

The “DIY Community Art Program” model of cultural development

One of the long-standing sources of art and culture in Australia is the community-based art sector. This sector is typically made up of professionals, retired professionals, students and enthusiasts who work together to learn, create and exhibit art. This sector embodies a core principle that culture should be democratised: that is, culture is created *by* people, not *for* them.

The legitimacy and efficacy of this sector is actively championed in jurisdictions such as Scotland where government funding supports everyday people to create their own art, heritage, sense of place and identity, and to do so throughout their lives (for example, Scotland’s [Culture Strategy](#), or [Creative Lives](#)).

One of the biggest problems facing the community arts sector in Australia is getting access to high quality, adult-based learning resources which are seen as relevant to their members.

The following model of cultural development has been supporting local and regional photographers over the past three years. It can easily be adapted for other disciplines and community-based art sectors.

The FCC recommends the Australian Government document the model, and support other sectors to develop their own content for their members. The FCC is available to assist.

Background

The Federation of Camera Clubs (FCC) is the peak body supporting 73 camera and video-maker clubs in NSW and the ACT), which represent around 2,500 community-based practitioners (see <https://fccnsw.com.au/>). Most of the FCC’s member clubs are based outside urban areas.

The Model

The FCC’s DIY community art education program is based on the “Flipped Classroom” model of pedagogy. In this model, students learn new instructional content but most of the learning time is dedicated to interactive, hands-on activities and collaborative problem-solving.

The DIY Community Art model has the following key features:

- **Adult Learning:** Resource content is developed using adult learning principles, including being directly relevant to adults, problem centred, practical, participatory and collaborative.
- **Customised:** Draft presentations and workshops are piloted with clubs to ensure they suit all club members from professionals to enthusiasts to students.
- **Discipline-Based Art Education:** The resources are deliberately designed to provide a structured approach, at a tertiary-level standard, which integrates Art Production (making art), Art History (studying historical contexts), and Art Criticism (discussing and evaluating works).

Specifically, the FCC produces PowerPoint presentations on specific art topics, a script which accompanies the presentation, and instructions for a practical collaborative workshop which is carried out immediately after the presentation. Topics include Minimalism, Maximalism, Portraits and Flora photography.

The learning packages are then provided to member clubs for free. Clubs use the prepared script to present the 45-minute presentation to their members, and then run the associated workshop. The resources are self-contained, and no special knowledge is needed.

The FCC resources, and the ability of Clubs to implement a structured program in ways that best suit their members, are affectionally known as “Art school for clubs”.

Typically, Clubs and the FCC organise exhibitions and competitions where members practice and exhibit their new skills in their local club, in state events and to a world-wide audience.

The FCC’s DIY Community Art Program is an innovative, effective and low-cost model of community arts development which could easily be adapted to suit other arts forms across Australia.