

IMPACT & INSIGHT TOOLKIT

SUMMARY OF ARTFORM & MUSEUM METRICS WORKSHOPS

APRIL 2020

This report provides a summary of the discussions that took place at the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops in October and November 2019. The workshops took place as part of the Impact & Insight Toolkit project, and were designed to enable National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) representatives to work together to create new dimensions for evaluating audience and peer experience of individual artforms and museums.

The first section of this report describes how the workshops were run and summarises the discussions that took place. In the second section, we present analysis and recommendations for how the dimensions in the Impact & Insight Toolkit can be developed and organised to better meet the needs and aims of NPOs. Section 3 considers how we might build on this analysis to establish a core set of arts and museum specific dimensions. The final section offers some conclusions and possible next steps.

Alongside the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops, Counting What Counts and NPOs have been working on other activities relating to the development of Impact & Insight Toolkit dimensions:

- 2 webinars were held in November 2019 to explore how the participatory dimensions could be improved
- One to one discussions with NPOs about dimensions for evaluating the emotional responses of audiences and peers ('sentiment' dimensions)
- 2 workshops with literature NPOs to consider how the Toolkit can be developed to support evaluation within the literature sector

We have incorporated insights from all these engagement activities alongside the outputs of the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops, so that this report provides a comprehensive account of how NPOs would like to improve, expand and organise dimensions within the Impact & Insight Toolkit.

1. ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

1.1 Artform & Museums Metrics Workshop format

The six Artform & Museum Metrics workshops were conducted in several locations, in accordance with where most interested organisations were situated. The decision was made to conduct them in person due to the importance of a true

collaborative approach which would be best explored face-to-face rather than online. We encouraged NPOs to send creative staff members (i.e. curators, producers and artistic directors) to the workshops. Certain workshops had higher numbers of creative staff than others; the roles of non-creative attendees ranged from marketing to audience insight to data. A summary of the workshops and who attended is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Attendees at Artform & Museum Metric workshops

Date	Location	Artform	Number of NPOs Represented	Number of NPO Attendees	Number of Creative Staff
28/10/19	London	Visual Arts	17	20	16
29/10/19	Birmingham	Museums	7	10	4
30/10/19	Birmingham	Music	12	14	7
31/10/19	Manchester	Outdoor events/ combined arts	6	9	3
04/11/19	London	Theatre	11	15	6
05/11/19	London	Dance	12	12	8

The three-hour long workshops consisted of two sections:

- 1) Understanding shared outcomes – what are organisations trying to achieve, and what is unique about outcomes for the artform/museums?
- 2) Exploring and creating new dimensions, specific to the artform/museums

Working in groups, attendees began by sharing their organisation’s mission/creative intention statement; they were encouraged to analyse their own statement, and highlight any words of significance. Discussions were prompted regarding the definition of words within the statements and how they can be interpreted differently, even between organisations specialising in the same artform. Attendees identified outcomes they wished to capture through their use of the Toolkit by discussing what they hoped their peers and audiences would say about their work.

Provided with post-it notes, attendees wrote down outcomes they wished to capture and, where possible, corresponding statements to define those outcomes. Working together, attendees grouped their post-it-notes however they deemed appropriate, identifying common themes. They were guided to consider whether the outcomes they had identified were specific to their artform/museums, or whether they were applicable across artforms. They were also asked to consider whether outcomes would best be evaluated by audience members, peers or both.

Groups presented their suggested outcomes back to the room, and there was a plenary discussion about the outcomes that had been identified and how they related to the dimensions that are currently used in the Impact & Insight Toolkit. We concluded the workshops by summarising the main points of the discussion and explaining next steps.

Please note the Literature NPOs had begun discussing the development of literature specific dimensions in an online workshop in June 2019. NPOs made the decision to share thoughts, metrics and best practice in a shared dropbox followed by a second NPO led workshop (online) in October 2019. All of those inputs have been considered in the shaping of this analysis and report.

1.2 Summary of discussions

We were impressed by the high levels of engagement and enthusiasm shown by NPOs at the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops. Attendees worked hard to convey what they hoped audiences and peers would say about their work, and suggested many well-crafted dimensions that they would like to use to evaluate their work.

During the workshops, attendees spent time reflecting on what additional dimensions might be needed to capture aspects of audience and peer experience that were specific to their individual artforms. The NPO attendees also spent a considerable amount of time reflecting on their aims and values as publicly funded cultural organisations, and how these might be translated into evaluation measures that could be shared across the NPO portfolio.

Discussions extended beyond the evaluation of a narrow view of ‘quality’ or ‘creative intentions’ to explore all the ways in which the work of NPOs makes a difference to the people who experience it. We realised that many organisations found it difficult or unhelpful to separate ‘creative’ goals from other, more audience or community-focused goals. For these organisations, the artistic quality of their work and the difference they make to people’s lives and places are all part of the same creative vision.

The ensuing discussions of course raised insights about what other outcomes the NPOs would like to measure, and in turn the strengths and limitations of the Arts Council core set of cultural experience dimensions.

This report is focused on how to progress the feedback on artform-specific dimensions; sentiment metrics; and refining the existing participatory metrics.

What then were the key findings?

2. DEVELOPING IMPACT & INSIGHT TOOLKIT DIMENSIONS

2.1 Artform and museum specific dimensions

An important finding was that many of the outcomes that NPOs wanted to measure were already covered by the existing core metrics. Surprisingly, across the workshops there were only a handful of suggestions for artform-specific dimensions.

Most additional dimensions suggested by attendees at the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops related to the general nature of arts and cultural experiences, and were applicable across multiple artforms and event types. However, attendees suggested a few dimensions to capture aspects of experience that they felt were specific to their artform, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Artform specific dimensions, based on suggestions made by attendees at the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops and by literature organisations

Artform	Dimension	Dimension statement
Dance	Balance	The elements were well-balanced (peer)
	Cadence	It was well-paced (peer)
Music	Sound	I loved the sound the musicians made
Visual arts/ museums/	Visual Impact	It drew me in and made me look
	Interpretation	The information about the exhibition was clear and helpful
Literature	Intimacy	I felt close to the artists/performers
	Completion	I feel more confident about knowing when my work is finished

After the workshops, we reflected on the broad nature of the NPO discussions that expanded beyond the unique characteristics and impacts of individual artforms. We wondered whether the workshop attendees – of whom nearly half worked in marketing or strategy – approached the tasks from a largely *institutional* perspective, and tried to convey what their organisations are trying to achieve in the round. It may be that if we repeat the exercise just with creative staff, such as artistic directors and curators, they will bring a more *personal* perspective and try to convey what they hope to achieve through their own creative practice. This may result in more artform-specific measures, and we suggest that a useful next step would be to share and discuss this report with a wider group of creative leaders and practitioners.

2.2. Sentiment Dimensions

However, whilst the attendees did not generate lots of artform specific metric dimensions statements, perhaps the strongest call from NPOs that took part in the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops, across all artforms, was to develop new dimensions for capturing overall feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction among audiences and peers, and for understanding how and to what extent people respond emotionally to a work. We term these ‘sentiment’ dimensions and, prior to the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops, we had started discussing which sentiment dimensions would be most useful to include in the Toolkit with individual NPOs.

Attendees at the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops suggested many possible sentiment dimensions. We have distilled those suggestions, along with insights from our individual NPO conversations, into a recommended set in Table 3 (dimensions in red are currently Arts Council core dimensions; dimensions in purple; dimensions in green have been created in the Culture Counts platform during previous projects):

Table 3: Suggested sentiment dimensions

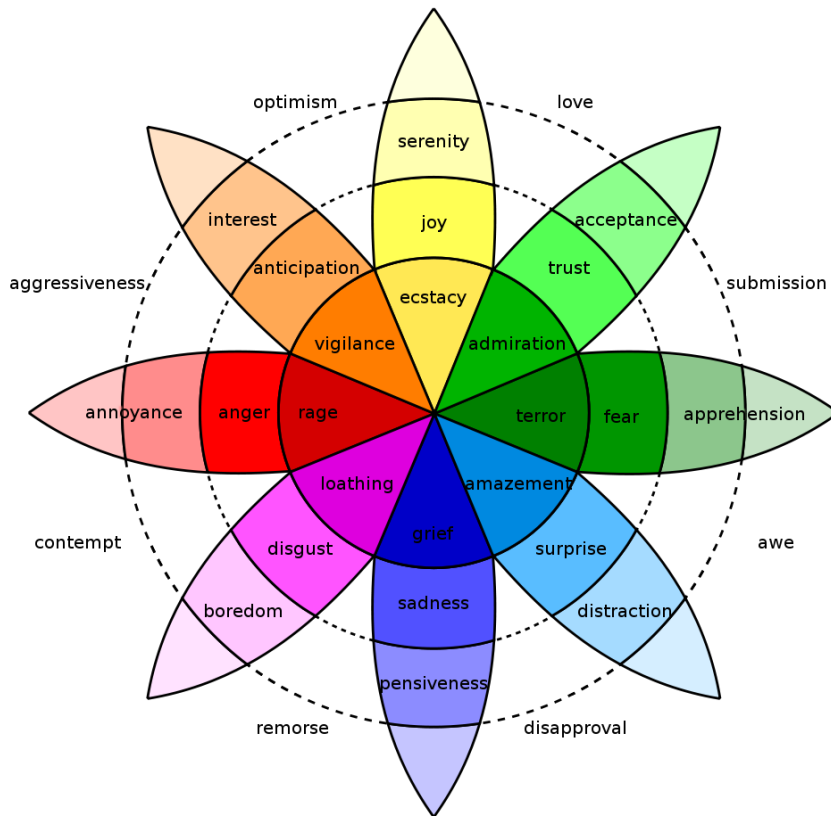
Sentiment dimension	Sentiment dimension statement
Enjoyment	I had a good time
Captivation	It was absorbing and held my attention
Moving	It had an emotional impact on me
Transported	It took me beyond (my) everyday life
Inspiring	I feel like I’ve experienced something amazing
Memorable	I will remember this for a long time
Value-for-money	It was worth the money
Enthusiasm	I would come to something like this again

Many NPOs felt that it would be useful to include an overarching (mandatory?) sentiment dimension that could be asked at the beginning of every survey to gauge a respondent’s overall response to the work. Most of the dimensions suggested above could provide this function.

In our individual conversations with NPOs, it was suggested that the Toolkit needs to capture a breadth of emotions, including ‘negative’ feelings. An additional or

alternative means of capturing sentiment dimensions could be to include elements of a framework such as Plutchik’s Wheel of Emotions (see Figure 1 shown below), and ask respondents to use a slider to indicate the extent to which they felt different emotions while experiencing the work.

Figure 1: Robert Plutchik’s Wheel of Emotions



Beyond these immediate emotional responses, workshop attendees were also keen to capture the impact of their work in terms of outcomes such as innovation, learning, inclusion, relevance and community. There was a perhaps surprising degree of consensus across artforms about these key outcome clusters, which are developed in detail in section 3.1 below.

2.3. Participatory dimensions

In November we ran two webinars involving 9 participants to discuss the current set of participatory dimensions that is available to NPOs in the Culture Counts platform. The discussion focused on two questions:

- 1) Which participatory dimensions work well and where could improvements be made?

- 2) Would it be useful to consolidate the current set of 30 participatory dimensions into a smaller, core set that could be used consistently by arts and cultural organisations to evaluate participatory work?

Participants in the webinars agreed that improvements could be made to some of the current participatory dimensions to clarify their meaning and/or improve their legibility to survey respondents. In addition, the Literature organisations had a very strong focus on talent development and suggested a range of new talent development metrics which they consider to be a specific subset of the participatory metrics.

More detail on suggested edits to existing dimensions is provided in appendix A.

There were mixed views on the issue of whether to consolidate the current long list of participatory dimensions into a smaller 'core'. Some webinar participants felt that this would be helpful, creating opportunities for organisations that carry out participatory work to aggregate evaluation data and report results in a consistent way. Others were concerned that reducing the current list would limit flexibility for organisations and potentially devalue participatory work that did not align with the selected dimensions.

The outcome clusters mentioned above offer a route through this dilemma and allow participatory dimensions to be organised and presented alongside dimensions for evaluating mainstream cultural experiences. Table above shows that several participatory dimensions are relevant to audience members experiencing a cultural work as well as to participants taking part in a creative project. For example, many NPOs evaluating audience-facing work would benefit from being able to use the participatory dimension 'Motivation: I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future'. Similarly, the participatory dimension 'Enjoyment: I had a good time' would be a popular sentiment dimension for evaluating cultural experiences. It seems that for some outcome areas there is no clear line between what constitutes a cultural experience dimension and a participatory dimension.

We suggest that of the current set of 30 participatory dimensions, 21 could be incorporated within the main outcome clusters as per Table 4 below. These 21 dimensions are the most frequently used by NPOs evaluating participatory work. The remaining nine participatory dimensions (Clarity, Intention, Respect, Trust, Intensity, Achievement, Creative Legacy, Opportunity and Worldview) are rarely used by NPOs and several were noted by webinar participants as requiring improvement. In the future, we recommend that these dimensions should not be included within any pre-defined groupings of dimensions, but could continue to be available to NPOs as custom questions within the Culture Counts platform.

Table 4: Most frequently used participatory dimensions, by outcome cluster

Participatory dimension	Participatory dimension statement
Sentiment	
Enjoyment	I had a good time
Execution	
Authenticity	It felt like a real artistic experience
Organisation	The project was well organised
Responsiveness	The organisers responded well to the needs of the group
Innovation & distinctiveness	
Experimenting	I felt comfortable trying new things
Talent development	
Artistic skills	I improved my artistic skills
Learning & progression	
Feedback	I got helpful feedback
Skills	I gained new skills
Stretch	I did something I didn't know I was capable of
Confidence	I feel more confident about doing new things
Creativity	I feel more able to express myself creatively
Motivation	I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future
Accessibility & inclusion	
Acceptance	I felt like I could be myself
Belonging	They made me feel part of the team
Relevance & identity	
Identity	It helped me to see myself differently
Empathy	It helped me understand other people's points of view
Participation & voice	

Contribution	I felt that my contribution mattered
Voice	My ideas were taken seriously
Connection & community	
Friendship	I felt close to other people involved in the project
New people	I got to know people who are different to me
Support	People in the group supported each other

3. DEVELOPING ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS

3.1 Outcome clusters

In addition to the artform and museum specific, and sentiment dimensions, attendees at the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops suggested a range of dimensions that they would like to use to evaluate the impact of their work on the people who experience it. Despite the diversity of organisations represented at the workshops, there were many common themes; we have grouped the dimensions suggested by NPOs into ‘outcome clusters’ that seem to be relevant across all artforms and museums:

Figure 2: Outcome clusters identified by attendees at the Artform and Museum Metrics workshops

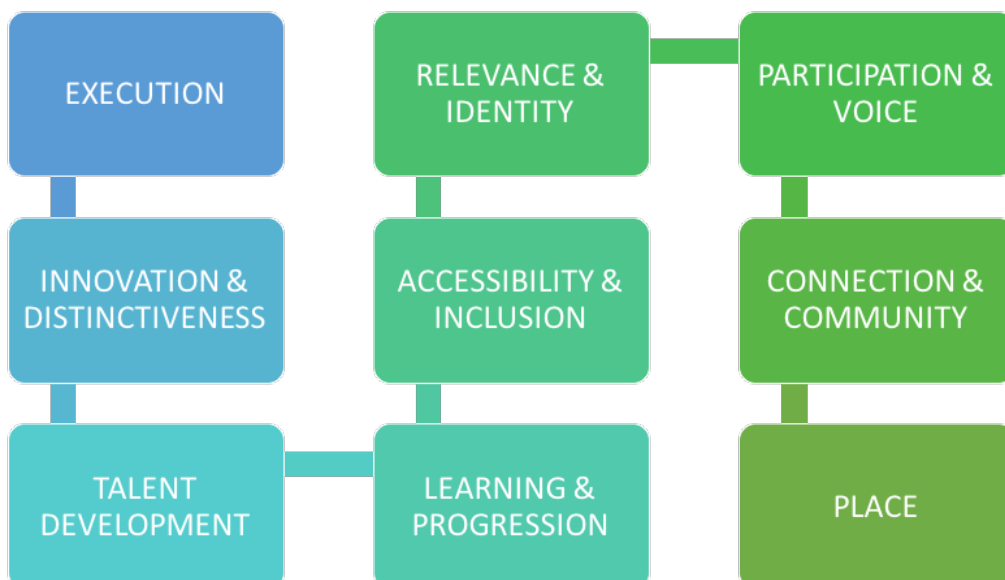


Table 5 below presents our suggested dimensions for each outcome cluster. We have tried to identify a small number of dimensions that together capture the essence of each outcome, drawing on the discussions at the Artform & Museum

Metrics workshops and suggestions made by the group of literature NPOs, which met separately as part of the Impact & Insight Toolkit Strategic Development Strand. Dimensions in red are currently Arts Council core dimensions; dimensions in purple are in the current set of participatory dimensions; dimensions in green have been created in the Culture Counts platform during previous projects. We have indicated in brackets where dimensions are aimed at particular respondent types (peer, artist, participant).

Table 5: Dimensions for evaluating outcome clusters, based on suggestions made by attendees at the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops and by literature organisations

Dimension	Dimension statement
Execution	
Concept	It was an interesting idea
Rigour	It was well thought through and put together
Excellence	It is one of the best examples of its type that I have seen (peer)
Virtuosity	I admired the skill of the performers
Narrative	The story was clear and easy to follow
Space	It was a good space for the event
Integrity	It was in line with the organisation's mission (peer)
Partnership	It was an effective partnership (peer)
Innovation & distinctiveness	
Distinctiveness	It was different from things I've experienced before
Surprise	I wasn't expecting it to be like that
Bold	It was not afraid to tackle difficult subjects
Innovation	It demonstrated new ways of working (peer)
Originality	It was ground-breaking (peer)
Risk	The artists/curators really challenged themselves with this work (peer)
Talent development	
Influence	It will influence my own work in the future (peer)
New Talent	It created opportunities for new artists (peer/artist)
Artistic Skills	I improved my artistic skills (artist/participant)
Networks	It connected me with other people in my field
Improvement	I have a better understanding of how I can improve my work
Learning & progression	
Challenge	It was thought-provoking

Learning	I learned something new
Free Thinking	It helped me develop my own ideas about the subject
Feedback	I got helpful feedback (artist/participant)
Sharing	I feel more confident about sharing my work with others (artist/participant)
Skills	I gained new skills (artist/participant)
Curiosity	It sparked my curiosity and made me want to find out more
Motivation	I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future
Perception	It made me think differently about [artform]
Accessibility & inclusion	
Diversity	It engaged people from different backgrounds
Inclusion	It made me feel welcome and included
Appropriate	I felt that this was for me
Safety	I feel safe here
Family	It was a fun family experience
Relevance & identity	
Meaning	It meant something to me personally
Representation	I saw myself and my experiences represented
Identity	It helped me to see myself differently
Empathy	It helped me understand other people's points of view
Reflect	It made me reflect on my own beliefs
Relevance	It had something to say about the world in which we live
Participation & voice	
Involved	I was involved in creating it
Contribution	I felt that my contribution mattered (participant)
Voice	My ideas were taken seriously (participant)
Social Change	It helped under-represented people to be heard
Connection & community	

Shared Experience	I felt I shared something special with other people
Connection	It helped me to feel connected to people in the community
New people	I got to know people who are different to me
Place	
Local Impact	It felt important for this area
Place	It made me feel proud of my local area
Understanding	It helped me to better understand the place and people where I live

We think these outcomes clusters could be a useful planning tool for NPOs as they design different types of evaluations using the Toolkit, and it will be interesting to see which of the dimensions in Table 5, particularly the new ones suggested by NPOs using the Toolkit, are used most in future evaluations.

4. CONCLUSIONS

We would like to thank attendees at the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops, the Participatory Dimensions webinars, meetings of the literature group and other related events for all their contributions. Together they have produced a great deal of insight into the outcomes that arts and cultural organisations would like to evaluate, and we hope that this report provides an accurate and comprehensive account of their discussions.

As we were preparing to publish this report the COVID-19 pandemic was taking hold leading to the lockdown and social-distancing we are now living through. These events have inevitably impacted on our priority next steps which we detail below.

Our priority next steps are:

- To work with ACE and Toolkit users to implement our proposed changes to the refinement and presentation of the participatory dimensions (see Appendix), whilst paring back the list of dimensions to (a minimum of) 21 statements in the relevant Toolkit drop down menu.
- To do some further work with ACE Artform Directors to identify additional artform and museum specific metrics for inclusion within the Toolkit, alongside the helpful suggestions from NPOs detailed in this report. We will then add these dimensions into the Toolkit for all users
- To explore the feasibility of developing a sentiment dimensions ‘module’ within Culture Counts based on Plutchik’s Wheel of Emotions

The advent of the COVID-19 crisis means that it does not feel appropriate to do any further development work on the broader outcome clusters and dimensions statements outlined in Section 3 above.

Rather, Counting What Counts is keen to monitor, with ACE, how NPOs creatively respond to the crisis, and how the Toolkit can best adapt to meet their evaluation needs over this next 12 months. For example, we anticipate the portfolio's creative intentions and programming objectives will shift, with for example a greater emphasis on programming work specifically for digital distribution; work that is more intimate in its presentation; which focuses on specific social outcomes; or work which is site specific In order to facilitate greater social distancing within the performance or event.

We can envisage a range of ways in which working closely with NPOs, the Toolkit can create evaluation tools and resources that will be of value during this period of adaptation and innovation. Our focus is to be as responsive as possible to NPOs as they seek to evaluate their work and R&D in this period of transition. Fluidity should come before formalising a particular set of outcome clusters.

We look forward to continuing to engage with NPOS on who best to support their work, and provide useful evaluation tools, and encourage readers to contact support@countingwhatcounts.co.uk if they would like to discuss any aspect of the report in more detail.

APPENDIX: REFINING DIMENSIONS

At the Artform & Museum Metrics workshops and the Participatory Dimensions webinars there were suggestions made about how some of the existing dimensions in the Culture Counts platform could be improved. Most of the suggestions related to the participatory dimensions, perhaps unsurprisingly given that these have not been subject to the same degree of testing and use as the main cultural experience dimensions.

The suggested changes are shown in Table 2 (excluding changes to the nine participatory dimensions that are least frequently used and that we suggest should remain available to NPOs as custom questions only):

Table 2: Suggested changes to existing dimensions

Dimension	Current dimension statement	Suggested revision
Challenge	It was thought-provoking	It made me think deeply
Artistic Skills	I improved my artistic skills	I improved my artistic or creative skills
Belonging	They made me feel part of the team	I felt like I was part of a team
Motivation	I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future	I now want to do more creative things in the future

Along with these changes, attendees at the Participatory Dimensions webinars discussed the dimension 'Authenticity: It felt like a real, artistic experience'. This dimension is popular with NPOs evaluating participatory work, but webinar attendees felt that the dimension statement did not fully capture what they meant by the term 'authenticity'. Webinar attendees were unable to settle on a satisfactory alternative.

We support the changes suggested in Table 2, and note that they are in line with recommendations made in an earlier report on the accessibility of dimensions¹. We also welcome the request to improve or find a suitable alternative to the dimension 'Authenticity'. However, the benefits of changing the wording of dimensions in terms of improved clarity and accessibility need to be offset against the costs of a break in the continuity of data collection.

¹ Shared Intelligence, The Mighty Creatives and Pickthall, S. (2017) *Testing the Accessibility of Arts Council England's Quality and Participatory Metrics* [online]. Available at https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Testing_Quality_Participatory_Metrics.pdf (Accessed 2 March 2020)

We suggest that April 2022 would be an appropriate time to make any changes to the wording of dimensions in the Culture Counts platform. Before then we will work with the Culture Counts team in Australia to design a process for formally consulting the Arts Council, NPOs and global Culture Counts users on upcoming changes to dimensions and other aspects of the platform.

We also need to respond to the Literature Organisation’s requests for a range of new talent development dimension statements which they consider to be a specific subset of the current participatory metrics. The idea would be to offer Literature Organisations, through agreed advice and guidance, additional participatory metric options designed to capture the talent development journey for non-professional writers who they are helping to develop.

Other artform users could also view these dimensions in the Toolkit platform, as they too might decide to ‘use’ them in modified form, by creating similar custom questions more tailored to their artform (e.g. I improved my composition skills etc.). Examples of those additional Literature talent development dimension statements follow below:

Dimension	New Dimension Statement
Skills (writing)	I improved my technical writing skills
Editing skills	I improved my editing skills
Sharing work	I feel more confident about sharing my work with other people
Confidence (writing)	I feel more confident to write on my own
Networks	I have increased my network of people to support with my writing
Improvement	I have a better understanding of what I need to do to improve my writing
Imagination	I was able to develop my imaginative skills in my writing