

Conclusions and Recommendations

Teaching in Art Schools: 'Full time Teachers on Casual Rates'

It has long been assumed by administrators and policy makers in tertiary institutions that part-time teachers generally have another significant source of income, and that they move in and out of teaching. It is argued that the 'flexibility' of part-time work suits the practising artist who does not wish to be tied down to the rigidity of full time work. This may be true for a minority of part-time teachers but the results of this study present a very different picture.

Part-time teachers in art institutions rely heavily on their income from part-time teaching.

- **80% of survey respondents earned most of their income through part-time teaching.**
- **Only 17% of visual artists earn all their income from arts related activity.**

Income from teaching is an essential part of the income of practising artists. Artists are unique amongst professional people (92% have tertiary qualifications in the arts or related areas) who typically receive high remuneration and are therefore hard to attract into the education sector. The number of artists on low income results in a situation where there are many more artists wanting teaching work than there are positions available.

The arts in tertiary institutions have suffered and are likely to continue to suffer cuts because of their current status as 'non-vocational' courses. The employment generating potential of the arts has not been fully explored, although a growing number of people are expressing interest in training in the arts. Despite all this, the visual arts like the arts in general; is a growing area of employment, albeit an underpaid one, and provides significant opportunities for self-employment.

As a result of the nature of employment in the arts, many artists are reliant on income from part-time teaching for extended periods of time. Of part-time teachers in the study, 44% had worked in the institution they were currently employed in for more than four years. Many worked the equivalent of a full time teaching load (41% of all respondents) and the majority worked more than 9 hours a week (54%)

Part-time teaching provides the major part of the income of most part-time teachers, and part-time teachers generally work in one institution for significant periods of time.

This is not to deny that there are many part-time teachers in art institutions whose real ambition is to work in full-time teaching and for whom there are not enough full time positions. As has been stated elsewhere in this study, the growth in part-time positions has far outstripped the growth in full time employment.

The real impact of the current organisation of part-time work on those doing the work is:

- **they work more hours than they are paid for.**
- **they do not receive holiday pay, sick pay or other entitlements of full time work.**
- **they are not paid over semester breaks, resulting in some teachers needing to receive social security benefits between each academic year. This effectively transfers the costs of providing some form of income security from the employing body (tertiary institution) to the social security system.**
- **they have no job security. Some are employed semester to semester, most are employed week to week and can have teaching hours (and income) reduced at short notice.**
- **they are often employed on reduced rates of pay.**

The result is that, despite their significant contribution to the teaching load in terms of experience and hours and years worked in institutions, part-time teachers' employment is insecure and their hours are subject to unpredictable changes. Most respondents to the survey wanted to work more hours (58%) but few have ever had the opportunity to change their employment status.

Appropriate payment for the particular job is variable and subject to change. When the actual hours worked are considered, there is no pay equity between part-time and full time teachers.

The lack of recognition of the value of work performed by part-time teachers is also reflected in the lack of involvement of part-time teachers in decisions about the courses they teach in. Part-time teachers are generally not paid to attend staff meetings

Most part-time teachers feel they have no part in the decision -making process (65%) and of these, most would like greater involvements (91%)

Although the majority of respondents to this survey were women, insufficient data was gathered to know whether this response reflects a greater proportion of women working as part-time teachers in art colleges.

The concept of permanent part-time work was overwhelmingly supported by respondents.

Recommendations

As a result of the findings of this survey the Artworkers Union and NAVA believe that practising artists who are employed as part-time teachers should have access to the following conditions in NSW:

- **job security/predictability of income.**
- **payment for preparation/consultation time**
- **payment for holidays**
- **sick pay and other leave conditions.**
- **access to promotion and recognition of increased skills and experience.**
- **superannuation**
- **paid studio time**
- **study leave.**

Since the 1983 TAFE survey of part-time teachers in NSW found that 78% of part-time teachers are females it would be a good idea to test this statistic against the general belief that female staff are occasional part-time or at best junior members of departments. From our survey we realise that more women were dissatisfied with their employment conditions; we also found that women remained part-time for longer than men.

We have not specifically taken into account the implementation of EEO management plans which should affect the part-time employment of women.

- **The status of women bears further investigation**

The introduction of greater job security and better conditions for part-time teachers should not be at the expense of retaining full time teaching positions. Instead it should be used to reduce the enormous casualization taking place in the teaching areas at the present time.

It is clear that part-time teaching is generally not something artists do to supplement an income from another source. For the majority their part-time teaching is their major source of income. It is for this reason that urgent consideration needs to be given to improve existing inequitable systems of employment.

An even more compelling argument is that the casualization of whole departments in art schools and the lack of cohesion in educational programs means that art education has difficulty in justifying its degree status and remains lower in status than other courses.

Within schools of art the ratio of full time to part-time staff must be designed to ensure stability and provide for flexibility. Tenured staff should include a high proportion of permanent part-time positions. The ratio of tenured to non-tenured staff within schools of art must be reviewed by the employing authorities to ensure that there is the same guarantee of academic freedom, security and continuity of employment for these employees as exists in other faculties.

In accordance with the findings of the Report we will be seeking further discussions with Heads of Schools and other administrators to develop a strategy that addresses the historic problems associated with part-time employment in tertiary art institutions. We will seek the co-operation of Teachers Unions and Staff Associations in the hope that this Report assists them in determining and negotiating a system of employment conditions for part-time teachers in the TAFE and CAE sectors which can provide the benefits of part-time work listed above. We will also present the case for improved employment contracts to Federal and State governments and tertiary education authorities.

Source: Part-time Teachers in Tertiary Visual Arts Education: A Report Prepared for the Artworkers Union & the National Association for the Visual Arts. 1987