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Creative Osmosis: Teacher Perspectives of Artist Involvement in Professional Development

PDF (Size: 131KB) PP. 971-979 DOI: 10.4236/ce.2012.326147

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ABSTRACT

This inquiry examined the impact of a professional development program in the arts for teachers offered in partnership with Canada's cultural institutions and the involvement of artists over a three-year period. The research focused on the teachers' personal growth and professional practice by employing a multiple-perspectives methodology entitled Integrated Inquiry. Findings indicate that it was the inspirational settings in cultural settings, the creative learning activities with artists, and the opportunities to discuss and reflect on their personal perspectives that promoted the teachers personal growth and professional practice. Participation in a wide variety of creative arts activities in cultural settings increased the participants' willingness to teach the arts in their own classrooms. These experiences enhanced their tolerance for ambiguity and sensitivity to different learning styles. The reflective journal was a powerful tool for making the practical theoretical. It enabled them to relate arts experiences to learning theory and to develop and nurture new ideas. Major obstacles to implementing the arts in schools are inadequate resources, limited peer support, insufficient expertise to assess student achievement effectively, and lack of time. Teachers could overcome these obstacles by engaging in arts advocacy, developing cross-curricular arts themes, enrolling in upgrading courses in evaluation, and adopting an integrated approach to curriculum delivery, respectively.

KEYWORDS

Arts Partnerships; Professional Development Arts; Teaching Artists

Cite this paper

Andrews, B. (2012). Creative Osmosis: Teacher Perspectives of Artist Involvement in Professional Development. *Creative Education*, 3, 971-979. doi: 10.4236/ce.2012.326147.

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