sensory experiences, and most of all, community due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, participants also shared their challenges and frustrations with technology specifically around making meaningful or quality art online. They especially worried about the losses from an equity lens since many youths and their families either lacked access internet and the technology necessary to log into the virtual world. Each of the following sub-categories will be expanded upon:

1. Negative emotions
 - a. Burn-out
 - b. Mental health
2. Client losses

3. Community losses
4. Sensory experience losses
5. Funding losses
6. Staff losses
7. Program cuts
8. Equity challenges
9. Negative experiences with technology
10. Challenges between the arts and education industries

1. Negative Emotions

Today, people worldwide are experiencing the emotional exhaustion associated with living through a pandemic. In particular, the artists and representatives at the roundtable discussions across Canada discussed negative emotions such as burn-out and poor mental health. To examine this more closely, the following quotes and analysis will explain the emotional experiences of participants after eight months of the pandemic. To set the tone for this section, one artist-educator in Alberta explained how they felt:

As of yesterday, students were told that they will be at home once again and learning virtually. So I feel like I want to cry today. It is hard to navigate family and teaching my students who cannot be with their peers. I get it, we have to do this, but I am feeling a rollercoaster of emotions. I feel for the teachers so I want to support teachers. We're behind at the National Arts Centre but we will get there.

While these sensitive emotional experiences were shared by participants, they also articulated a sense of hope for the short-term and long-term future. Many discussants, although exhausted, were able to use reasoning to comfort themselves. By this, we mean that they know that their current circumstances are temporary, and that life will become more stable in the future.

a. Burn Out

Burn-out is a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, feelings of cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment (Koutsimani, Montgomery & Georganta, 2019). Artists, arts-organizations representatives, and arts-educators agreed that they were experiencing feelings of burn-out especially because of the need to re-adjust their lives or programs every few months given the different waves of the pandemic and responses by the government to protect citizens from the virus. One participant explains that:

Now that numbers are climbing it feels like anything can be snatched away, the contracts feel like they are going to fall apart. I feel like we are overcoming some hurdles but then there is the next one. A never-ending battle, a touch-and-go situation. Anything artists can provide to teachers is very much needed and we try to do that.

During the roundtables, once one participant shared feelings of burn-out, others felt compelled and comfortable to do the same. The *Arts and Cultural Centre of Sussex* in New Brunswick helped the CNAL team to understand their challenges to pivot online. Because this arts organization operates as a team of four, they would typically rely on volunteer engagement. Since the pandemic, the number of events has decreased but the staff workload has increased dramatically because they cannot access their volunteers as they did in-person. A program director in Nova Scotia explained that it took five months to figure out what to do with their programming and three months “trying to cram as much work as

humanly possible.” Poignantly, she explained her reality working from home supporting an arts organization during the pandemic:

I think people think you have more time when you are working from home, we have been working at 150%. I did not stop. We planned so much, had to plan so much and cancel. I feel like I've been hit in the chest. I know people across the country feel the same thing.

One word that was echoed by participants was “exhaustion.” A Toronto school administrator elaborates on this additional layer of responsibility:

I have all the personal protection equipment (PPE). You can't go near kids who are sick without isolation gloves. We are just trying to keep everyone safe but how do you build connection when you are wearing this barrier? We try so hard because of the mental health piece for the kids, the friendship and doing things that are concrete and visual and hands-on, but it is exhausting. Artists and educators all work so hard helping families and each other but there are so many layers to our day. The safety protocols are exhausting.

People in these industries are working hard to make a positive impact on children however any COVID protocols necessary to offer in-person experiences were referred to as a full-time job in and of themselves.

b. Mental Health

As prefaced by the previous quote, negative mental health was a huge concern for participants, not only for themselves but also for their clients. By sharing their mental health concerns and challenges, participants in the virtual roundtables articulated that they felt a sense of togetherness with other participants in their experience. A teacher from the Toronto Catholic School Board explains:

I'll just echo what [another participant] said. In my board, everyone leaves at 11AM after students go home. Prep time isn't prep time anymore because you are driving home. All those experiences such as talking to colleagues have disappeared. We are in silos, we are in a relentless onslaught of getting technology ready, answering emails, physical Zoom fatigue, and mental impacts. Detachment is necessary in order to maintain equanimity and that has been released from teachers.

Participants, particularly those in the school system in the Greater Toronto Area, described this as a “mental health crisis for staff and students alike” with “no answers to the questions” they have. More specifically,

There are challenges of risk of exposure, it's a balancing act of the energy and pay-off of in-person teaching versus online, or the mental health pay off versus physical health pay off. What is truly valued by the Ministry of Education and our Premier? It is one thing to talk about the protection of the integrity of the arts as performative, communal disciplines and it is quite another to think about the survival of trying to keep the arts offered in a streamlined way in the pandemic. We are seeing a lot of exhaustion, and hope for some answers, and some people stepping up to the plate with leadership and creativity.

A parent and music-educator explained the impact for her child, a music student:

What I have learned from parents, on one side they feel the online program is good to learn music but they don't send kids to daily school anymore. I have often been told that kids have mental health challenges. It's very hard for them, they are not mentally healthy, they don't get to exercise. They no longer have the same passion for music as they used to. I am worried about my kids from risk exposure from COVID-19 but after quite some time I sent them back to school because the mental health is very important. We are ok, but we are not great.

Experiencing personal mental health challenges over the last eight months in the pandemic, professionals developed empathy for their students and for others.

I am pulling out all my coping strategies. Big realization is that you can never assume what others are living and what might be difficult for someone else. Asking people what is going on, is so important. Asking the experience of kids of what it's like. Trying not to assume what people are dealing with has shifted. It's taken more engagement than ever before.

The empathy has resulted in responsive and supportive teaching. There is a shift away from mastery of skill within the arts to focusing on the power of the arts, as a medium for healing, therapeutic benefits, community, and self-regulation of both behaviour and emotions.

2. Client losses

Many artists and artists-educators explained that they pivoted online either immediately or several months after the pandemic began. They created new strategies for their workshops or classes to make them accessible using platforms such as Zoom. Despite innovative approaches and successful integration of arts and technology, many artists, and artists-educators experienced losses in clientele. Some participants explained that competition, particularly competitors offering free virtual workshops to support people through the hardships of stay-at-home orders, decreased demand for their programs and courses. Where artists and arts organizations were successful at maintaining clientele, they explained that fewer people enrolled in their virtual programs and virtual workshops when compared with pre-pandemic enrollment. The *Labrador Creative Arts Festival*, one of the oldest arts festivals in Canada, typically focusses bringing professional artists and Indigenous students together. Their program director explained that a huge barrier to their normal programming is that sixteen of the Indigenous communities they serve are not accessible by road. Before COVID-19, Indigenous students and/or professional artists would fly to or from each other to collaborate. During the pandemic, this has been cut completing. This is in part because of restrictions in the territory and because Indigenous communities are more at-risk and are taking necessary pre-cautions. Where Canadians are continuing to experience lockdowns or strict limitations on interactions outside of their bubbles, the artists, arts-educators, and arts organizations are prepared to, or are exploring how to, transition online.

3. Community losses

There is beauty we are missing these days. Being together, singing together, is affecting me a lot now. There is a lot of people believing and needing the arts.

The more profound and emotional loss to Canadian artists and arts-educators, is the loss of their sense of being *in* community. Even when participants experienced success transitioning their programming virtually, artists, artist-educators and representatives of arts organizations unanimously agreed on the importance and connection of sharing the arts in the same physical collective space. Across the nation, these arts advocates and creatives expressed that the arts remain invaluable, and they share a concern about losing that sense of community through the online space. One practicing high school teacher from Ontario explained that it is not the *same* to engage online because we are not sharing physical space. In his experience, students and teachers are not building the *same* community as they would in-person. There is a sense of being in community that can only be achieved by experiencing the arts together, physically, side-by-side rather than on screen.

Furthermore, the loss of being *in* community was also explained in terms of the ways in which workshops and programs have had to adapt virtually, irrespective of the arts discipline. The program coordinators, educators or artists have had to focus on what individuals *can do* within their own homes and then invite individuals to share their art with peers online. For example, there is less group performance and more monologues removing community feelings. Where band programs have been

cut, there is a focus on body percussion, found instruments, again removing feelings of community taking up space together in an ensemble. Found art materials, such as those available at home, are leveraged to give learning to students equitably. Some artists explained that is challenging to talk to students who are working on different art works simultaneously in group settings. In these ways there is a loss of a sense of community achieved through sharing space, resources, and working on a joint arts activity.

4. *Sensory experience losses*

Pottery is a tactile medium, it is really hard to have tactile effect online. Someone can show you a mug, but you can't hold the mug and see if the handle suits you.

Sensory experiences are a critical component when engaging with and participating in the arts. Roundtable participants, who work in pottery, crafts, and drama shared that over online platforms, such as Zoom, there is a loss of the sensory experiences that artists feel is integral to their teaching and without it, there is a loss for both students and the artist educators themselves. The expression, “*the show must go on,*” captures the feelings of workshop leads who continue to adapt their programs for virtual learning despite these sensory losses.

We minimize what is shared and students must sanitize before and after, then the material is sanitized ... lots of time that is going into cleaning and disinfecting on an hour-by-hour basis. Teachers must wear face masks and face shields, disposable gloves must be used, group work is completely cancelled. We aren't allowed to do dance outdoors or indoors because it increases the odds that students are breathing heavily which makes masks less useful. We are doing our best, but it is a challenge.

This account was shared by a school administrator in the Greater Toronto Area. The precautionary measures to cope with the pandemic in-person take away from the sensory experiences of the arts for students and make the work of educators exhausting.

5. *Funding losses*

Roundtable discussion participants from across Canada shared a wide range of experiences around losses in funding. While some arts organizations were able to tap into federal wage subsidies, little assistance has been received from their provinces. A program director explained her organization's context in Nova Scotia:

I feel like I've been hit in the chest. I know people across the country feel the same thing. The federal wage subsidy and our passionate staff help us, but we have not had any significant assistance from the province. The province was supposed to let us know by the middle of December and we still haven't heard anything. For things like a website which would facilitate the registration for our online workshops, we are reliant on that funding. So, this is really frustrating for us.

Similarly, *Woodland Cultural Centre* in Ontario, an organization related to this experience. *Woodland Cultural Centre's* representative explained that revenues are gone, which requires the organization to rely on funding to maintain itself at this time however funding opportunities have been diminished in the pandemic. A practicing high school teacher in Ontario and member of the Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators (CODE) mentioned that although there are positive connections in the online teaching and learning space, educators and artist-educators are experiencing the funding cuts firsthand. Many small arts organizations are minimizing expenses and letting go of their physical spaces to make insurance payments or other critical expenses. Put bluntly, the president of a Quebecois arts organization said:

There is not a lot of overhead, so we are being bled dry. We are in somewhat hibernation mode. Two artist-educators in Quebec are the same predicament. They decided to use the COVID-relief funds to focus on personal creative expression, such as music making or visual art. They attributed this to not enough work at present and because getting funding for artist residences is a cumbersome process compared to the relatively easy procedure to design a workshop and walk into schools as they once did. One arts organization in the Greater Toronto Area expressed high frustration with similar barriers to access funding intended to support Arts and Culture in Ontario.

We had to do some quick rethinking of things in the summer and at the time we had some funding to do performances in parks. Instead, we adapted and did a virtual performance. It was a huge learning and success. We had digital team including a consultant who was a digital arts student. They helped us create a virtual storytelling experience. It is a website that is online, synchronously mostly, rethinking how to do theatre online. We were inspired by other organizations in paper theatre and filmic theatre, and we used that to build relationships and address some issues around isolation during the pandemic. We compiled all that data as a case-study for us, so we've done the research and development, and now we want funds to move towards paying artists but funding sources for COVID are still a lot around research and development. It's frustrating because we're ready and eager to move forward.

Despite these ongoing challenges, arts-educators, artists, and arts organizations remain resilient, innovative, and patient as they work through the bureaucratic processes to access funding necessary to survive and make a living through the pandemic.

6. Staff losses

The economic implications of the pandemic forced many arts organizations to reduce their staff and restructure their operations *initially*. Checking-in with the arts organizations eight months after the first roundtable discussions allowed the CNAL team to understand whether those changes were permanent or not. As with many of the organizations at the roundtables, *Artshine Incorporated* in Ontario, an organization that would typically teach in-person, initially laid off 45 staff members. They hired back 12 employees in the last few months to sell virtual programs and prescriptions. Similarly, an artist-educator in Quebec explained that as one of 30 temporary employees at *The Museum of Fine Arts*, she was laid off at the beginning of the pandemic. She explained that management has since called back seven of the most senior artist-educators and although that does not include her there is work for others. At *Craft Nova Scotia*, two staff members decided to retire early because of the pandemic so there are only five employees in the office currently. Two employees are working at 80% capacity and only one is full time. These kinds of adjustments and adaptations were present in other arts organizations across the country.

7. Program cuts

Program cuts were necessary for many arts organizations, artists, and artist-educators across Canada; roundtable participants articulated several reasons as to why they had to do so. Given the unanticipated lockdowns, many program coordinators had to delay or cut their programming because they did not have the capacity to move programs virtually in March 2020. They explained that they were unable to pivot the program online due to technology or logistical challenges at the beginning of the pandemic or that their clients, particularly those at-risk, were unable to access the programs virtually. Some of these programs are listed below:

1. **St. Lawrence Academy** musical theatre program was stopped due to COVID (Brockville, Ontario)
2. **Independent practicing artist (retired Faculty of Education professor from Laurentian University)** series of exhibitions were cancelled at the beginning and throughout the pandemic (Ontario).
3. **Shakespeare Performing Arts** cancelled the in-person afterschool program for at-risk youth in March 2020 (Greater Toronto Area, Ontario).
4. **Canadian Music Educator** competition had to cancel events and turn the program into a non-competitive program (Pan-Canadian).
5. **Clay and Paper Theatre** cancelled the puppetry and big images in public spaces before rethinking and adapting the program later (Greater Toronto Area, Ontario).
6. **Peel District School Board** school band programs were cancelled to facilitate safe and equitable learning to students (Greater Toronto Area, Ontario).
7. **Toronto Catholic District School Board** school band programs, singing and any movement of students in and out of visual arts rooms was cancelled (Greater Toronto Area, Ontario).
8. **Soundbone Traditional Arts Foundation** cut community choirs (Newfoundland and Labrador).
9. **Co-Op Collective Vision** cancelled their summer camp program (Quebec).
10. **New Brunswick College of Craft and Design** cancelled programs because students could not access equipment at home such as jewelry torches, pottery wheels, and kilns (New Brunswick).
11. **Craft Nova Scotia** lost a few sessions during the shutdown in March 2020 because of the need to offer in-person classes in studios. Instead of cutting programs completely, many were delayed (Nova Scotia).
12. **Labrador Creative Arts Festival** cancelled their program which would typically fly artists to visit Indigenous students from sixteen communities not accessible by road (Newfoundland and Labrador).

Given that discussions with the participants eight months after the initial shutdowns across Canada, it is important to note that most of the organizations and artists took some time to pause, reimagine, and organize subsequent programming online. They expressed challenges with doing so but were successful in some instances (see “Positive Experiences” on page 17). For example, when *Co-Op Collective Vision* was forced to cancel in-person summer camps, they created a virtual summer camp program although it was not well attended. Small businesses like *Co-Op Collective Vision* were not as well supported by the government to endure the crisis, requiring them to reduce their expenses as mentioned previously, and therefore making it more likely to cut programs.

8. Equity challenges

During the Ontario roundtable discussion, an artist in residence who currently works remotely in Sudbury reminded colleagues of the integral role of the Arts:

We can't forget the agenda of the arts. Multicultural, equity-based, and the empowerment of first literacies.

Participants who work closely with student groups or schools explained very dire equity challenges and disparities between students of higher and lower economic status.

The equity issue is huge. Currently, in the Greater Toronto Area there are at least 14,000 students in the secondary virtual school. They don't have the technology. Some don't have microphones even if they wanted to speak. We are doing terrible. If we have any income, we feel guilty saying that we are struggling.

Educators and arts program coordinators at schools in Ontario could not stress this enough. One participant, a New Brunswick Youth Orchestra lead, explained that the largest part of their operations is to support nine Sistema New Brunswick orchestral programs for 1,100 to 1,200 at-risk youth in a typical school year. In the 2020-2021 school year, the program enrollment fell to 600 to 700 students; inequity is at the root of this issue explained the roundtable participant. Partner school districts are not able to guarantee any school transport and the program operates out of school facilities, so numbers have been diminished. Given that Sistema students are at-risk and may come from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, programming that is online may not be accessible to students without technology or with limited technology. Another example is that of *Prairie Debut, Calgary*, which is an organization that typically tours rural communities and schools across Canada. During the pandemic they have been compiling resources for these groups instead of travelling however their representative explained that accessibility and delivery to the community is incredibly challenging.

It is important to explain that four programs serving at-risk artists and at-risk communities, rather than students specifically, were immediately cut when the pandemic first began. However, these organizations shared their success at pivoting online over the past eight months since initial lockdowns. This includes two organizations in Ontario, including two in the Greater Toronto Area.

9. Negative experiences with technology

In Part Two of this report entitled, "Working Digitally," we expand on the challenges with technology endured by participants. It is worthwhile to examine a few specific experiences closer in this section. Independent teaching-artists working from home expressed the many contrasting experiences with technology. For example, one mentioned:

Asynchronous way does not work for me. I miss body language, so I have struggled.

While others took to technology quite eagerly and used it as a vehicle for co-learning between teacher and student. An Ontario high school drama teacher explained:

I have learned a lot from my students in their expertise, that has shaped my learning too, for example using Tik Tok for performances. I am less overwhelmed and now more seeing possibility [with technology].

As such, there was a movement towards using technology to be creative while teacher and student simultaneously explored the possibilities of arts learning in unprecedented times. Interestingly, only one roundtable participant raised the issue of privacy concerns using technology and the need to safeguard students:

I've wondered about privacy and security because we [artist-educators] are not being monitored by a teacher. VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) issues must be being dealt with. One student had an incredibly hard time getting a reference letter from me after the first work-from-home order. We had to jump through so many hoops to get contact information just to connect which is a shame because they would typically walk into my class and ask me directly.

For arts organizations who did not immediately pivot online given the nuance of technology and virtual learning, they took their time to fully explore possibilities of virtual programming before gradually pivoting programs to the virtual world. After preparation and learning new technology, a deliverable for schools was eventually produced. Unfortunately, by the time they were ready to share this product with schools, there was less interest causing frustration and further challenges. For more information about the experiences of “Working Digitally” please go to page 20.

10. Challenges between the arts and education industries

Roundtable participants from one, or both, the arts and education industries explained discrepancies between the two. Artists explained:

We are doing everything we can to have the teachers use this huge grant, but it is very difficult. We are currently at one third of our target this year and we are already three months in the school year. Today we are publishing a catalogue including education program competencies, and what each artist educator can offer which will go up on our website. The last thing we want to be is perceived as insensitive or pressuring teachers. Apparently, there is an increased need for teachers to engage secondary students who are checking out currently and they are looking to community for resources, but they are also dealing with living in a pandemic in their classrooms, so it is very difficult to engage them.

Many artists and arts organizations shared ongoing challenges in accessing teachers or finding ways for teachers to access their programs. This knowledge translation gap is necessary to fill so that professionals in both industries can support one another.

A huge concern shared by arts-educators was the privatization of arts education induced by the pandemic:

I was trained as an art-educator, not a teaching-artist, which are two different things. I think in this COVID era artists are thinking let's go into the school and do workshops. So, it puts art educators in a difficult place. I run 4 sections of dance classes and the music program after-school. Why is it offered after-school not during class? This is something to be concerned about. I have students in Grade 10, and they are currently doing their first painting because they never painted in elementary. There is a lack and inconsistency of arts being offered. My objective is to do art in the school. If this wasn't offered after-school, there would be no arts at the school at all. We need to think about what is happening to our youth right now and COVID is another impeachment. We must continue fighting that cause. RoundTable participants listened and responded to one another through the sharing negative experiences. By illuminating the diverse perspectives and experiences of different professionals in the arts and education industries across Canada, we hope that these findings this will benefit stakeholders. We encourage colleagues, educators, artists, and arts program developers take these negative experiences and consider how to build upon the innovative work that is being carried out, bridging gaps, and creating opportunities for collaboration and learning together.

Positive Experiences

Emotionally charged memories, such as those shared by participants in the third series of our roundtable discussions, were not limited to negative experiences. Many stakeholders shared positive experiences, which provide hope for the short-term and long-term future of the arts and arts education.

Unanticipated triumphs may outlast the pandemic according to some participants. The following subcategories will be expanded upon further in the following section:

1. Funding opportunities
2. Hiring new staff
3. Personal creativity boost
4. Pivoting successes
 - a. Equity successes
 - b. Fostering community
 - c. Technology success

1. Funding opportunities

Only two organizations were able to access funding more easily in the pandemic. The first was *English Language Arts Network* in Quebec who shared how their funding pre-pandemic allowed them to pivot online immediately.

We have funding through Quebec although working with schools this year is an incredible challenge. We made our art workshops virtual and available immediately once the pandemic hit. We did this from April 2020 to August 2020, after which we asked our funder if we could move funding from school to offering arts and culture in homes. With approval, we created and published a guide about effective ways to deliver high quality arts experiences. Whether an artist is delivering in this manner (one to many screens) or whether they are coming into a classroom and the teacher is with their students, this guide is helpful.

Those that did secure funding throughout the pandemic expressed deep gratitude. More specifically, the *Arts and Cultural Centre of Sussex* in New Brunswick, received grants and felt lucky given that others were struggling through the pandemic and *Soundbone Traditional Arts Festival* in Nova Scotia, funded by the Arts Council, was grateful to be able to continue their work with international choirs in the United Kingdom and Germany.

2. Hiring new staff

As mentioned in the previous section of this report, some organizations let go of staff and were able to hire a small number of these employees back as the pandemic progressed. However, one organization shared the unique experience of hiring a new staff member in the pandemic:

I have someone that I hired online, and I've never met her in-person, but she happens to have the skillset that we need at this time. We are a team of 12 doing so much.

Website development skillsets, referenced in this quote, were necessary for organizations to pivot remotely if they didn't currently have that expertise in their workforce and if they were financially able to hire the additional expertise. The *Arts and Cultural Centre of Sussex* in New Brunswick also sought out staff with technical skills such as marketing, communications, and digital workshop providers. These were the few experiences in which new hires were discussed by roundtable discussants reflecting on the past eight months.

3. Personal creativity boost

For participants who found themselves with spare time and/or a lull in work, artists explained that they were being "nourished by the arts." Artist-educators and teaching-artists expressed a sense of

gratitude for the fact that they were able to turn inwards and be creative through the pandemic. More specifically, one artist-educator in Sudbury Ontario spoke to this point:

I did an online challenge through quarantine which required me to show up every day for 10 minutes. I found my voice through this; I used that emergent sensation and voice to create a performance. So, thereafter I put it online and got asked to do a show.

Two other artists explained that they recorded music or did more visual art. Here is another experience:

I have had my work explode in the pandemic creatively and as a teaching artist.

Therefore, it was evident that a silver lining in the pandemic for some artists and educators was unanticipated personal creativity boost.

4. Pivoting success

Although there were many negative experiences shared throughout the roundtable discussion series three, there were positive experiences related to pivoting successfully online or in-person with COVID-19 precautionary measures in place. *The New Brunswick Youth Orchestra's* 70 to 90 auditioned members are operating in sectional bubbles when they can rehearse physically together in compliance with health and safety regulations. Similarly, *New Brunswick College of Craft and Design* was forced online when the pandemic initially began but eight months later 260 students are attending the college in-person with space between kilns, knitting machines and jewelry stations. These in-person programs were not prevalent in Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec.

a. Equity

Two organizations diligently created "Take and Makes," which are kits including art materials so that people could do arts activities at home. One artist-educator in Sudbury, Ontario shared their experience in creating 20 tutorials that are equity based:

I work in schools doing these long project-based art forms with teachers and students. They are all equitable videos, based off very little materials. I like to support new organizations in creating these programs.

These were particularly useful for lower-income students and clients who did not have the resources to afford such opportunities otherwise. In Saskatchewan, *Mann Art Gallery*, adapted programs online and provided marginalized groups with three various kits which included a licensed artist's coloring pages and activity books. However, given the challenges associated with such a cumbersome project, this was not a popular option by most arts organizations or artists.

b. Fostering Community

Fostering community was a huge topic of conversation in the sharing of experiences across the nation. Although there were losses to community felt by some, other organizations such as *Clay and Paper Theatre* in the GTA explained how they "were being welcomed into homes [virtually] seeing isolation and loneliness" and that connections online brought people together through these trying times. *The Art Gallery of Grand Prairie* in Alberta shared that upon their re-opening in early June 2020, the team coordinated a community art installation in response to COVID-19. Community members of all ages and backgrounds were invited to share artwork with the gallery which was on display consistently until the end of September 2020. Submissions included visual art, music, poems, and photography. Some work even went into the permanent collection at the art gallery and created a cultural archive. Intentional community building arts experiences were recognized to be of great value to facilitators and clients. Another positive experience was shared by *Art Wheel Studio*:

It's been wonderful. When I look at a student, I realized I have been given the opportunity of a whole world. I see archived and joined organization. I am meeting with people across the world. For the children and seniors, this just open the lines of communication for them. We need to acknowledge that it's not stale – it's a living thing. As an individual, you must be arranged to a bigger group.

Arts learning, offered virtually and in-person with safety precautions, created community and maintained community throughout the shared, but unique, experiences of individuals living through the pandemic.

c. Technology Success

In Part 2 entitled, “Working Digitally,” we will expand upon the positive aspects of technology shared by participants however positive emotional experiences related to technology were also relayed: *We have had a lot of fun trying to learn new things online. I never thought I would sit on Zoom as much as I have considering I wouldn't sit on Facetime with family. I've been watching my neighbors, or other craft councils.*

Participants who expressed enjoyment for using technology to provide programming were not alone but also not the majority. Another participant shared:

With libraries, it is all online stuff. I do feel comfortable online, I have been testing it on friends, and I feel more comfortable than I ever thought I would which is cool too.

Well-established organizations were pleasantly surprised with the opportunity to reinvent themselves after many years. The *Labrador Creative Arts Festival* explained their new program considering the pandemic:

We are going to invite artists to do virtual workshops, subscribed to different schools and different ages of students (K-12). Some of these workshops will be short and some long. For example, we'll have five days of workshops leading to performance on the final day, which will be recorded and then we will have a virtual festival once they are all completed. We have everything from a Bollywood Dancer working with an Inuit Drum group. Another dealing workshop dealing with the reaction to COVID-19 through theatre and dance. We hope we will only have to do this this one year. It is good for us to have to reinvent our festival after 45 years of doing things the same way.

As mentioned by this arts program coordinator, while some arts and learning professionals did have positive experiences pivoting programs due to the pandemic, many expressed that these are merely short-term solutions in anticipation of the world returning “back to normal” in the future. That is not to say they won't take these experiences into consideration in the future which will be explained further in Part 3 entitled, “Future Considerations for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning.”

Specific Activities

The specific activities carried out by arts organizations, teacher-artists, and artist-educators, are described below.

1. Hybrid programs

Many organizations chose to create hybrid programming. Hybrid programs included a mix of in-person programs (with safety precautions) and online programs. For example:

- a. **A piano teacher** running a small studio for 38 students has created hybrid recitals – students can safely upload a video performance and share with anyone they want (Ontario)
- b. **A piano teacher** running a small studio, Zoom classes for some and in-person classes with sanitization for others. Recitals on YouTube (Calgary)
- c. **An Art Gallery** in Oshawa remains open and running virtual programs (programming, exhibitions, and family events) since the beginning of the pandemic. Currently, they are working on school programming (pre-recorded tours and live-studio workshops for seniors). The gallery had one in-person session before the shutdown occurred again/ This session was with adults with special needs and the caretakers (Ontario).
- d. **A Museum** in Oakville's Recreational Cultural Department pivoted very quickly to do virtual and online offerings and is now looking at the mix between virtual and in-person around arts and education outreach (Ontario).

2. Support for other artists

A few arts organizations, artist-educators, and teaching-artists who pivoted successfully during the early stages of the pandemic chose to support other artists during the pandemic by creating informative guides and resources from what they learned. Specifically, *English Language Arts Network in Quebec* explained:

We have created and published a guide about effective ways to deliver high quality experiences. Whether an artist is delivering in this manner (one to many screens) or whether they are coming into a classroom and the teacher is with their students.

These kinds of resources will be shared on the CNAL website.

3. Virtual programs

As expected, many programs were completely virtual and have remained so to endure the pandemic and persistent changes in health and safety recommendations. Examples of these kinds of programs include:

- a. Virtual school
- b. Virtual modules
- c. Virtual workshops for students
- d. Virtual private and group classes
- e. Selling virtual programs and subscriptions
- f. Online art packages
- g. Metis artist program online
- h. Turning productions into a podcast
- i. Art gallery online programming and exhibitions
- j. “Senior Centers Without Walls” using telephone to connect with seniors
- k. Creative arts full-day program: academics in the morning and arts in the afternoon
- l. Five-minute video series: including 12 music body-breaks
- m. Recording audio and making 2D puppets that will be animated
- n. YouTube and Facebook video rehearsals, online ensembles, online concerts
- o. Virtual storytelling experience

Part 2: Working Digitally

Within the digital roundtable discussion series, participants were asked to shed light on their experiences working with technology and online programming. This section of the report will be divided into three sections:

1. Digital platforms used by participants
2. Positive aspects about technology and online programming
3. Challenging aspects about technology and online programming

1. Digital platforms used by participants

The platforms included below were mentioned in the online discussions. CNAL has also compiled a list of resources for the arts and learning sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included arts-specific resources, links for digital learning, collaboration and skill sharing sites, and additional digital platforms for collaboration: <https://www.eduarts.ca/resources-for-the-arts-and-learning-sector-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>

- Accepted
 - This tool is useful for users looking to move auditions online, simplifying the entire digital process (accepting online video auditions, collecting applications, scheduling, customizing rubrics, processing payments)
 - Students can submit their repertoire, music sheet and recordings via this platform
 - Audition room can be set up between one another
 - Similar asynchronous platform to “Slide Room”
- Audio Bridge
 - A tool for music teachers where students can record their vocal lines and create up to a ten-part harmony
 - Useful for compiling virtual music online – and free!
- Brightspace
 - A cloud-based learning platform that works on any device
 - Allows you to create engaging online courses (helpful to transition in-person to online courses)
 - Individualized learning plans can be created on here (gamification, social tools, video features)
- Cadenza
 - An online tool for music teachers and music students to communicate with each other and manage their lessons (keeping track of musical goals, creating practice plans, commenting on recordings of videos)
 - Not limited to use during music classes, students can use the tool in their own time too
- Dropbox
 - A workspace that houses synchronized files in one space
 - Customizable organization using folders
- Facebook
 - Useful to promoting and boosting community outreach and engagement
 - Allows live streaming of recitals, concerts, workshops and more
- Google Classroom

- Makes teaching more productive and meaningful by streamlining assignments, boosting collaboration, and fostering communication
- Educators can create Google classrooms to distribute assignments, send feedback, and store everything in one place for students
- Integrates with other Google tools like Google Docs and Google Drive
- More security compared to Zoom
- Google Meet
 - Video meetings
 - Free for everyone including those without a user
- Jam Kazam
 - Users can create music in real-time with other musicians virtually as if they are were physically in the same room with one another
 - Performances can be recorded, shared, and broadcasted through live streaming to friends, family and fans
 - Helpful for choral rehearsals
- Miro
 - Virtual whiteboard – like live editing feature in Google Docs
 - Create visuals including flowcharts, drawings and import different files
 - Free trial includes three boards
 - Purchasing an account allows access to unlimited boards
- Slide Room
 - A platform based in the United States
 - Asynchronous platform to gather registration, and students can submit their repertoire, music sheet and recordings
- ReStream
 - An online live streaming platform that is compatible with other software's such as Zoom and Facebook
 - Can simultaneously record video and screen
- YouTube
 - Useful for hosting recitals and live streaming
- Zoom
 - Most popular platform
 - Video communications platform for video and audio conferencing, collaboration, chat, and webinars across mobile devices, desktops, telephones, and room systems
 - Participants stated that they liked the screen sharing function
 - User friendly
- Other Technological Considerations
 - Multi-camera set-up
 - Some arts instructors have two cameras, one capturing their teaching and the second capturing their art making.
 - During live drawing sessions, multiple cameras are set up at different angles/perspectives to allow remote participants to choose them
 - Virtual Assistant

- Participants expressed the difficulty of managing the chat features (included on Zoom), their physical environment, and the virtual environment with participants through video and audio
- Virtual assistants can be helpful to managing the chat, typing written reminders, and allow arts-educators to focus on the arts

1. *Positive aspects about technology and online programming*

Within the discussion about technology and online programming, many overlapping themes were identified by our team including: (a) developing connections and engaging in unanticipated opportunities, (b) expanding accessibility through technology and (c) increasing archival functions and intuition for the future.

a. *Developing connections and engaging in unanticipated opportunities*

- Given that artists and arts organizations have been using online platforms to communicate and collaborate, many arts programs, studios and arts organizations have served a wider audience, including those across the country and globe.
- One participant described, “*the [online] tools allow us to connect internationally ... reach people across geographic boundaries, create partnerships and wholesome community within the arts*”.
- Programs that have been able to connect with international artists and organizations explained that they have provided enriching opportunities for students and the relationships between organizations.
- With synchronous and asynchronous online courses/lessons, students located in remote communities or in other provinces have successfully enrolled in programs they may never have been able to access before.

b. *Expanding accessibility through technology*

- Hosting programs virtually has allowed program coordinators to realize the potential to expanding community engagement through outreach thus accommodating for a wider audience.
- Using tools like Facebook to “boost” and market arts programs online, arts stakeholders have noticed that audience engagement has moved outside previously targeted audiences.
- Many tools have functions to allow clients to engage both during and after events with live and recorded streams increasing the accessibility to the events.

c. *Increasing archival functions*

- Representatives, particularly from galleries and other arts programs, explained lesson plans and teaching materials are not typically consolidated electronically because of the reliance on physical copies. Given the pandemic and needing to work online, many arts programs have been able to archive their work.
- Organizations or artists who transitioned their programming online or to a hybrid format expressed that this has and will influence their approaches post-pandemic (see “Future Consideration for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning” on page 24).

2. *Challenging aspects of technology and online programming*

Many participants expressed challenges when it comes to navigating technology and online programming. Below is a list of challenges expressed during the digital roundtable discussions:

- a. The learning curve while transitioning to virtual programming
 - Many participants stated that they are “not technologically savvy.”
 - The learning curve including challenges associated with Resources, technology platforms or devices and technological knowledge creating a barrier for artists/arts program coordinators at the beginning of the pandemic – not everyone had the necessary understanding of online platforms that could be useful prior to COVID-19.
- b. Accessing and building connections with educators was difficult
 - Participants in both Alberta and the Northwest Territories explained that “*Teachers are exhausted in the pandemic.*”
 - Many boards reportedly declined art services by arts programs and organizations who had previous connections. This was said to be due to the difficult and overwhelming transition teachers are experiencing this school year.
 - With limited connections, fewer arts programs have been able to continue their work with school-aged students and youth since there is now a barrier to them and/or creating relationships digitally with school boards is increasingly difficult.
- c. Arts-educators struggled with providing formative feedback throughout learning experience online
 - Prior to COVID-19, educators would be able to see students learning and experiment with new concepts, tools and techniques. With online learning, many educators are missing these hands-on teaching moments which were useful for evaluation and assessment for learning in order to support student learning better.
 - With more independent times for students to “go off” and explore by themselves, educators mentioned that they are missing opportunities to assess the artistic process which was possible in-person. Instead, some educators explained that they are only seeing final submissions which limit the support to students’ creative process embedded with curriculum.
- d. Difficulty seeing engagement
 - Students without videos or audio turned on during class timed, facilitators reported that it can be hard understand student engagement, comprehension, and progress in their learning.
- e. Fatigue
 - Some participants expressed battle with the expectations they hold for themselves, their working community and their clients they are serving.
 - Balancing screen time is said to be exhausting and associated with personal guilt.

Part 3: Future Considerations for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning

The CNAL participants were prompted to consider their plans in a post-pandemic world. Two questions were of particular interest, 1) Were participants going to continue to use digital platforms and products? 2) Were these changes in their programming permanent? This section articulates themes and perspectives shared by arts stakeholders based on their responses. Most arts organizations and representatives did not respond to the question, perhaps because the future is unknown and because planning now is focused on mitigating the impositions created by the pandemic. Based on the data collected, the themes generated include:

1. Programs and organizations have been forever changed.
2. Blended learning will be provided in the future due to its positive engagement and accessibility.
3. The importance of building connections and relationships within shared physical spaces as soon as possible.
4. Following up on connections made during the pandemic in the online world.

1. Programs and organizations have been changed forever

During the National Bilingual roundtable, a musician clearly articulated the value in learning from the experiences during the pandemic,

It would be unfortunate not to learn from the lessons that we have endured in the pandemic... why would I want to go back to the way I was before? Because first, it's impossible, as this is a part of my life experience. So collectively, this is our life experience, and why would we want to throw that out? There are ways I must deal with what I am doing and learning to manage the ways I am on the screen. Let's take the lessons and move forward with them.

This participant from Quebec emphasizes that there is no "going back" to a pre-pandemic world and nor should there be. Over the last eight months, arts-educators and program developers have gained enormously in relation to understanding the intersection between the arts, education and technology. Across Canada, people within these industries demonstrated innovation, resilience and flexibility. Since arts stakeholders have invested time, resources, energy and emotional support to their community, roundtable participants believed that they should leverage these developments to dictate the future of arts, learning, and the industry at large. The "lessons" and community gained are invaluable. Arts stakeholders anticipate that these lessons will be vital and supportive of a smoother transition back to in-person learning post-pandemic.

I think this digital aspect of our sector will continue to progress; there are so many aspects of our work that thrive in our analogue. If we are innovative and learn the tools (which fall outside of our practice and our sector), then we can move forward with the changing time (Voice with Purpose, National Bilingual Discussion).

This is an account shared by an arts-educator and researcher explaining the value of digital tools for arts and learning. An Anishinaabe playwright and actor reminds the community that "*the online platform is a supplementary but not temporary piece.*" Arts organizations can and should at least consider hybrid models given that technology may provide unique and diverse opportunities for students.

2. Blended learning will be provided in the future due to its positive engagement and accessibility

Like many organizations, a representative from *The Conservatory of Performing Arts* in Saskatchewan valued the option to streamline communication on virtual platforms. To reiterate, this opens the possibilities of learning for students and their families and allows greater access materials and content from the comfort of their homes. *Clay and Paper Theatre* member shared their intentions of blending both digital and face-to-face experiences.

To some degree, we will try and incorporate some of the digital experience and lessons we have learned through the certain advantages we have seen online. Through the Third Eye project, we saw single people online on their own or families joining in our workshop online. Feedback from parents about the process with their own children allowed us to realize how quickly and how impactful the work was while working on it together as a family unit at home. They were not completely isolated. Ultimately, we work in public space to make art as accessible as we possibly can... In the future, we may do some online workshops and then allow people to bring that learning to an in-person component. The work [Third Eye project] we developed online will remain as a backup because we don't have the resources to maintain both the live and digital work.

Resources may limit an organization's ability to provide hybrid programs in the future however there is evidence to make a case for such programs particularly if accessibility and inclusion remain a priority.

3. The importance of building connections and relationships within shared physical spaces as soon as possible

Many, if not all the participants, stressed that we cannot “*forget the importance and connection together in the same collective space*” (*Winnipeg Writer's Guild*). When asked about the future one participant from Alberta explained that they believe there will be a “*rebirth of live music*” and that people who were taking it for granted before are likely waiting to get back to a shared space. Feeding of this point, another from Ontario explained that it is “*not the same engagement online as you would through a shared-space... we are not building the same community.*” Consequentially, social and emotional learning may be lost by students who are missing community building opportunities in person. More specifically,

Online you can reach out to many communities, but I'm concerned we can't practice those social skills. How can we nurture that empathy, perspective-taking, that happens automatically in person? (Shadow Land Theory, Greater Toronto Area)

The concern around relationship building online versus in a physical, shared space were sources of worry for many roundtable discussants. Participants explained that the spaces where the activities occur have a profound affect learning, creativity and performing.

Throughout this digital learning experience, many found pieces of the arts experiences missing or not being the “same” as it once in a shared space. For example, one participant shared how virtual concerts/recitals did not move them to the same degree. Areas of process and performance are being shaped differently through online platforms and thus not formulating the same nostalgia that once was pre-pandemic. This emphasizes that the performing arts such as music, dance, and theatre, in a remote context raise questions about authenticity and do feel like a changed experience all together.

4. Following up on the connections created during the pandemic in the online world

Building partnerships, collaborations and connections between professionals was advanced using technology. For example,

Connections and bridges with stakeholders outside of the province and out of the country have been and are continuing to be developed. It started in the digital and may evolve to an in-person community (Free Flow, Saskatchewan).

These connections between arts organizations and stakeholders are hoping to flourish post-pandemic. Emergent international or cross-country partnerships could advance the future of the arts and education industries. Cutting down on the expenses associated with importing skilled international staff can open the possibilities for more of these experiences. Of course, this can enrich learning for and within arts organizations as well as their students.

From experience shifting from in-person to virtual, I understand how you are feeling that it is nearly impossible to replicate the in-person experience (feelings, sharing space, the magic of the arts), but you're right the online virtual delivery is so cool reaching further beyond what we had imagined pre-Pandemic. (Alberta)

Exploring possibilities for partnerships is now more feasible than ever.

PART 4: The Utility and Function of the CNAL *Digital Map for Arts & Learning*

This component of the third digital roundtable series included focused questions about the utility and function the CNAL Digital Map for Arts & Learning. The CNAL team demonstrated the functions and capabilities of the Map for those who were less familiar. The team asked the artists, arts educators, arts organizations and other participants for feedback which is detailed below. The CNAL Digital Map for Arts & Learning can be found at the following link: <https://www.eduarts.ca/canadas-map>.

Qualitative Data, Third Roundtable Discussion Series

The first suggestion was to provide analytics to organizations listed on the Map. Audience engagement, such as data about the number of views and click-rate, would be useful to the listed organization to understand the effectiveness of the map as a tool to them. Given that many funding applications are requesting demographic information of targeted audiences and traffic data, these statistics may even be useful to funding applications. The Digital Map of Arts & Learning team is currently working to provide this information by upgrading to the Map's interface.

Quantitative Data, Third Roundtable Discussion Series Follow Up Survey

A follow-up survey was conducted after this discussion roundtable series which collected response to the question, "Do you have any suggestions for improving The Map or Directory of Online Arts Instruction?" We received ten follow-up surveys including the following suggestions:

- *Would it be possible to see more French presence and participation?*
- *Could there be more publicity and advertising to introduce the tool in Francophone communities?*
- *I would suggest presenting the tool to French organizations.*

Within the map itself, users can search for French contacts offering community programs, school programs and French schools. This can be found by filtering for "French" under the language category. However, it is worth noting that at present the platform itself is English which may create barriers for engagement of Francophone people.

PART 5: Limitations and Considerations for the Future

This final section of the report includes limitations to the experiences of participants in the digital roundtable discussion. These responses were gained through quantitative and qualitative follow-up survey. While we hosted 169 participants in total, we received 19 responses to the follow-up survey; therefore, these experiences speak to some, but not all, perspectives.

Experiences of Engagement through the Digital Roundtable Discussion

Participants answered qualitative and quantitative questions to communicate their experiences within the roundtable discussion series. Within the following two sections, 1) common experiences deemed useful or interesting (qualitative data) and 2) graphic data will be shared.

1. Qualitative Data, Common Experiences in the Digital Roundtable Discussion

The question, “Let us know the most interesting or useful part of the roundtable discussion,” elicited many responses. More than half of the overall 19 responses shared how these discussions were interesting simply because participants could hear how different organizations and programs have adjusted during this time period.

I really enjoyed hearing how everyone was doing and how they are coping through the pandemic.

Learning people's thoughts and feelings about online learning and their own struggles and successes was interesting.

I liked the opportunity to meet others and to share our stories about how the pandemic is impacting us. It is good not to feel so isolated during these times.

Many articulated how this discussion provided space for support, gain connections and networking. For example, one participant shared,

Without a moderator, it becomes a great channel to share personal experiences but not necessary a good tool for development or fruitful discussions between the members.

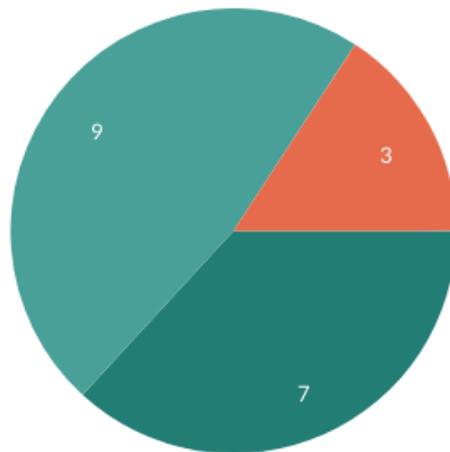
By facilitating a collective space to reflect on personal experiences, the roundtable discussions allowed many people within these industries to connect. Per recommendation, roundtable discussions may benefit from a moderator. The following list highlights suggestions by participants for future roundtable discussions:

1. Introductions felt lengthy – perhaps limiting them to a time frame to have more time for discussion questions.
2. “Find ways to make these sessions more diverse in insight and opinions.”
3. “I was the only participant from Yukon which made the conversation interesting but not too relevant for me.”

2. Quantitative Data, 5-point Rating Scale (Engagement and Remote learning)

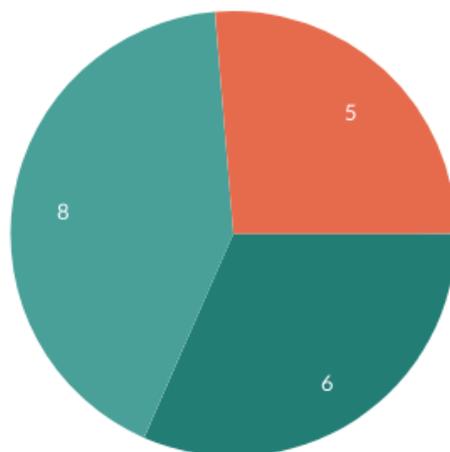
The following graphs depict participants responses to the follow-up survey using a 5-point rating scale. Each question is included in the title of the graph.

I think **Canada's Map of Arts & Learning** is a useful tool for increasing public access and discoverability of arts and learning opportunities online.



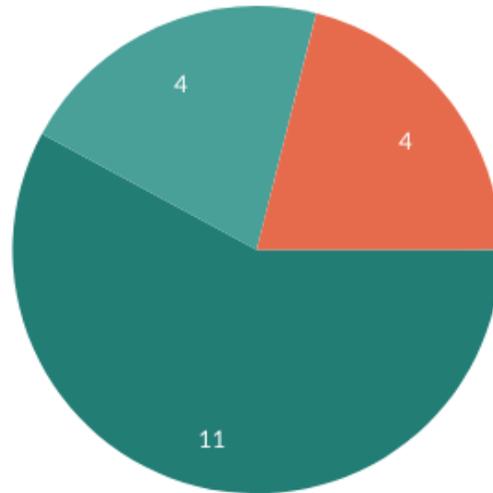
■ Strongly Agree (36.84%) ■ Agree (47.37%) ■ Neutral (15.79%)

I am likely to use **The Map and Directory of Online Arts Instruction** in the future.



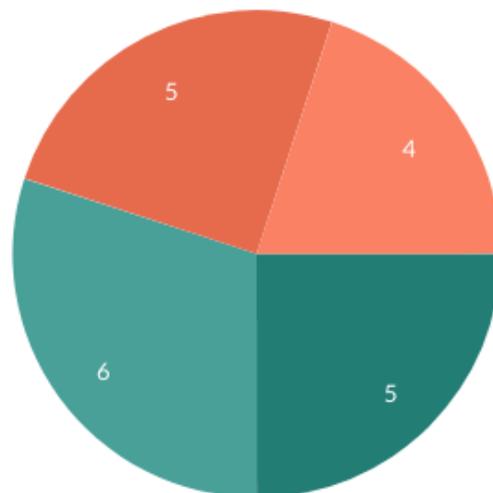
■ Strongly Agree (31.58%) ■ Agree (42.11%) ■ Neutral (26.32%)

It was helpful for me to hear other people's experiences during the pandemic.



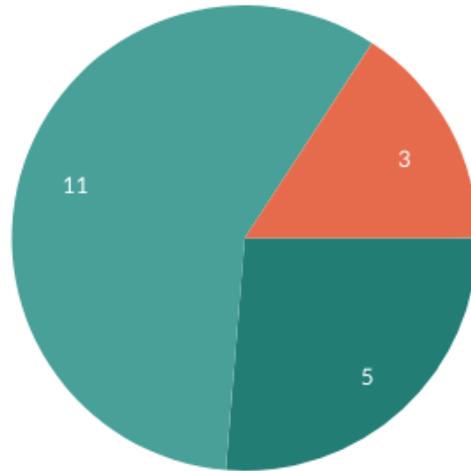
Strongly Agree (57.89%) Agree (21.05%) Neutral (21.05%)

The discussion offered support for me in my current situation.



Strongly Agree (25%) Agree (30%) Neutral (25%) Disagree (20%)

I am likely to recommend **The Map and Online Directory** to others.



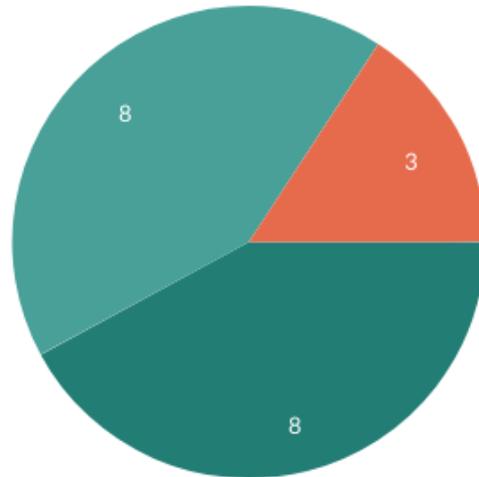
Strongly Agree (26.32%) Agree (57.89%) Neutral (15.79%)

I would like to attend another **roundtable discussion or webinar**.



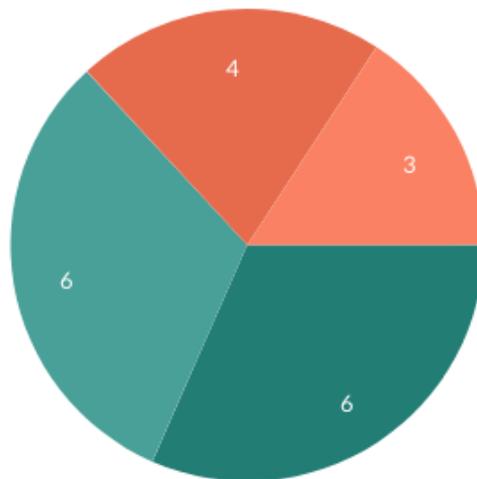
Strongly Agree (36.84%) Agree (47.37%) Neutral (15.79%)

I discovered ways that other arts and learning professionals are sustaining and developing their work online.



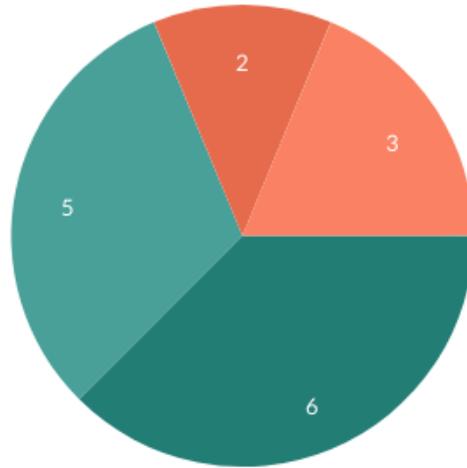
Strongly Agree (42.11%) Agree (42.11%) Neutral (15.79%)

I discovered new technology being used to facilitate online arts instruction.



Strongly Agree (31.58%) Agree (31.58%) Neutral (21.05%) Disagree (15.79%)

I have, or I plan to follow-up with someone I met through the discussion.



■ Strongly Agree (37.5%) ■ Agree (31.25%) ■ Neutral (12.5%) ■ Disagree (18.75%)

Overall Summary

Part 1

Experiences of Canadian Arts Stakeholders Eight Months into COVID-19 Pandemic

Negative and positive experiences were shared by participants across Canada. Negative experiences outweighed positive experiences. These included negative emotions (burn-out and mental health challenges), losses in clients, community, sensory experiences, funding, staff, program cuts, equity challenges, negative experiences with technology and challenges between the arts and education industries. Positive experiences related to funding opportunities, hiring new staff, a personal creativity boost, and pivoting successes (in terms of equity, fostering community, and technology).

Part 2

Working Digitally

Four key themes were identified through roundtable discussions around “working digitally,” which included 1) digital platforms used by participants, 2) positive aspects about technology and online programming, and 3) challenging aspects about technology and online programming. Positive aspects included developing connections and partaking in opportunities one never expected opportunities to expand accessibility and increasing archival functions. Challenges included a learning curve of adjusting to virtual programming, having a difficult time reaching out and building connections with educators, struggling to provide formative feedback throughout the learning experience, difficulty seeing engagement and fatigue.

Part 3

Future Considerations for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning

Within this section, our findings were categorized into the following sections. Firstly, participants shared that programs and organizations had been forever changed because of the pandemic. Second, discussions around the value of blended learning and visions to maintain this option in the future due to its positive engagement and accessibility. The third section expanded upon the importance of building connections and relationships within collective physical spaces in a post-pandemic world and finally, continuing to foster unique experiences and connections when COVID-19 no longer poses such huge barriers to everyday activities.

Part 4

The Utility and Function of the CNAL *Digital Map for Arts & Learning*

Qualitative data explained that participants craved access to analytics about their organization’s click-rate when public users explored the digital map. This would allow mapped/listed stakeholders to understand the effectiveness of the tool itself. Quantitative data provided insights to understand the need for provide a greater French presence and participation on the map and one possibility could be to market the map to Francophone communities and organizations specifically.

Part 5

Limitations and Considerations for the Future

Of 169 participants at our digital roundtable series three, we received 19 responses to the follow-up survey. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to connect and learn about other organizations and professionals' experiences in arts and learning. Their future recommendations include a moderator

in the roundtable discussions, shorter introductions and more discussion questions, seeking more participants from provinces or territories that were underrepresented, and requesting that the CNAL team searches for more ways to create diversity in the discussion. Quantitative data reinforced these findings, including the support gained from attending these sessions, discovering new technologies and ways to sustain work online, valuing the Digital Map for Arts & Learning as a tool for public service that is likely to be used and recommended to others. Overall, participants would like to attend another session in this series and, several planned to follow up with someone they met through this experience.

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- Part 3: Future Considerations for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning
 - Programs and organizations had been forever changed.

Blended learning will be provided due to its positive engagement and accessibility. The importance of building connections and relationships within collective physical spaces, and finally.

Continuing to foster unique experiences and connections (similar gains through a pandemic, online learning).

Part 4: The Utility and Function of the CNAL *Digital Map for Arts & Learning*

Qualitative Data, Third Roundtable Discussion Series

Quantitative Data, Third Roundtable Discussion Series Follow-Up Survey

Part 5: Limitations and Considerations for the Future

Qualitative Data, Common Experiences in the Digital Roundtable Discussion

Quantitative Data, 5-point Rating Scale (Engagement and Remote Learning)

Overall Summary

Project Overview

Purpose and Description

The Canadian Network for Arts & Learning (CNAL) was born out of a shared belief that arts and learning, formally, informally, and non-formally “enrich, empower, and sustain the lives of individuals and communities” (Larry O’Farrell and Tiina Kukkonen, 2017, Transformative Action and Arts Education). CNAL believes that if decision makers understand the intrinsic value of the arts, then arts program will return to the core of Canadian education and be accessible to children, youth, adults and the older age population.

The overarching purpose of the digital roundtable discussion series were to gain a better understanding of participants’ experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and effects of physical distancing on their work in arts and learning. The first series of digital roundtable discussions took place in March-April 2020 and a follow up series occurred in May 2020. At that time, arts and learning stakeholders were adjusting to the early phases of the pandemic characterized by province or city-wide lockdowns, physical-distancing, and learning how to pivot to carry out their work remotely and/or virtually. As an extension of this work, in November-December 2020, CNAL hosted a third series of digital roundtable discussions entitled, “Navigating arts and learning through a global crisis: building digital capacity and connections.” The objective was to understand if and how the experiences of artists, arts educators, and arts organizations had changed after enduring six more months of the pandemic. More specifically, these digital roundtables examined how participants had been carrying out virtual programming over the last six to nine months, the technology used to support their programs, and how these individuals envisioned their work moving forward in a post-pandemic world.

The national digital roundtable discussion series was made possible by the Canada Council for the Arts and the Azereli Foundation.

Methodology

Considering travel restrictions imposed for the health and safety of all Canadians, the roundtables were held digitally on Zoom, a video conferencing platform. Zoom was successfully used in the previous roundtables and brought participants together, virtually, from across the country. The following list shows the dates of these sessions as well as the province/territory invited to participate in each session.

- November 24th, 2020: British Columbia and Yukon
- November 26th, 2020: Saskatchewan and Manitoba
- November 27th, 2020: Greater Toronto Area
- November 30th, 2020: Albert and Northwest Territories
- November 30th, 2020: Ontario
- December 2nd, 2020: Quebec, Atlantic Canada, and Nunavut
- December 3rd, 2020: National Bilingual Discussion

Sessions were recorded and posted online for the public at the following link:

<https://www.eduarts.ca/navigating-arts-and-learning-through-a-global-crisis-building-digital-capacity-and-connections>

Focus Group Questions

During the digital roundtables, a series of questions were asked of the participants. These included:

1. How are you doing, how are you feeling, and what are you doing currently?
2. What platforms are you using? Are there digital tools that you particularly like?

3. How do you see things progressing post-pandemic? Are you going to continue to use digital platforms and products? Are these changes in programming permanent? What are we preparing for?

Follow-Up Survey

A follow-up survey was distributed to all participants to gather qualitative and quantitative data about the experiences engaging in the digital roundtable discussions. The survey included:

Quantitative Component

The quantitative component of the survey asked questions related to:

1. Experiences engaging in digital roundtable discussions.
 - i. Engagement with other arts and learning professionals
 - ii. Remote learning (technology)
2. The CNAL Digital Map of Arts & Learning utility and functionality
 - iii. Presently
 - iv. Future

Respondents were able to provide feedback in the following ways:

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Qualitative Component

To generate more data, we conducted a follow-up survey about 1) improvements to the Digital Map of Arts & Learning, 2) experiences of the digital roundtable discussions, 3) recommendations and next steps for CNAL during the pandemic and in the future. Participants were asked to answer these questions:

1. Do you have any suggestions for improving The Map or Directory of Online Arts Instruction?
2. Please let us know the most interesting or useful part of the roundtable discussion.
3. Do you have any suggestions for how the Canadian Network for Arts & Learning can continue to support you through the pandemic and into the future?

Participants

A total of 169 people participated in the discussions overall. The non-CNAL participants represented a variety of backgrounds (e.g., visual arts, music, theatre) and positions (e.g., teachers, gallery owners, program coordinators, artistic directors, musicians, dance instructors, etc.) across Canada. In this paper, they may be referred to as artist-educators, teaching-artists, arts organizations, or arts stakeholders.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was generated through the responses to the follow-up survey. Responses were calculated and made into pie charts. Qualitative data was collected through the roundtable discussions. The recorded sessions were reviewed and transcribed. Recurring themes and phrases were noted and categorized by question. Notes from the Francophone discussion were completed by the translator for CNAL, Dominique Denis.

Sections of this Report

Part 1: Experiences of Canadian Arts Stakeholders Eight Months into COVID-19 Pandemic

Part 2: Working Digitally

Part 3: Future Considerations for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning

Part 4: The Utility and Function of the CNAL *Digital Map for Arts & Learning*

Part 5: Limitations and Considerations for the Future

Part 1: Experiences of Canadian Arts Stakeholders Eight Months into the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the third series of roundtable discussions in November and December 2020, The Canadian Network for Arts & Learning (CNAL) team's main objective was to understand the experiences of artists, artist educators, and arts organizations who had endured the last eight months of the COVID-19 global pandemic. More specifically, questions related to 1) what these individuals were doing for work eight months into the pandemic, if anything, and 2) how these individuals were doing emotionally readjusting to life in a global pandemic. Precautionary measures such as social distancing and lockdowns forced many participants to pivot to the remote context and offer programming virtually. This was reported by many, but not all. The roundtable discussions with arts stakeholders illuminated both negative and positive outcomes associated with adjusting to life in these unprecedented times. The following discussion will elaborate on these experiences and findings more closely.

Negative Experiences

A profound sense of loss was shared by participants. The following quote emphasizes the disarray caused by the pandemic in the lives of some artists, artist-educators, and arts organizations.

Prior to the pandemic, I work mostly as an art-educator. I do workshops with kids, summer camps, classes, schools. Basically, I would be the super-spreader if I was at work. I typically bring a whole whack load of instruments such as drums. It is loud and interactive, and the kids touch everything and bang. Over the summer, I tried a few Zoom workshops, but it took the soul out of the work and now it's like this plastic being. No schools are biting at workshops either. I have a very small business but when it was busy, I could hire three or four artists to supply teach for me because I also do workshopping through an arts organization in Ottawa. The artist organization is transitioning artists online, but it is taking a very long time. Everyone is frozen, the schools, the teachers, the artists. So, I am turning into recording and using the funds from COVID-relief to focus on my personal music making because I just don't have enough work.

This participant from Quebec explains the vulnerable position he is still experiencing eight months into the pandemic. Although Quebec, much like other provinces across the country, experienced lockdown and reopening over these eight months, precautionary measures associated with keeping children apart at school and sanitization of communal spaces and/or objects have put many artists or artist-educators in limbo. This participant is not alone in their experience or their emotions towards burn-out and mental health concerns. Other Canadian art stakeholders shared comparable stories explaining losses in clientele, funding, programs, staff, sensory experiences, and most of all, community due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, participants also shared their challenges and frustrations with technology specifically around making meaningful or quality art online. They especially worried about the losses from an equity lens since many youths and their families either lacked access internet and the technology necessary to log into the virtual world. Each of the following sub-categories will be expanded upon:

1. Negative emotions
 - a. Burn-out
 - b. Mental health
2. Client losses

3. Community losses
4. Sensory experience losses
5. Funding losses
6. Staff losses
7. Program cuts
8. Equity challenges
9. Negative experiences with technology
10. Challenges between the arts and education industries

1. Negative Emotions

Today, people worldwide are experiencing the emotional exhaustion associated with living through a pandemic. In particular, the artists and representatives at the roundtable discussions across Canada discussed negative emotions such as burn-out and poor mental health. To examine this more closely, the following quotes and analysis will explain the emotional experiences of participants after eight months of the pandemic. To set the tone for this section, one artist-educator in Alberta explained how they felt:

As of yesterday, students were told that they will be at home once again and learning virtually. So I feel like I want to cry today. It is hard to navigate family and teaching my students who cannot be with their peers. I get it, we have to do this, but I am feeling a rollercoaster of emotions. I feel for the teachers so I want to support teachers. We're behind at the National Arts Centre but we will get there.

While these sensitive emotional experiences were shared by participants, they also articulated a sense of hope for the short-term and long-term future. Many discussants, although exhausted, were able to use reasoning to comfort themselves. By this, we mean that they know that their current circumstances are temporary, and that life will become more stable in the future.

a. Burn Out

Burn-out is a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, feelings of cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment (Koutsimani, Montgomery & Georganta, 2019). Artists, arts-organizations representatives, and arts-educators agreed that they were experiencing feelings of burn-out especially because of the need to re-adjust their lives or programs every few months given the different waves of the pandemic and responses by the government to protect citizens from the virus. One participant explains that:

Now that numbers are climbing it feels like anything can be snatched away, the contracts feel like they are going to fall apart. I feel like we are overcoming some hurdles but then there is the next one. A never-ending battle, a touch-and-go situation. Anything artists can provide to teachers is very much needed and we try to do that.

During the roundtables, once one participant shared feelings of burn-out, others felt compelled and comfortable to do the same. The *Arts and Cultural Centre of Sussex* in New Brunswick helped the CNAL team to understand their challenges to pivot online. Because this arts organization operates as a team of four, they would typically rely on volunteer engagement. Since the pandemic, the number of events has decreased but the staff workload has increased dramatically because they cannot access their volunteers as they did in-person. A program director in Nova Scotia explained that it took five months to figure out what to do with their programming and three months “trying to cram as much work as

humanly possible.” Poignantly, she explained her reality working from home supporting an arts organization during the pandemic:

I think people think you have more time when you are working from home, we have been working at 150%. I did not stop. We planned so much, had to plan so much and cancel. I feel like I've been hit in the chest. I know people across the country feel the same thing.

One word that was echoed by participants was “exhaustion.” A Toronto school administrator elaborates on this additional layer of responsibility:

I have all the personal protection equipment (PPE). You can't go near kids who are sick without isolation gloves. We are just trying to keep everyone safe but how do you build connection when you are wearing this barrier? We try so hard because of the mental health piece for the kids, the friendship and doing things that are concrete and visual and hands-on, but it is exhausting. Artists and educators all work so hard helping families and each other but there are so many layers to our day. The safety protocols are exhausting.

People in these industries are working hard to make a positive impact on children however any COVID protocols necessary to offer in-person experiences were referred to as a full-time job in and of themselves.

b. Mental Health

As prefaced by the previous quote, negative mental health was a huge concern for participants, not only for themselves but also for their clients. By sharing their mental health concerns and challenges, participants in the virtual roundtables articulated that they felt a sense of togetherness with other participants in their experience. A teacher from the Toronto Catholic School Board explains:

I'll just echo what [another participant] said. In my board, everyone leaves at 11AM after students go home. Prep time isn't prep time anymore because you are driving home. All those experiences such as talking to colleagues have disappeared. We are in silos, we are in a relentless onslaught of getting technology ready, answering emails, physical Zoom fatigue, and mental impacts. Detachment is necessary in order to maintain equanimity and that has been released from teachers.

Participants, particularly those in the school system in the Greater Toronto Area, described this as a “mental health crisis for staff and students alike” with “no answers to the questions” they have. More specifically,

There are challenges of risk of exposure, it's a balancing act of the energy and pay-off of in-person teaching versus online, or the mental health pay off versus physical health pay off. What is truly valued by the Ministry of Education and our Premier? It is one thing to talk about the protection of the integrity of the arts as performative, communal disciplines and it is quite another to think about the survival of trying to keep the arts offered in a streamlined way in the pandemic. We are seeing a lot of exhaustion, and hope for some answers, and some people stepping up to the plate with leadership and creativity.

A parent and music-educator explained the impact for her child, a music student:

What I have learned from parents, on one side they feel the online program is good to learn music but they don't send kids to daily school anymore. I have often been told that kids have mental health challenges. It's very hard for them, they are not mentally healthy, they don't get to exercise. They no longer have the same passion for music as they used to. I am worried about my kids from risk exposure from COVID-19 but after quite some time I sent them back to school because the mental health is very important. We are ok, but we are not great.

Experiencing personal mental health challenges over the last eight months in the pandemic, professionals developed empathy for their students and for others.

I am pulling out all my coping strategies. Big realization is that you can never assume what others are living and what might be difficult for someone else. Asking people what is going on, is so important. Asking the experience of kids of what it's like. Trying not to assume what people are dealing with has shifted. It's taken more engagement than ever before.

The empathy has resulted in responsive and supportive teaching. There is a shift away from mastery of skill within the arts to focusing on the power of the arts, as a medium for healing, therapeutic benefits, community, and self-regulation of both behaviour and emotions.

2. Client losses

Many artists and artists-educators explained that they pivoted online either immediately or several months after the pandemic began. They created new strategies for their workshops or classes to make them accessible using platforms such as Zoom. Despite innovative approaches and successful integration of arts and technology, many artists, and artists-educators experienced losses in clientele. Some participants explained that competition, particularly competitors offering free virtual workshops to support people through the hardships of stay-at-home orders, decreased demand for their programs and courses. Where artists and arts organizations were successful at maintaining clientele, they explained that fewer people enrolled in their virtual programs and virtual workshops when compared with pre-pandemic enrollment. The *Labrador Creative Arts Festival*, one of the oldest arts festivals in Canada, typically focusses bringing professional artists and Indigenous students together. Their program director explained that a huge barrier to their normal programming is that sixteen of the Indigenous communities they serve are not accessible by road. Before COVID-19, Indigenous students and/or professional artists would fly to or from each other to collaborate. During the pandemic, this has been cut completing. This is in part because of restrictions in the territory and because Indigenous communities are more at-risk and are taking necessary pre-cautions. Where Canadians are continuing to experience lockdowns or strict limitations on interactions outside of their bubbles, the artists, arts-educators, and arts organizations are prepared to, or are exploring how to, transition online.

3. Community losses

There is beauty we are missing these days. Being together, singing together, is affecting me a lot now. There is a lot of people believing and needing the arts.

The more profound and emotional loss to Canadian artists and arts-educators, is the loss of their sense of being *in* community. Even when participants experienced success transitioning their programming virtually, artists, artist-educators and representatives of arts organizations unanimously agreed on the importance and connection of sharing the arts in the same physical collective space. Across the nation, these arts advocates and creatives expressed that the arts remain invaluable, and they share a concern about losing that sense of community through the online space. One practicing high school teacher from Ontario explained that it is not the *same* to engage online because we are not sharing physical space. In his experience, students and teachers are not building the *same* community as they would in-person. There is a sense of being in community that can only be achieved by experiencing the arts together, physically, side-by-side rather than on screen.

Furthermore, the loss of being *in* community was also explained in terms of the ways in which workshops and programs have had to adapt virtually, irrespective of the arts discipline. The program coordinators, educators or artists have had to focus on what individuals *can do* within their own homes and then invite individuals to share their art with peers online. For example, there is less group performance and more monologues removing community feelings. Where band programs have been

cut, there is a focus on body percussion, found instruments, again removing feelings of community taking up space together in an ensemble. Found art materials, such as those available at home, are leveraged to give learning to students equitably. Some artists explained that is challenging to talk to students who are working on different art works simultaneously in group settings. In these ways there is a loss of a sense of community achieved through sharing space, resources, and working on a joint arts activity.

4. *Sensory experience losses*

Pottery is a tactile medium, it is really hard to have tactile effect online. Someone can show you a mug, but you can't hold the mug and see if the handle suits you.

Sensory experiences are a critical component when engaging with and participating in the arts. Roundtable participants, who work in pottery, crafts, and drama shared that over online platforms, such as Zoom, there is a loss of the sensory experiences that artists feel is integral to their teaching and without it, there is a loss for both students and the artist educators themselves. The expression, “*the show must go on,*” captures the feelings of workshop leads who continue to adapt their programs for virtual learning despite these sensory losses.

We minimize what is shared and students must sanitize before and after, then the material is sanitized ... lots of time that is going into cleaning and disinfecting on an hour-by-hour basis. Teachers must wear face masks and face shields, disposable gloves must be used, group work is completely cancelled. We aren't allowed to do dance outdoors or indoors because it increases the odds that students are breathing heavily which makes masks less useful. We are doing our best, but it is a challenge.

This account was shared by a school administrator in the Greater Toronto Area. The precautionary measures to cope with the pandemic in-person take away from the sensory experiences of the arts for students and make the work of educators exhausting.

5. *Funding losses*

Roundtable discussion participants from across Canada shared a wide range of experiences around losses in funding. While some arts organizations were able to tap into federal wage subsidies, little assistance has been received from their provinces. A program director explained her organization's context in Nova Scotia:

I feel like I've been hit in the chest. I know people across the country feel the same thing. The federal wage subsidy and our passionate staff help us, but we have not had any significant assistance from the province. The province was supposed to let us know by the middle of December and we still haven't heard anything. For things like a website which would facilitate the registration for our online workshops, we are reliant on that funding. So, this is really frustrating for us.

Similarly, *Woodland Cultural Centre* in Ontario, an organization related to this experience. *Woodland Cultural Centre's* representative explained that revenues are gone, which requires the organization to rely on funding to maintain itself at this time however funding opportunities have been diminished in the pandemic. A practicing high school teacher in Ontario and member of the Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators (CODE) mentioned that although there are positive connections in the online teaching and learning space, educators and artist-educators are experiencing the funding cuts firsthand. Many small arts organizations are minimizing expenses and letting go of their physical spaces to make insurance payments or other critical expenses. Put bluntly, the president of a Quebecois arts organization said:

There is not a lot of overhead, so we are being bled dry. We are in somewhat hibernation mode. Two artist-educators in Quebec are the same predicament. They decided to use the COVID-relief funds to focus on personal creative expression, such as music making or visual art. They attributed this to not enough work at present and because getting funding for artist residences is a cumbersome process compared to the relatively easy procedure to design a workshop and walk into schools as they once did. One arts organization in the Greater Toronto Area expressed high frustration with similar barriers to access funding intended to support Arts and Culture in Ontario.

We had to do some quick rethinking of things in the summer and at the time we had some funding to do performances in parks. Instead, we adapted and did a virtual performance. It was a huge learning and success. We had digital team including a consultant who was a digital arts student. They helped us create a virtual storytelling experience. It is a website that is online, synchronously mostly, rethinking how to do theatre online. We were inspired by other organizations in paper theatre and filmic theatre, and we used that to build relationships and address some issues around isolation during the pandemic. We compiled all that data as a case-study for us, so we've done the research and development, and now we want funds to move towards paying artists but funding sources for COVID are still a lot around research and development. It's frustrating because we're ready and eager to move forward.

Despite these ongoing challenges, arts-educators, artists, and arts organizations remain resilient, innovative, and patient as they work through the bureaucratic processes to access funding necessary to survive and make a living through the pandemic.

6. Staff losses

The economic implications of the pandemic forced many arts organizations to reduce their staff and restructure their operations *initially*. Checking-in with the arts organizations eight months after the first roundtable discussions allowed the CNAL team to understand whether those changes were permanent or not. As with many of the organizations at the roundtables, *Artshine Incorporated* in Ontario, an organization that would typically teach in-person, initially laid off 45 staff members. They hired back 12 employees in the last few months to sell virtual programs and prescriptions. Similarly, an artist-educator in Quebec explained that as one of 30 temporary employees at *The Museum of Fine Arts*, she was laid off at the beginning of the pandemic. She explained that management has since called back seven of the most senior artist-educators and although that does not include her there is work for others. At *Craft Nova Scotia*, two staff members decided to retire early because of the pandemic so there are only five employees in the office currently. Two employees are working at 80% capacity and only one is full time. These kinds of adjustments and adaptations were present in other arts organizations across the country.

7. Program cuts

Program cuts were necessary for many arts organizations, artists, and artist-educators across Canada; roundtable participants articulated several reasons as to why they had to do so. Given the unanticipated lockdowns, many program coordinators had to delay or cut their programming because they did not have the capacity to move programs virtually in March 2020. They explained that they were unable to pivot the program online due to technology or logistical challenges at the beginning of the pandemic or that their clients, particularly those at-risk, were unable to access the programs virtually. Some of these programs are listed below:

1. **St. Lawrence Academy** musical theatre program was stopped due to COVID (Brockville, Ontario)
2. **Independent practicing artist (retired Faculty of Education professor from Laurentian University)** series of exhibitions were cancelled at the beginning and throughout the pandemic (Ontario).
3. **Shakespeare Performing Arts** cancelled the in-person afterschool program for at-risk youth in March 2020 (Greater Toronto Area, Ontario).
4. **Canadian Music Educator** competition had to cancel events and turn the program into a non-competitive program (Pan-Canadian).
5. **Clay and Paper Theatre** cancelled the puppetry and big images in public spaces before rethinking and adapting the program later (Greater Toronto Area, Ontario).
6. **Peel District School Board** school band programs were cancelled to facilitate safe and equitable learning to students (Greater Toronto Area, Ontario).
7. **Toronto Catholic District School Board** school band programs, singing and any movement of students in and out of visual arts rooms was cancelled (Greater Toronto Area, Ontario).
8. **Soundbone Traditional Arts Foundation** cut community choirs (Newfoundland and Labrador).
9. **Co-Op Collective Vision** cancelled their summer camp program (Quebec).
10. **New Brunswick College of Craft and Design** cancelled programs because students could not access equipment at home such as jewelry torches, pottery wheels, and kilns (New Brunswick).
11. **Craft Nova Scotia** lost a few sessions during the shutdown in March 2020 because of the need to offer in-person classes in studios. Instead of cutting programs completely, many were delayed (Nova Scotia).
12. **Labrador Creative Arts Festival** cancelled their program which would typically fly artists to visit Indigenous students from sixteen communities not accessible by road (Newfoundland and Labrador).

Given that discussions with the participants eight months after the initial shutdowns across Canada, it is important to note that most of the organizations and artists took some time to pause, reimagine, and organize subsequent programming online. They expressed challenges with doing so but were successful in some instances (see “Positive Experiences” on page 17). For example, when *Co-Op Collective Vision* was forced to cancel in-person summer camps, they created a virtual summer camp program although it was not well attended. Small businesses like *Co-Op Collective Vision* were not as well supported by the government to endure the crisis, requiring them to reduce their expenses as mentioned previously, and therefore making it more likely to cut programs.

8. Equity challenges

During the Ontario roundtable discussion, an artist in residence who currently works remotely in Sudbury reminded colleagues of the integral role of the Arts:

We can't forget the agenda of the arts. Multicultural, equity-based, and the empowerment of first literacies.

Participants who work closely with student groups or schools explained very dire equity challenges and disparities between students of higher and lower economic status.

The equity issue is huge. Currently, in the Greater Toronto Area there are at least 14,000 students in the secondary virtual school. They don't have the technology. Some don't have microphones even if they wanted to speak. We are doing terrible. If we have any income, we feel guilty saying that we are struggling.

Educators and arts program coordinators at schools in Ontario could not stress this enough. One participant, a New Brunswick Youth Orchestra lead, explained that the largest part of their operations is to support nine Sistema New Brunswick orchestral programs for 1,100 to 1,200 at-risk youth in a typical school year. In the 2020-2021 school year, the program enrollment fell to 600 to 700 students; inequity is at the root of this issue explained the roundtable participant. Partner school districts are not able to guarantee any school transport and the program operates out of school facilities, so numbers have been diminished. Given that Sistema students are at-risk and may come from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, programming that is online may not be accessible to students without technology or with limited technology. Another example is that of *Prairie Debut, Calgary*, which is an organization that typically tours rural communities and schools across Canada. During the pandemic they have been compiling resources for these groups instead of travelling however their representative explained that accessibility and delivery to the community is incredibly challenging.

It is important to explain that four programs serving at-risk artists and at-risk communities, rather than students specifically, were immediately cut when the pandemic first began. However, these organizations shared their success at pivoting online over the past eight months since initial lockdowns. This includes two organizations in Ontario, including two in the Greater Toronto Area.

9. Negative experiences with technology

In Part Two of this report entitled, "Working Digitally," we expand on the challenges with technology endured by participants. It is worthwhile to examine a few specific experiences closer in this section. Independent teaching-artists working from home expressed the many contrasting experiences with technology. For example, one mentioned:

Asynchronous way does not work for me. I miss body language, so I have struggled.

While others took to technology quite eagerly and used it as a vehicle for co-learning between teacher and student. An Ontario high school drama teacher explained:

I have learned a lot from my students in their expertise, that has shaped my learning too, for example using Tik Tok for performances. I am less overwhelmed and now more seeing possibility [with technology].

As such, there was a movement towards using technology to be creative while teacher and student simultaneously explored the possibilities of arts learning in unprecedented times. Interestingly, only one roundtable participant raised the issue of privacy concerns using technology and the need to safeguard students:

I've wondered about privacy and security because we [artist-educators] are not being monitored by a teacher. VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) issues must be being dealt with. One student had an incredibly hard time getting a reference letter from me after the first work-from-home order. We had to jump through so many hoops to get contact information just to connect which is a shame because they would typically walk into my class and ask me directly.

For arts organizations who did not immediately pivot online given the nuance of technology and virtual learning, they took their time to fully explore possibilities of virtual programming before gradually pivoting programs to the virtual world. After preparation and learning new technology, a deliverable for schools was eventually produced. Unfortunately, by the time they were ready to share this product with schools, there was less interest causing frustration and further challenges. For more information about the experiences of “Working Digitally” please go to page 20.

10. Challenges between the arts and education industries

Roundtable participants from one, or both, the arts and education industries explained discrepancies between the two. Artists explained:

We are doing everything we can to have the teachers use this huge grant, but it is very difficult. We are currently at one third of our target this year and we are already three months in the school year. Today we are publishing a catalogue including education program competencies, and what each artist educator can offer which will go up on our website. The last thing we want to be is perceived as insensitive or pressuring teachers. Apparently, there is an increased need for teachers to engage secondary students who are checking out currently and they are looking to community for resources, but they are also dealing with living in a pandemic in their classrooms, so it is very difficult to engage them.

Many artists and arts organizations shared ongoing challenges in accessing teachers or finding ways for teachers to access their programs. This knowledge translation gap is necessary to fill so that professionals in both industries can support one another.

A huge concern shared by arts-educators was the privatization of arts education induced by the pandemic:

I was trained as an art-educator, not a teaching-artist, which are two different things. I think in this COVID era artists are thinking let's go into the school and do workshops. So, it puts art educators in a difficult place. I run 4 sections of dance classes and the music program after-school. Why is it offered after-school not during class? This is something to be concerned about. I have students in Grade 10, and they are currently doing their first painting because they never painted in elementary. There is a lack and inconsistency of arts being offered. My objective is to do art in the school. If this wasn't offered after-school, there would be no arts at the school at all. We need to think about what is happening to our youth right now and COVID is another impeachment. We must continue fighting that cause. RoundTable participants listened and responded to one another through the sharing negative experiences. By illuminating the diverse perspectives and experiences of different professionals in the arts and education industries across Canada, we hope that these findings this will benefit stakeholders. We encourage colleagues, educators, artists, and arts program developers take these negative experiences and consider how to build upon the innovative work that is being carried out, bridging gaps, and creating opportunities for collaboration and learning together.

Positive Experiences

Emotionally charged memories, such as those shared by participants in the third series of our roundtable discussions, were not limited to negative experiences. Many stakeholders shared positive experiences, which provide hope for the short-term and long-term future of the arts and arts education.

Unanticipated triumphs may outlast the pandemic according to some participants. The following subcategories will be expanded upon further in the following section:

1. Funding opportunities
2. Hiring new staff
3. Personal creativity boost
4. Pivoting successes
 - a. Equity successes
 - b. Fostering community
 - c. Technology success

1. Funding opportunities

Only two organizations were able to access funding more easily in the pandemic. The first was *English Language Arts Network* in Quebec who shared how their funding pre-pandemic allowed them to pivot online immediately.

We have funding through Quebec although working with schools this year is an incredible challenge. We made our art workshops virtual and available immediately once the pandemic hit. We did this from April 2020 to August 2020, after which we asked our funder if we could move funding from school to offering arts and culture in homes. With approval, we created and published a guide about effective ways to deliver high quality arts experiences. Whether an artist is delivering in this manner (one to many screens) or whether they are coming into a classroom and the teacher is with their students, this guide is helpful.

Those that did secure funding throughout the pandemic expressed deep gratitude. More specifically, the *Arts and Cultural Centre of Sussex* in New Brunswick, received grants and felt lucky given that others were struggling through the pandemic and *Soundbone Traditional Arts Festival* in Nova Scotia, funded by the Arts Council, was grateful to be able to continue their work with international choirs in the United Kingdom and Germany.

2. Hiring new staff

As mentioned in the previous section of this report, some organizations let go of staff and were able to hire a small number of these employees back as the pandemic progressed. However, one organization shared the unique experience of hiring a new staff member in the pandemic:

I have someone that I hired online, and I've never met her in-person, but she happens to have the skillset that we need at this time. We are a team of 12 doing so much.

Website development skillsets, referenced in this quote, were necessary for organizations to pivot remotely if they didn't currently have that expertise in their workforce and if they were financially able to hire the additional expertise. The *Arts and Cultural Centre of Sussex* in New Brunswick also sought out staff with technical skills such as marketing, communications, and digital workshop providers. These were the few experiences in which new hires were discussed by roundtable discussants reflecting on the past eight months.

3. Personal creativity boost

For participants who found themselves with spare time and/or a lull in work, artists explained that they were being "nourished by the arts." Artist-educators and teaching-artists expressed a sense of

gratitude for the fact that they were able to turn inwards and be creative through the pandemic. More specifically, one artist-educator in Sudbury Ontario spoke to this point:

I did an online challenge through quarantine which required me to show up every day for 10 minutes. I found my voice through this; I used that emergent sensation and voice to create a performance. So, thereafter I put it online and got asked to do a show.

Two other artists explained that they recorded music or did more visual art. Here is another experience:

I have had my work explode in the pandemic creatively and as a teaching artist.

Therefore, it was evident that a silver lining in the pandemic for some artists and educators was unanticipated personal creativity boost.

4. Pivoting success

Although there were many negative experiences shared throughout the roundtable discussion series three, there were positive experiences related to pivoting successfully online or in-person with COVID-19 precautionary measures in place. *The New Brunswick Youth Orchestra's* 70 to 90 auditioned members are operating in sectional bubbles when they can rehearse physically together in compliance with health and safety regulations. Similarly, *New Brunswick College of Craft and Design* was forced online when the pandemic initially began but eight months later 260 students are attending the college in-person with space between kilns, knitting machines and jewelry stations. These in-person programs were not prevalent in Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec.

a. Equity

Two organizations diligently created "Take and Makes," which are kits including art materials so that people could do arts activities at home. One artist-educator in Sudbury, Ontario shared their experience in creating 20 tutorials that are equity based:

I work in schools doing these long project-based art forms with teachers and students. They are all equitable videos, based off very little materials. I like to support new organizations in creating these programs.

These were particularly useful for lower-income students and clients who did not have the resources to afford such opportunities otherwise. In Saskatchewan, *Mann Art Gallery*, adapted programs online and provided marginalized groups with three various kits which included a licensed artist's coloring pages and activity books. However, given the challenges associated with such a cumbersome project, this was not a popular option by most arts organizations or artists.

b. Fostering Community

Fostering community was a huge topic of conversation in the sharing of experiences across the nation. Although there were losses to community felt by some, other organizations such as *Clay and Paper Theatre* in the GTA explained how they "were being welcomed into homes [virtually] seeing isolation and loneliness" and that connections online brought people together through these trying times. *The Art Gallery of Grand Prairie* in Alberta shared that upon their re-opening in early June 2020, the team coordinated a community art installation in response to COVID-19. Community members of all ages and backgrounds were invited to share artwork with the gallery which was on display consistently until the end of September 2020. Submissions included visual art, music, poems, and photography. Some work even went into the permanent collection at the art gallery and created a cultural archive. Intentional community building arts experiences were recognized to be of great value to facilitators and clients. Another positive experience was shared by *Art Wheel Studio*:

It's been wonderful. When I look at a student, I realized I have been given the opportunity of a whole world. I see archived and joined organization. I am meeting with people across the world. For the children and seniors, this just open the lines of communication for them. We need to acknowledge that it's not stale – it's a living thing. As an individual, you must be arranged to a bigger group.

Arts learning, offered virtually and in-person with safety precautions, created community and maintained community throughout the shared, but unique, experiences of individuals living through the pandemic.

c. Technology Success

In Part 2 entitled, “Working Digitally,” we will expand upon the positive aspects of technology shared by participants however positive emotional experiences related to technology were also relayed: *We have had a lot of fun trying to learn new things online. I never thought I would sit on Zoom as much as I have considering I wouldn't sit on Facetime with family. I've been watching my neighbors, or other craft councils.*

Participants who expressed enjoyment for using technology to provide programming were not alone but also not the majority. Another participant shared:

With libraries, it is all online stuff. I do feel comfortable online, I have been testing it on friends, and I feel more comfortable than I ever thought I would which is cool too.

Well-established organizations were pleasantly surprised with the opportunity to reinvent themselves after many years. The *Labrador Creative Arts Festival* explained their new program considering the pandemic:

We are going to invite artists to do virtual workshops, subscribed to different schools and different ages of students (K-12). Some of these workshops will be short and some long. For example, we'll have five days of workshops leading to performance on the final day, which will be recorded and then we will have a virtual festival once they are all completed. We have everything from a Bollywood Dancer working with an Inuit Drum group. Another dealing workshop dealing with the reaction to COVID-19 through theatre and dance. We hope we will only have to do this this one year. It is good for us to have to reinvent our festival after 45 years of doing things the same way.

As mentioned by this arts program coordinator, while some arts and learning professionals did have positive experiences pivoting programs due to the pandemic, many expressed that these are merely short-term solutions in anticipation of the world returning “back to normal” in the future. That is not to say they won't take these experiences into consideration in the future which will be explained further in Part 3 entitled, “Future Considerations for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning.”

Specific Activities

The specific activities carried out by arts organizations, teacher-artists, and artist-educators, are described below.

1. Hybrid programs

Many organizations chose to create hybrid programming. Hybrid programs included a mix of in-person programs (with safety precautions) and online programs. For example:

- a. **A piano teacher** running a small studio for 38 students has created hybrid recitals – students can safely upload a video performance and share with anyone they want (Ontario)
- b. **A piano teacher** running a small studio, Zoom classes for some and in-person classes with sanitization for others. Recitals on YouTube (Calgary)
- c. **An Art Gallery** in Oshawa remains open and running virtual programs (programming, exhibitions, and family events) since the beginning of the pandemic. Currently, they are working on school programming (pre-recorded tours and live-studio workshops for seniors). The gallery had one in-person session before the shutdown occurred again/ This session was with adults with special needs and the caretakers (Ontario).
- d. **A Museum** in Oakville's Recreational Cultural Department pivoted very quickly to do virtual and online offerings and is now looking at the mix between virtual and in-person around arts and education outreach (Ontario).

2. Support for other artists

A few arts organizations, artist-educators, and teaching-artists who pivoted successfully during the early stages of the pandemic chose to support other artists during the pandemic by creating informative guides and resources from what they learned. Specifically, *English Language Arts Network in Quebec* explained:

We have created and published a guide about effective ways to deliver high quality experiences. Whether an artist is delivering in this manner (one to many screens) or whether they are coming into a classroom and the teacher is with their students.

These kinds of resources will be shared on the CNAL website.

3. Virtual programs

As expected, many programs were completely virtual and have remained so to endure the pandemic and persistent changes in health and safety recommendations. Examples of these kinds of programs include:

- a. Virtual school
- b. Virtual modules
- c. Virtual workshops for students
- d. Virtual private and group classes
- e. Selling virtual programs and subscriptions
- f. Online art packages
- g. Metis artist program online
- h. Turning productions into a podcast
- i. Art gallery online programming and exhibitions
- j. “Senior Centers Without Walls” using telephone to connect with seniors
- k. Creative arts full-day program: academics in the morning and arts in the afternoon
- l. Five-minute video series: including 12 music body-breaks
- m. Recording audio and making 2D puppets that will be animated
- n. YouTube and Facebook video rehearsals, online ensembles, online concerts
- o. Virtual storytelling experience

Part 2: Working Digitally

Within the digital roundtable discussion series, participants were asked to shed light on their experiences working with technology and online programming. This section of the report will be divided into three sections:

1. Digital platforms used by participants
2. Positive aspects about technology and online programming
3. Challenging aspects about technology and online programming

1. Digital platforms used by participants

The platforms included below were mentioned in the online discussions. CNAL has also compiled a list of resources for the arts and learning sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included arts-specific resources, links for digital learning, collaboration and skill sharing sites, and additional digital platforms for collaboration: <https://www.eduarts.ca/resources-for-the-arts-and-learning-sector-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>

- Accepted
 - This tool is useful for users looking to move auditions online, simplifying the entire digital process (accepting online video auditions, collecting applications, scheduling, customizing rubrics, processing payments)
 - Students can submit their repertoire, music sheet and recordings via this platform
 - Audition room can be set up between one another
 - Similar asynchronous platform to “Slide Room”
- Audio Bridge
 - A tool for music teachers where students can record their vocal lines and create up to a ten-part harmony
 - Useful for compiling virtual music online – and free!
- Brightspace
 - A cloud-based learning platform that works on any device
 - Allows you to create engaging online courses (helpful to transition in-person to online courses)
 - Individualized learning plans can be created on here (gamification, social tools, video features)
- Cadenza
 - An online tool for music teachers and music students to communicate with each other and manage their lessons (keeping track of musical goals, creating practice plans, commenting on recordings of videos)
 - Not limited to use during music classes, students can use the tool in their own time too
- Dropbox
 - A workspace that houses synchronized files in one space
 - Customizable organization using folders
- Facebook
 - Useful to promoting and boosting community outreach and engagement
 - Allows live streaming of recitals, concerts, workshops and more
- Google Classroom

- Makes teaching more productive and meaningful by streamlining assignments, boosting collaboration, and fostering communication
- Educators can create Google classrooms to distribute assignments, send feedback, and store everything in one place for students
- Integrates with other Google tools like Google Docs and Google Drive
- More security compared to Zoom
- Google Meet
 - Video meetings
 - Free for everyone including those without a user
- Jam Kazam
 - Users can create music in real-time with other musicians virtually as if they are were physically in the same room with one another
 - Performances can be recorded, shared, and broadcasted through live streaming to friends, family and fans
 - Helpful for choral rehearsals
- Miro
 - Virtual whiteboard – like live editing feature in Google Docs
 - Create visuals including flowcharts, drawings and import different files
 - Free trial includes three boards
 - Purchasing an account allows access to unlimited boards
- Slide Room
 - A platform based in the United States
 - Asynchronous platform to gather registration, and students can submit their repertoire, music sheet and recordings
- ReStream
 - An online live streaming platform that is compatible with other software's such as Zoom and Facebook
 - Can simultaneously record video and screen
- YouTube
 - Useful for hosting recitals and live streaming
- Zoom
 - Most popular platform
 - Video communications platform for video and audio conferencing, collaboration, chat, and webinars across mobile devices, desktops, telephones, and room systems
 - Participants stated that they liked the screen sharing function
 - User friendly
- Other Technological Considerations
 - Multi-camera set-up
 - Some arts instructors have two cameras, one capturing their teaching and the second capturing their art making.
 - During live drawing sessions, multiple cameras are set up at different angles/perspectives to allow remote participants to choose them
 - Virtual Assistant

- Participants expressed the difficulty of managing the chat features (included on Zoom), their physical environment, and the virtual environment with participants through video and audio
- Virtual assistants can be helpful to managing the chat, typing written reminders, and allow arts-educators to focus on the arts

1. *Positive aspects about technology and online programming*

Within the discussion about technology and online programming, many overlapping themes were identified by our team including: (a) developing connections and engaging in unanticipated opportunities, (b) expanding accessibility through technology and (c) increasing archival functions and intuition for the future.

a. *Developing connections and engaging in unanticipated opportunities*

- Given that artists and arts organizations have been using online platforms to communicate and collaborate, many arts programs, studios and arts organizations have served a wider audience, including those across the country and globe.
- One participant described, “*the [online] tools allow us to connect internationally ... reach people across geographic boundaries, create partnerships and wholesome community within the arts*”.
- Programs that have been able to connect with international artists and organizations explained that they have provided enriching opportunities for students and the relationships between organizations.
- With synchronous and asynchronous online courses/lessons, students located in remote communities or in other provinces have successfully enrolled in programs they may never have been able to access before.

b. *Expanding accessibility through technology*

- Hosting programs virtually has allowed program coordinators to realize the potential to expanding community engagement through outreach thus accommodating for a wider audience.
- Using tools like Facebook to “boost” and market arts programs online, arts stakeholders have noticed that audience engagement has moved outside previously targeted audiences.
- Many tools have functions to allow clients to engage both during and after events with live and recorded streams increasing the accessibility to the events.

c. *Increasing archival functions*

- Representatives, particularly from galleries and other arts programs, explained lesson plans and teaching materials are not typically consolidated electronically because of the reliance on physical copies. Given the pandemic and needing to work online, many arts programs have been able to archive their work.
- Organizations or artists who transitioned their programming online or to a hybrid format expressed that this has and will influence their approaches post-pandemic (see “Future Consideration for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning” on page 24).

2. *Challenging aspects of technology and online programming*

Many participants expressed challenges when it comes to navigating technology and online programming. Below is a list of challenges expressed during the digital roundtable discussions:

- a. The learning curve while transitioning to virtual programming
 - Many participants stated that they are “not technologically savvy.”
 - The learning curve including challenges associated with Resources, technology platforms or devices and technological knowledge creating a barrier for artists/arts program coordinators at the beginning of the pandemic – not everyone had the necessary understanding of online platforms that could be useful prior to COVID-19.
- b. Accessing and building connections with educators was difficult
 - Participants in both Alberta and the Northwest Territories explained that “*Teachers are exhausted in the pandemic.*”
 - Many boards reportedly declined art services by arts programs and organizations who had previous connections. This was said to be due to the difficult and overwhelming transition teachers are experiencing this school year.
 - With limited connections, fewer arts programs have been able to continue their work with school-aged students and youth since there is now a barrier to them and/or creating relationships digitally with school boards is increasingly difficult.
- c. Arts-educators struggled with providing formative feedback throughout learning experience online
 - Prior to COVID-19, educators would be able to see students learning and experiment with new concepts, tools and techniques. With online learning, many educators are missing these hands-on teaching moments which were useful for evaluation and assessment for learning in order to support student learning better.
 - With more independent times for students to “go off” and explore by themselves, educators mentioned that they are missing opportunities to assess the artistic process which was possible in-person. Instead, some educators explained that they are only seeing final submissions which limit the support to students’ creative process embedded with curriculum.
- d. Difficulty seeing engagement
 - Students without videos or audio turned on during class timed, facilitators reported that it can be hard understand student engagement, comprehension, and progress in their learning.
- e. Fatigue
 - Some participants expressed battle with the expectations they hold for themselves, their working community and their clients they are serving.
 - Balancing screen time is said to be exhausting and associated with personal guilt.

Part 3: Future Considerations for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning

The CNAL participants were prompted to consider their plans in a post-pandemic world. Two questions were of particular interest, 1) Were participants going to continue to use digital platforms and products? 2) Were these changes in their programming permanent? This section articulates themes and perspectives shared by arts stakeholders based on their responses. Most arts organizations and representatives did not respond to the question, perhaps because the future is unknown and because planning now is focused on mitigating the impositions created by the pandemic. Based on the data collected, the themes generated include:

1. Programs and organizations have been forever changed.
2. Blended learning will be provided in the future due to its positive engagement and accessibility.
3. The importance of building connections and relationships within shared physical spaces as soon as possible.
4. Following up on connections made during the pandemic in the online world.

1. Programs and organizations have been changed forever

During the National Bilingual roundtable, a musician clearly articulated the value in learning from the experiences during the pandemic,

It would be unfortunate not to learn from the lessons that we have endured in the pandemic... why would I want to go back to the way I was before? Because first, it's impossible, as this is a part of my life experience. So collectively, this is our life experience, and why would we want to throw that out? There are ways I must deal with what I am doing and learning to manage the ways I am on the screen. Let's take the lessons and move forward with them.

This participant from Quebec emphasizes that there is no "going back" to a pre-pandemic world and nor should there be. Over the last eight months, arts-educators and program developers have gained enormously in relation to understanding the intersection between the arts, education and technology. Across Canada, people within these industries demonstrated innovation, resilience and flexibility. Since arts stakeholders have invested time, resources, energy and emotional support to their community, roundtable participants believed that they should leverage these developments to dictate the future of arts, learning, and the industry at large. The "lessons" and community gained are invaluable. Arts stakeholders anticipate that these lessons will be vital and supportive of a smoother transition back to in-person learning post-pandemic.

I think this digital aspect of our sector will continue to progress; there are so many aspects of our work that thrive in our analogue. If we are innovative and learn the tools (which fall outside of our practice and our sector), then we can move forward with the changing time (Voice with Purpose, National Bilingual Discussion).

This is an account shared by an arts-educator and researcher explaining the value of digital tools for arts and learning. An Anishinaabe playwright and actor reminds the community that "*the online platform is a supplementary but not temporary piece.*" Arts organizations can and should at least consider hybrid models given that technology may provide unique and diverse opportunities for students.

2. Blended learning will be provided in the future due to its positive engagement and accessibility

Like many organizations, a representative from *The Conservatory of Performing Arts* in Saskatchewan valued the option to streamline communication on virtual platforms. To reiterate, this opens the possibilities of learning for students and their families and allows greater access materials and content from the comfort of their homes. *Clay and Paper Theatre* member shared their intentions of blending both digital and face-to-face experiences.

To some degree, we will try and incorporate some of the digital experience and lessons we have learned through the certain advantages we have seen online. Through the Third Eye project, we saw single people online on their own or families joining in our workshop online. Feedback from parents about the process with their own children allowed us to realize how quickly and how impactful the work was while working on it together as a family unit at home. They were not completely isolated. Ultimately, we work in public space to make art as accessible as we possibly can... In the future, we may do some online workshops and then allow people to bring that learning to an in-person component. The work [Third Eye project] we developed online will remain as a backup because we don't have the resources to maintain both the live and digital work.

Resources may limit an organization's ability to provide hybrid programs in the future however there is evidence to make a case for such programs particularly if accessibility and inclusion remain a priority.

3. The importance of building connections and relationships within shared physical spaces as soon as possible

Many, if not all the participants, stressed that we cannot “*forget the importance and connection together in the same collective space*” (*Winnipeg Writer's Guild*). When asked about the future one participant from Alberta explained that they believe there will be a “*rebirth of live music*” and that people who were taking it for granted before are likely waiting to get back to a shared space. Feeding of this point, another from Ontario explained that it is “*not the same engagement online as you would through a shared-space... we are not building the same community.*” Consequentially, social and emotional learning may be lost by students who are missing community building opportunities in person. More specifically,

Online you can reach out to many communities, but I'm concerned we can't practice those social skills. How can we nurture that empathy, perspective-taking, that happens automatically in person? (Shadow Land Theory, Greater Toronto Area)

The concern around relationship building online versus in a physical, shared space were sources of worry for many roundtable discussants. Participants explained that the spaces where the activities occur have a profound affect learning, creativity and performing.

Throughout this digital learning experience, many found pieces of the arts experiences missing or not being the “same” as it once in a shared space. For example, one participant shared how virtual concerts/recitals did not move them to the same degree. Areas of process and performance are being shaped differently through online platforms and thus not formulating the same nostalgia that once was pre-pandemic. This emphasizes that the performing arts such as music, dance, and theatre, in a remote context raise questions about authenticity and do feel like a changed experience all together.

4. Following up on the connections created during the pandemic in the online world

Building partnerships, collaborations and connections between professionals was advanced using technology. For example,

Connections and bridges with stakeholders outside of the province and out of the country have been and are continuing to be developed. It started in the digital and may evolve to an in-person community (Free Flow, Saskatchewan).

These connections between arts organizations and stakeholders are hoping to flourish post-pandemic. Emergent international or cross-country partnerships could advance the future of the arts and education industries. Cutting down on the expenses associated with importing skilled international staff can open the possibilities for more of these experiences. Of course, this can enrich learning for and within arts organizations as well as their students.

From experience shifting from in-person to virtual, I understand how you are feeling that it is nearly impossible to replicate the in-person experience (feelings, sharing space, the magic of the arts), but you're right the online virtual delivery is so cool reaching further beyond what we had imagined pre-Pandemic. (Alberta)

Exploring possibilities for partnerships is now more feasible than ever.

PART 4: The Utility and Function of the CNAL *Digital Map for Arts & Learning*

This component of the third digital roundtable series included focused questions about the utility and function the CNAL Digital Map for Arts & Learning. The CNAL team demonstrated the functions and capabilities of the Map for those who were less familiar. The team asked the artists, arts educators, arts organizations and other participants for feedback which is detailed below. The CNAL Digital Map for Arts & Learning can be found at the following link: <https://www.eduarts.ca/canadas-map>.

Qualitative Data, Third Roundtable Discussion Series

The first suggestion was to provide analytics to organizations listed on the Map. Audience engagement, such as data about the number of views and click-rate, would be useful to the listed organization to understand the effectiveness of the map as a tool to them. Given that many funding applications are requesting demographic information of targeted audiences and traffic data, these statistics may even be useful to funding applications. The Digital Map of Arts & Learning team is currently working to provide this information by upgrading to the Map's interface.

Quantitative Data, Third Roundtable Discussion Series Follow Up Survey

A follow-up survey was conducted after this discussion roundtable series which collected response to the question, "Do you have any suggestions for improving The Map or Directory of Online Arts Instruction?" We received ten follow-up surveys including the following suggestions:

- *Would it be possible to see more French presence and participation?*
- *Could there be more publicity and advertising to introduce the tool in Francophone communities?*
- *I would suggest presenting the tool to French organizations.*

Within the map itself, users can search for French contacts offering community programs, school programs and French schools. This can be found by filtering for "French" under the language category. However, it is worth noting that at present the platform itself is English which may create barriers for engagement of Francophone people.

PART 5: Limitations and Considerations for the Future

This final section of the report includes limitations to the experiences of participants in the digital roundtable discussion. These responses were gained through quantitative and qualitative follow-up survey. While we hosted 169 participants in total, we received 19 responses to the follow-up survey; therefore, these experiences speak to some, but not all, perspectives.

Experiences of Engagement through the Digital Roundtable Discussion

Participants answered qualitative and quantitative questions to communicate their experiences within the roundtable discussion series. Within the following two sections, 1) common experiences deemed useful or interesting (qualitative data) and 2) graphic data will be shared.

1. Qualitative Data, Common Experiences in the Digital Roundtable Discussion

The question, “Let us know the most interesting or useful part of the roundtable discussion,” elicited many responses. More than half of the overall 19 responses shared how these discussions were interesting simply because participants could hear how different organizations and programs have adjusted during this time period.

I really enjoyed hearing how everyone was doing and how they are coping through the pandemic.

Learning people's thoughts and feelings about online learning and their own struggles and successes was interesting.

I liked the opportunity to meet others and to share our stories about how the pandemic is impacting us. It is good not to feel so isolated during these times.

Many articulated how this discussion provided space for support, gain connections and networking. For example, one participant shared,

Without a moderator, it becomes a great channel to share personal experiences but not necessary a good tool for development or fruitful discussions between the members.

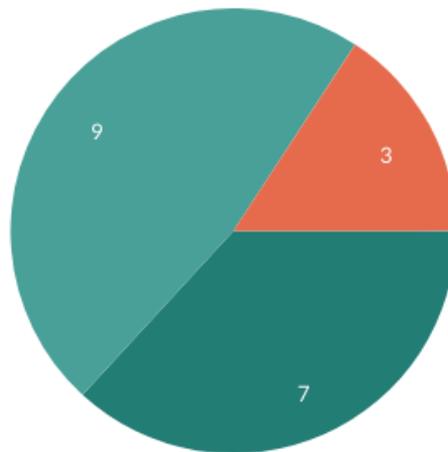
By facilitating a collective space to reflect on personal experiences, the roundtable discussions allowed many people within these industries to connect. Per recommendation, roundtable discussions may benefit from a moderator. The following list highlights suggestions by participants for future roundtable discussions:

1. Introductions felt lengthy – perhaps limiting them to a time frame to have more time for discussion questions.
2. “Find ways to make these sessions more diverse in insight and opinions.”
3. “I was the only participant from Yukon which made the conversation interesting but not too relevant for me.”

2. Quantitative Data, 5-point Rating Scale (Engagement and Remote learning)

The following graphs depict participants responses to the follow-up survey using a 5-point rating scale. Each question is included in the title of the graph.

I think **Canada's Map of Arts & Learning** is a useful tool for increasing public access and discoverability of arts and learning opportunities online.



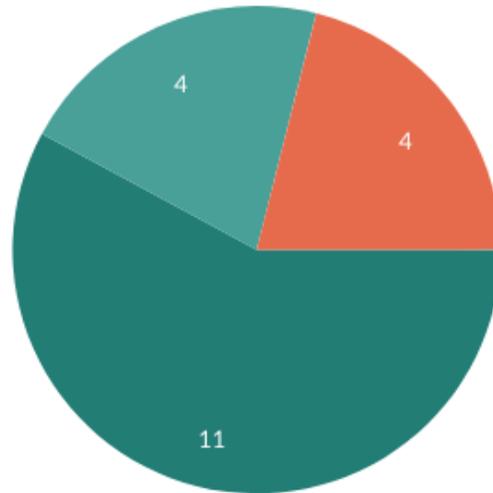
Strongly Agree (36.84%) Agree (47.37%) Neutral (15.79%)

I am likely to use **The Map and Directory of Online Arts Instruction** in the future.



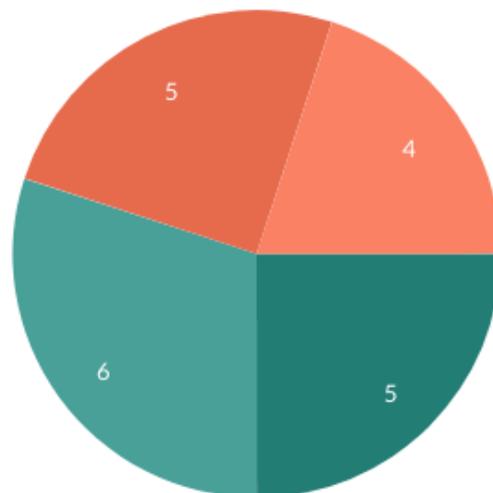
Strongly Agree (31.58%) Agree (42.11%) Neutral (26.32%)

It was helpful for me to hear other people's experiences during the pandemic.



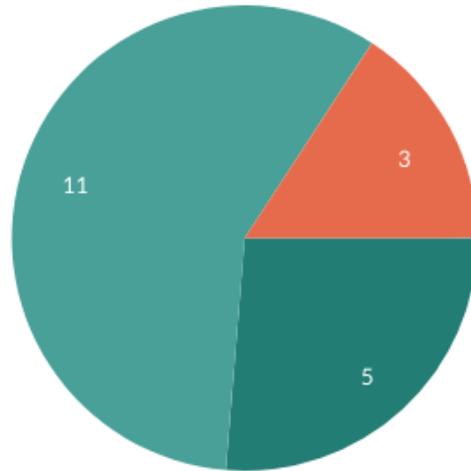
Strongly Agree (57.89%) Agree (21.05%) Neutral (21.05%)

The discussion offered support for me in my current situation.



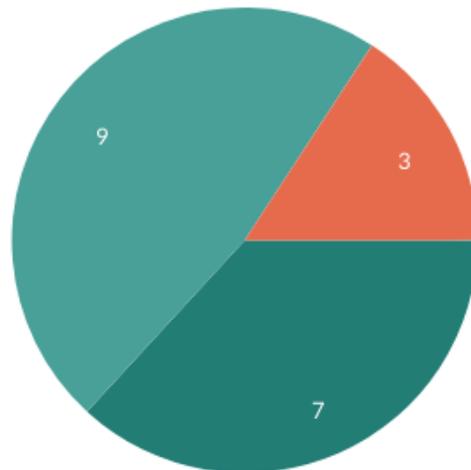
Strongly Agree (25%) Agree (30%) Neutral (25%) Disagree (20%)

I am likely to recommend **The Map and Online Directory** to others.



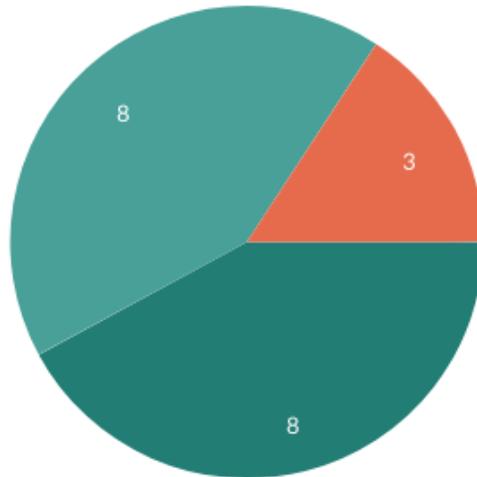
Strongly Agree (26.32%) Agree (57.89%) Neutral (15.79%)

I would like to attend another **roundtable discussion or webinar**.



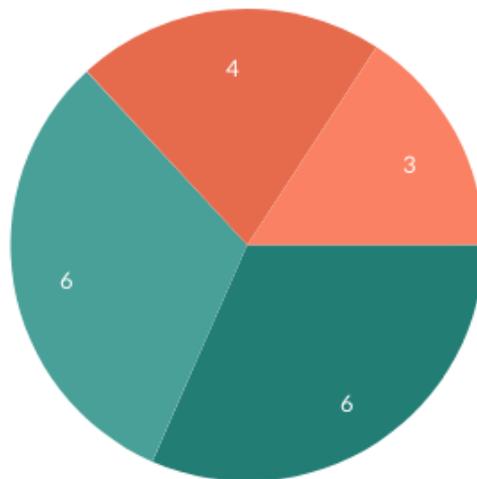
Strongly Agree (36.84%) Agree (47.37%) Neutral (15.79%)

I discovered ways that other arts and learning professionals are sustaining and developing their work online.



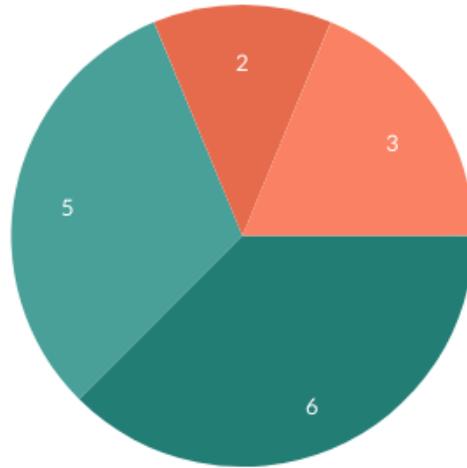
Strongly Agree (42.11%) Agree (42.11%) Neutral (15.79%)

I discovered new technology being used to facilitate online arts instruction.



Strongly Agree (31.58%) Agree (31.58%) Neutral (21.05%) Disagree (15.79%)

I have, or I plan to follow-up with someone I met through the discussion.



■ Strongly Agree (37.5%) ■ Agree (31.25%) ■ Neutral (12.5%) ■ Disagree (18.75%)

Overall Summary

Part 1

Experiences of Canadian Arts Stakeholders Eight Months into COVID-19 Pandemic

Negative and positive experiences were shared by participants across Canada. Negative experiences outweighed positive experiences. These included negative emotions (burn-out and mental health challenges), losses in clients, community, sensory experiences, funding, staff, program cuts, equity challenges, negative experiences with technology and challenges between the arts and education industries. Positive experiences related to funding opportunities, hiring new staff, a personal creativity boost, and pivoting successes (in terms of equity, fostering community, and technology).

Part 2

Working Digitally

Four key themes were identified through roundtable discussions around “working digitally,” which included 1) digital platforms used by participants, 2) positive aspects about technology and online programming, and 3) challenging aspects about technology and online programming. Positive aspects included developing connections and partaking in opportunities one never expected opportunities to expand accessibility and increasing archival functions. Challenges included a learning curve of adjusting to virtual programming, having a difficult time reaching out and building connections with educators, struggling to provide formative feedback throughout the learning experience, difficulty seeing engagement and fatigue.

Part 3

Future Considerations for the Post-Pandemic World of Arts and Learning

Within this section, our findings were categorized into the following sections. Firstly, participants shared that programs and organizations had been forever changed because of the pandemic. Second, discussions around the value of blended learning and visions to maintain this option in the future due to its positive engagement and accessibility. The third section expanded upon the importance of building connections and relationships within collective physical spaces in a post-pandemic world and finally, continuing to foster unique experiences and connections when COVID-19 no longer poses such huge barriers to everyday activities.

Part 4

The Utility and Function of the CNAL *Digital Map for Arts & Learning*

Qualitative data explained that participants craved access to analytics about their organization’s click-rate when public users explored the digital map. This would allow mapped/listed stakeholders to understand the effectiveness of the tool itself. Quantitative data provided insights to understand the need for provide a greater French presence and participation on the map and one possibility could be to market the map to Francophone communities and organizations specifically.

Part 5

Limitations and Considerations for the Future

Of 169 participants at our digital roundtable series three, we received 19 responses to the follow-up survey. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to connect and learn about other organizations and professionals' experiences in arts and learning. Their future recommendations include a moderator

in the roundtable discussions, shorter introductions and more discussion questions, seeking more participants from provinces or territories that were underrepresented, and requesting that the CNAL team searches for more ways to create diversity in the discussion. Quantitative data reinforced these findings, including the support gained from attending these sessions, discovering new technologies and ways to sustain work online, valuing the Digital Map for Arts & Learning as a tool for public service that is likely to be used and recommended to others. Overall, participants would like to attend another session in this series and, several planned to follow up with someone they met through this experience.