

# Frequently Asked Questions about ELVA - Enhancing Emotional Literacy Through Visual Arts

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## **What is emotional literacy?**

Emotional literacy is the ability to be aware, express and respond to emotional experiences. The aim of emotional literacy is for children to be emotionally alive, emotionally aware, and emotionally connected with themselves, others and experiences and situations.

## **What are the benefits of emotional literacy?**

Emotional literacy strengthens a positive sense of wellbeing within our students through encouraging a greater self-awareness of themselves and others within a safe and supportive environment. It increases their learning capacity, improves school connectedness and retention, strengthens positive peer relationships and resilience, and decreases the incidence of bullying.

## **Is this model for all children?**

ELVA fits comfortably alongside existing arts and wellbeing programs and can be delivered in a format suited to the needs and culture of individual schools. Emotional literacy and competence is fundamental to student development and their success in and out of school and acts as a protective factor in student mental health and wellbeing.

## **Is this arts therapy?**

The ELVA Approach is not a therapeutic model. Art therapy focuses on identified issues and treatment. ELVA works with all students in a classroom context to develop their emotional literacy capacity as part of the schools commitment to educating the whole child.

## **How is the ELVA Approach to enhancing emotional literacy through visual arts different?**

The Dax Approach focuses on the child's experience in art as it engages their emotional world of the child in the context of relationships. This process assists the child to better understand themselves and the world around them. Art creates a natural opportunity that enables this to happen. This approach, in contrast to most other classroom approaches, is not based on cognitive behavioral models with a focus on skills. ELVA is not instructional it is experiential, whilst still meeting the curriculum requirements.

