

Fostering creativity in young children through the arts

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This research was conducted by **Anna N. N. Hui, Mavis W. J. He and Shengquan Sam Ye** at **City University of Hong Kong** and the **Hong Kong Institute of Education**

Summary

This paper described the effects of a one-year artist-teacher collaboration in Hong Kong designed to increase the creativity of young children. They used a mix of measures to track changes in creativity, motivation and communication after the artists provided 60 hours of arts activities for teachers and children. They found that ‘young children’s verbal and figural creativity can be enhanced through quality arts education delivered collaboratively by professional artists and professional teachers’. The results suggest that visual arts generated the strongest increase in creativity, and all students who participated showed an improvement in their communication abilities.

Students were tested before and after their involvement in the scheme

Two specific tests of creativity were administered to 790 children were involved in the study. The average age of the children involved was four. 217 parents were asked about their impressions of their children’s behaviour and 65 teachers were asked to reflect on the experience.

Exposure to a single art form (rather than a mixed or integrated offer) seemed to generate the strongest increase in verbal creativity

The authors explain this may be because the creativity is a result of practice and training, that the visual arts (in particular) uses a mix of non-verbal

thinking and verbal expression (i.e. children talking about their art), or perhaps the distracting effects of multiple tasks.

Some things to bear in mind

The researchers suggest that the study should be repeated over a longer period of time than just one academic year and with children of other ages. The authors also caution that the children in the study were at schools that were engaged with the programme, and therefore already likely to offer a strong arts education experience. It would be good to repeat the study with a more representative sample of schools in Hong Kong.

Keywords

creativity **education** **Hong Kong** **children**

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