Measuring the Impact of Arts in Education

Artists in Schools: A Case Study of the “Arts-in-Education” Project

Dr Jane W Y Cheung
Department of Creative Arts
Hong Kong Institute of Education
wycheung@ied.edu.hk

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The Arts Education Reform: Overall Aims

• Build on the strengths of existing practice

• Allow greater autonomy for the school-based arts curriculum

• Provide space for more new art forms: media arts, dance and drama
The Arts-in-education Project (00-03)

- Artist working with teachers in formal curriculum
- Organizer: the HK Arts Development Council
- Co-organizers: the Education Manpower Bureau; Creative Arts Department, HKIEd
- 16 projects of 32 schools (01-03)
- Art forms involved dance, drama, Chinese opera, digital art, art and music (01-02)
- Aims: new ways of promoting the arts; developing new curriculum
Aims of Case Study in Two Pilot Schools

• Examine curriculum models & alternative teaching approaches

• Investigate effective student learning with the artist’s intervention

• Determine successful artist / school partnership
Research Methodology

• Lesson observation

• Semi-structured interview with teacher, artist, principal and students

• Focus group meeting

• Documents review and musical production
The Dreamcoat of Mount On Shan

School A

• Story of Joseph; school history & early communal life of Ma On Shan
• Across Form Two
• Integrated RS, Art, Music, PE, H.E, DT and CS
• Students to:
  a) Design digital images, props and costumes
  b) Take active role in an interested area
  c) Realize the close links of technology, arts and culture; relate these to their daily life
  d) Appreciate individual’s contribution and team work
The Dreamcoat of Mount On Shan

- Four stages of implementation:
  - computer classes
  - simultaneous workshops for dancers, choir, players, costume and prop designers
  - combined the rehearsals in informal time
  - Final rehearsal and performance

- Performed in school, dissemination process of learning and production through the school Intranet
The Dreamcoat of Mount On Shan
The New Wizard of Oz

School B

• Strong art and music curriculum with dance added
• Two Form 2 classes
• Integrated 5 subjects: RS, Chinese, Music, HE, PE
• Students to:
  a) Learn to care for and love one another;
  b) Develop creativity and imagination;
  c) Develop self confidence, communication skills;
  d) Enjoy the learning process;
  e) Explore dance & drama education in the formal curriculum
The New Wizard of Oz

- Ways of implementation:
  Timetabled double lessons for Music and PE to facilitate dance lessons

- Support from school includes extra funding, secretarial help and IT support

- Public performance with over two hundred staff and students front & back stage
The New Wizard of Oz
Findings: Curriculum Model

• Common time block for the arts and humanities to facilitate rehearsals and double lesson to facilitate more in-depth, active exploration of the arts
• Dance in the formal curriculum favoured
• Broader view of education: student-need curriculum
• A weak classification model - students to decide what to learn
• A thematic interdisciplinary approach
Findings: School Support

• Valued arts as a reflection of human beauty, creation and expression (sch. A); a part of living, the process was more important than the product (sch. B)
• Management gave Project top priority with full administrative, financial, manpower and moral support
• Parent and alumni support (school B)
• Ownership of and commitment to the teacher / artist partnership
Findings: Student Learning

- Artistic skills- enhanced existing arts; expanded other arts; boys confidence in dance (school B)
- Creativity- new insight in the creative process; wider appreciation of the arts; divergent thinking and critical judgement
- Personal and social skills- critical reflection; self-esteem, decision-making, leadership, teamwork and respect for others
- Motivation and joyful learning- greater motivation in multiple art forms and working with artist; imagination stretched; enjoyed learning process
- Affective side- explored feelings with peak experience
Findings: Artist / School Partnership

- ‘Demand-led’ (school B) and ‘Dynamic dialogue’ (school A)
- Common goals, joint planning, clearly defined roles, respect each other’s contribution, support from other staff and parents
- Enthusiasm and professionalism of artist as role model, effective student learning & staff development
- Strong leadership from project leader / teacher to provide a safe place for the arts
Problems Revealed

• Teachers’ psychological preparation needed
• Artist to face new challenges- multiple subjects with new arts; curriculum integration & teaching strategies
• Financial demand to produce a musical
• Rigid administrative procedure of fund virement left school and artist in frustration
• Projects rather short-term, reliability being challenged
Conclusion and Recommendation

• Good use of community resources for student learning
• Built on existing arts strengths to develop school-based curriculum with other subject areas
• Timetabling arrangement for an in-depth arts experience
• Different models to produce school musicals
• Artist as role model for staff and students
• Strong artist /school partnership with common goals
• Sufficient school & parental support
• Teachers’ professional need for new teaching strategies