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ABSTRACT

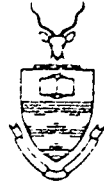
A creative arts program for talented students in Johannesburg (South Africa) is intended to foster perceptual-, aesthetic-, cultural-, social-, and self-awareness, understanding of the arts, as well as an emphasis on expanding creative potential focuses on the processes of sensory, intellectual creative, and aesthetic development. A four-phase system of identification is based on a multifaceted and expanded definition of giftedness. In designing the program, developers examined models of creativity, characteristics of the creative personality, criteria for determining creative thinking ability, and specific teaching models. Among desirable teacher characteristics are a willingness to risk, acceptance of the uniqueness of others, and the ability to be structured in a flexible way in response to the students' experience and motivation. Procedures for screening and placement, selection criteria, the curriculum outline, and evaluation procedures are described. Program options include core courses (e.g., Creative Thinking, Effective Thinking, Body Language, Study Skills), workshops in language, visual, performing, and cultural arts, and integrated arts/creativity workshops at primary and secondary levels. (JW)

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TITLE: AN INTEGRATED CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMME FOR EXCEPTIONALLY TALENTED
CHILDREN.

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CATEGORY: Creativity and Giftedness.

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1. OVERVIEW.

1.1. CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMME.

From its grassroot days as an Association for the Education of Gifted Children in 1971, the Schmerenbeck Educational Centre has developed its extra-mural enrichment programmes to stimulate the growth of the total unique personality of highly intelligent and creative children. The development from an association of concerned parents and altruistic teachers to that of a professional education centre was consolidated by the incorporation of the Centre into the University of the Witwatersrand in 1981. This growth has enabled on-going evaluation of its experimental programmes, a comprehensive and regular review of its identification procedures, and greater differentiation in providing education of an appropriate nature for its over 800 gifted children from pre-school to post-matric levels. Under the direction of a University Council Board of Control, and with the expert academic advice of an Advisory Committee, it has developed all aspects of its operation, at present providing 5 different programmes: the Microscapes Programme for pre-school and grade children with high potential; the Projects Plus Programme for gifted children; the High School Extension Programme for motivated Standard 8 to 10 students; the Soweto Programme for Black Gifted children; and the Creative Arts Programme for Talented children. (1983,1984)

1.2. RELEVANCE OF A CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMME.

The need for a creative arts programme developed from 3 sources:

1.2.1. MULTI-DIMENSIONAL IDENTIFICATION.

In 1982 the Centre re-evaluated its identification procedures in terms of a broader, multifaceted definition of giftedness. This was based on the 6 types of giftedness stipulated in the Marland Report (1972) which included: general intellectual ability; specific academic aptitude; creative or productive thinking; leadership ability; visual and performing arts; and psychomotor ability. (Ref.4) In terms of this, it developed a 4 phase system of identification: Preliminary information from parents, teachers, the child; Preliminary screening and referral to appropriate testing procedures or interview as per the nature of giftedness; Construction of profile in terms of all assessment; Selection of Appropriate programme as per differential criteria. In this perspective, highly talented children, who had previously been excluded from the gifted programme on the basis of scores on intelligence tests and general behavioural criteria, could be

identified by their specific talents and creative thinking abilities. A programme could then be designed to meet their unique characteristics and needs.

1.2.2. CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS, TEACHERS, CHILDREN.

Several parents had requested information on private tutors for their highly talented children: there was an awareness that these children were not being appropriately challenged in the average arts class. Teachers were in awe of the level of creative talent of these children and rated them as exceptional in relation to their peers. Although receiving constant praise, such children were often frustrated in their own work, unable to progress and unable to evaluate their achievements themselves in terms of their own potential. One standard 7 child who was getting 100% for art was told by her teacher "Your work is excellent, I can't teach you anything else, just carry on by yourself." Even within the context of the gifted programme at the Centre, the levels of talent in the arts classes differed so, that the teachers noted that in many ways this was replicating the average class and that those who were exceptionally talented needed additional challenge.

1.2.3. THE EDUCATION OF THE ARTS AT SCHOOL. /

A Committee was formed with representatives of College and University faculty members in Fine Arts, Dramatic Art, English, Dance, Music. This committee was concerned about the nature and level of education in the various arts at school in general, and the stress on the acquisition of skills and technique as ends in themselves. Although the arts had different specific objectives, this committee shared a common concern: talented children were not being extended in terms of their creative potential. While fully acknowledging the fundamental training in skill and technique in any art form, a programme to extend creative potential was seen to be necessary. The programme should put considerable emphasis on the processes involved and less on the product - including sensory development, intellectual development, creative development and aesthetic development. Projects which "encourage interpersonal and cross-cultural references, which elicit responses to the greater environment (built, natural, and human) and which require interdisciplinary investigation, would seem to be more appropriate!" (Stated by T.King, Department of Fine Art). This Committee was largely responsible for the conception and design of the Creative Arts Programme.

2. THE NATURE OF CREATIVITY.

In order to conceptualise the objectives of the Creative Arts Programme, it is necessary to consider various models of creativity on motivation, thought and behaviour; characteristics of creative personalities as shown in research; criteria for determining creative thinking ability; and possible teaching strategies that will develop creativity in children.

2.1. MODELS OF CREATIVITY.

In terms of motivation or needs, Maslow has presented a three-fold model:

- o PRIMARY CREATIVITY is the heritage of every human being, found in all healthy children, and is largely buried beneath defence mechanisms;
- o SPECIAL TALENT CREATIVENESS is a concentration of creative energy in one area such as art or drama;
- o SELF-ACTUALISING CREATIVENESS is a tendency to live and think creatively and represents a special kind of perception, that is "the ability to express ideas and intuitive feelings without dreading the reactions such expression might bring, as well as spontaneous, effortless, easy and free manner of acting without the hindrances of stereotypes, cliches, or preconceived notions of what one should see, feel and do." (Ref. 2)

Willings (1980) sees creativity in terms of three types of thinking:

adaptive (perceiving relationships); elaborative (improving basic ideas); and developmental (awareness, observation, perception). (Ref. 18)

Torrance (1979) presents a comprehensive model for studying and predicting creative behaviour:

- o ABILITIES include searching for problems; considering many alternatives; original thinking; highlighting the essence; openness, emotional awareness and self-expression; ability to put things in context, combining and synthesizing, richness and colourfulness of imagery and visualisation; glimpses of infinity; humour and playfulness; ability to extend boundaries; unusual visual perspective; kinesthetic and auditory responsiveness.
- o SKILLS are necessary to activate the abilities, such as competence use of equipment, materials, instruments.
- o MOTIVATION necessary for concentration, commitment and persistence. (Ref. 16)

Creativity as an operation of intelligence can be seen in terms of the Guilford Structure of Intellect Model (1975) termed "Divergent Thinking" characterised by four thinking abilities: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. These functions provide criteria by means of which creative thinking can be evaluated. (Ref. 9) Guilford also stressed the role that nonintellective traits, such as interest, aesthetic appreciation and tolerance of ambiguity, play in creativity.

Clark (1979) presents an Integrative Model of Creativity, wherein, in addition to the thinking characteristics mentioned, there are three additional aspects:

- o SENSING which is a high level and development of skill in a talent;
- o FEELING which is the actualisation of emotive energy;
- o INTUITION which is "a state of higher consciousness".

In planning any programme for the development of creativity, it must be realised that it is largely the thinking and sensing functions that can be developed; to a minimal extent the feeling function; but the intuitive function, which extends into the unconscious and far beyond any defined educational setting, may contain the core of the creative spirit. (Ref.3)

2.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CREATIVE PERSONALITY.

On the basis of a review of many studies on the creative personality, Torrance drew up a comprehensive list of characteristics that differentiate highly creative persons from less creative ones. (Ref.16). Research has shown that the following characterises the creative child:

- o have their energy field accessible
- o have ability to tap and release unconscious and preconscious thought
- o be more sensitive, enthusiastic and impulsive
- o be able to withstand being thought of as abnormal or eccentric
- o greater independence from environmental influences
- o have a rich and varied imagination
- o have a richer fantasy life and greater involvement in daydreaming
- o willingness to take risks in ideas and thoughts, tolerate ambiguity
- o when confronted with novelty of design and ideas get excited/involved
- o when given a new solution to a problem, get enthused, suggest other ideas, details, extension and development to the problem
- o sense gaps in knowledge, new problems
- o have a sense of humour, greater readiness to respond emotively but non-defensively
- o internal locus of evaluation or control.

(Ref.1,2,3,12,14,15)

2.3. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CREATIVE THINKING ABILITY.

Creative thinking must be evaluated qualitatively, bearing in mind that aesthetic judgement, self-evaluation, is not only a characteristic but also an objective of programming. Criteria include:

- o fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration (Guilford)
- o awareness, observation, heightened perception (Willings)
- o perceiving relationships, synthesizing ideas and images (Torrance)
- o problem sensing, finding, creative problem solving (Parnes, Ref.11)

2.4. TEACHING STRATEGIES.

In considering what models, strategies and approach should be used, the following models were considered:

- o Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Objectives - Developing from knowledge, to Comprehension, to application, to analysis, synthesis and evaluation, but with the stress laid on the last two levels.

- o Krathwohl's Taxonomy of Affective Objectives - developing from receiving, to responding, to valuing (from acceptance of value, to preference, to commitment), to organisation of a value system, to characterization or a broad philosophy. (Ref.9)
- o Parnes' Creative Problem Solving from finding facts, problems, ideas, solutions and finding acceptance through a plan of action. (Ref.11)
- o Linderman and Herberholz's approach to developing perceptual and aesthetic awareness by heightened sensory awareness, encouraging new ways of seeing and re-experiencing the world, increasing imaginative use of visual and aural concepts and the development of aesthetic feelings which govern critical judgement relevant to one's daily response to the environment. (Ref.19)

3. DESIGN OF THE PROGRAMME.

3.1. OBJECTIVES.

In order to meet the needs of creative and talented children, the Integrated Arts Programme would aim to foster perceptual, aesthetic, cultural, social and self-awareness and understanding of the process of creative thinking in the arts. It would provide opportunities to develop means of structuring experience through exploration, experimentation, manipulation of materials, and improvisation. It would foster the development of independent learning through self-motivation, self-expression and self-evaluation. As stated by Torrance, "Children fail to develop realistic self-concepts because they have not been provided situations in which it is safe to practise without evaluation." (Ref. 16)

Objectives may be said to be:

- 3.1.1. to provide experiences that increase awareness in any particular art of the act of creating itself.
- 3.1.2. To overcome stereotypes, prescriptions or conditioning that prevents the expression of the unique creativity of each child.
- 3.1.3. To enrich awareness of the principles of the arts beyond the perfection of any particular technique.
- 3.1.4. To stress creative processes rather than products as an attitude to experience and its interpretation rather than ends in themselves.
- 3.1.5. To overcome the specialisation and singular interests within any art form by integrating art experiences.

These are general objectives. However, within each art discipline there may be specific objectives which will give rise to particular teaching approaches.

Visual Arts

Greater perceptual awareness, heightened aesthetic sensitivity, increase in visual concepts, increase in expressive art skills, increase in the imaginative use of visual concepts.

Language Arts

Appreciation of symbols, images, myths, great traditions in thought, increase in use of verbal imagery, language skills, self-expression in creative writing, awareness of social and cultural concepts.

Performing Arts

Development of sensory perception, manifestation of sound, movement, action in the environment, historical and cultural perspectives, arts as communication, extension of self and experience of others.

Cultural Arts

Awareness and experience of the incorporation of the many art forms in the daily environment and life of different cultural and ethnic groups.

3.2. APPROACH.

The Programme aims to achieve the above objectives by adopting an approach that has four aspects to it.

3.2.1. Focus on the creative process itself.

The stages of creative thinking, preparation, incubation, illumination and verification would be integrated.

3.2.2. The conditions necessary for creative growth would be created in the environment.

An open, non-judgemental, stimulating, encouraging and supportive atmosphere to allow the child freedom to explore, question, accept the validity of his own experience, and to value the uniqueness of others, would be created.

3.2.3. Attitudes which facilitate creative growth would be fostered.

Such may include openness to experience and ideas, toying with elements and concepts, concern with both outer and inner worlds, ability to defer closure, to accept tension, self-motivation and aesthetic values.

3.2.4. Activities/Ideas which allow active participation would be created to generate the nature and direction of the learning by the children themselves.

3.3. SELECTION OF TEACHERS.

Because of the above approach, it is necessary to consider not only the level of competence and experience that teachers have had in the arts, but whether such teachers would appreciate the orientation of the programme and try to meet the objectives. They would not only have to foster the creative attitudes, but offer stimulating possibilities for exploration in any particular art, to be structured in a flexible way according to the experience and motivations of the children. In this, they would be open to participate fully in the creative experience themselves and to learn from the perceptions and ideas of the children, while maintaining

respect and encouraging authentic relationships and sincerity.

The attitudes of the teachers is therefore a core component of the success of such a programme. The same question arises as with teaching the gifted: should the teachers be creative themselves? Clark (1979) states that the following characteristics appear necessary to foster creativity:

a willingness to risk; confidence in one's own perception of reality; acceptance of the uniqueness of others; mutuality in interpersonal relationships; self-awareness; and an ability to communicate, empathise, understand, and share experience and ideas. (Ref. 3)

4. IDENTIFICATION OF TALENTED CHILDREN.

4.1. PROCEDURE FOR SCREENING AND PLACEMENT.

As stated, the Creative Arts Programme developed from within the identification process within the centre. Modifications were made to this process to get further insight and information about the nature of creative thinking abilities; levels of interest and motivation; personality characteristics.

4.1.1. Preliminary Information includes:

Parents Form requesting information on medical history; patterns of development; family relationships; home and leisure activities; behavioural characteristics checklist on all aspects of development and creative thinking.

School Form stating attitudes and achievement at school, behavioural characteristics checklist (same as for parents), activities.

Self-Rating includes a list of attitudes, checklist of activities, interests and motivation.

4.1.2. Preliminary Screening: Options:

Referral for testing: psychometric (Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking; S.O.I. Screening Test for the Gifted;)(Ref.10,16)

Identification of Creative Characteristics: Use of checklist such as the "Group Inventory for Finding Creative Talent" (Gift) (Ref. 12)

Information from arts teacher: (such as the Williams Scale of Creative Thinking, or the Meeker Rating Scale for Identifying Creative Potential.) (Ref. 9,10)

Internally devised creative tasks ("Creative Puzzles" devised by Ms Eriksson). (Ref. 17)

Interviews, auditions, or preliminary screening workshops.

4.1.3. Recommendations for Placement:

In line with the idea that identification should be matched with appropriate educational placement, and that this should form a basis from which development can take place and future evaluations can modify this profile, profiles are constructed of each child's distribution of strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations made

about appropriate programmes and courses.

(Note: this provides an overview of possible procedures. This area is under experimentation and research, and in its comprehensive design and rationale, is not within the scope of this discussion.)

4.2. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION.

Criteria, in view of the complex nature of creativity and the discrete measures and limitations of building a comprehensive profile, should be flexible and each case dealt with individually. Two important aspects should be noted:

- o Children who are educationally, socially, or aesthetically deprived may not have had any exposure or opportunities to develop competence in any arts skills - they may have "cultural positives"(Torrance) or creative strengths validated within their own culture;
- o It is desirable to avoid the misuse of the educational opportunity for status, ambition or purely recreational reasons, or for those already receiving much stimulation - in this sense, appropriate to the children's strengths and needs to fulfill their high potential.

The following should be considered:

- o High motivation, curiosity, openness to experience new ideas.
- o Divergent Thinking Abilities.
- o Need for enrichment and stimulation to fulfill creative potential.
- o Achievement and competence in any art field.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMME.

5.1. Registration:

After all the application procedures have been completed, and the child placed in the appropriate programme, registration is completed for the centre. This requests information, updated annually, on the child's interests, on what courses he would like offered, and gives the opportunity to suggest or design any relevant course. This information is analysed for all the children, and, balanced with the awareness that exposure is an important element in developing interests, plus the availability of relevant teachers, the programme is structured.

5.2. Structure of the Programme:

Bearing in mind the flexibility of the structure in terms of the needs and interests of the children, the following options are provided at present:

CORE COURSES: As a part of the whole programme at the centre, including the programme for gifted children, these courses integrate aspects of the child's development. As for gifted children, talented children may have deficiencies in areas of development, and areas of incompetence in general that would

inhibit the growth of the whole child. They are designed to develop four major areas of growth: perceptual skills; communication skills; learning and thinking skills; and concepts of knowledge or socio-cultural awareness.

(Note: A full analysis of the rationale and nature of these integrative courses has been prebterted elsewhere.)
(Ref. 6)

WORKSHOPS IN THE ARTS: Includes the following:

- LANGUAGE ARTS General creative writing; journalism; script-writing; writing scenarios/stories.
- VISUAL ARTS Drawing, painting, sculpture, graphics, ceramics, photography, film, etc.
- PERFORMING ARTS Dance, Movement, Drama, Music, etc.
- CULTURAL ARTS Courses combining anthropology and different cultural arts, such as African art, Chinese and Japanese, Inuit Art, etc.

INTEGRATED ARTS/CREATIVITY WORKSHOPS:

Primary Level : Usually take the form of a relevant thematic approach explored and expressed through the various art forms.

Secondary Level: Focus on the nature and development of the creative process as manifest and integrated in various art disciplines.

5.3. CART PROGRAMME 1984.

After discussion with willing teachers/professional artists on the nature of the programme, a brochure giving full descriptions of the range of possible courses is given to the children, who then are able to choose freely which courses they would like to take. (See Appendix: List of Courses for 1984 - or the "Creative Arts Programme" Brochure).

As noted, the descriptions of the course focus on the objectives stated above, that is, on the development of an awareness of the creative process itself, not merely the perfection of any particular artistic skills or technique. Note, for example, the description of the Music Workshop:

"This workshop will not only develop aural perception through the exploration of sound in both historical and cultural perspective, but develop your creative ability in musical improvisation and composition."

The Integrated Arts Workshop:

"These workshops are a real challenge to creative explorers, thinkers and composers. A multidisciplinary team of outstanding creative teachers in the visual arts, drama, film, music and dance and language will work with you to develop dynamic learning experiences."

5.4. Evaluation Procedures.

In relation to the approach (not preconceived teaching ends), both formative evaluation (on-going) and qualitative summative evaluation is used.

Teachers complete an evaluation after each session, giving them an opportunity to reflect on how the session has developed and, having discussed

this with the children/students, to decide how to extend into the following session. These evaluation forms contain questions as to objectives, the children's responses, the nature of the activity, preparation, etc. The children are encouraged to continually evaluate their own work in progress, to reflect on its relevance and so gradually build up an aesthetic appreciation and judgement. The summative evaluation includes: teacher's evaluation of the nature of the course and of each child's participation (items such as motivation, curiosity, social competence, and the nature of creative thinking processes); children's evaluation of the relevance of the course (or workshop) in terms of a checklist, and of their own participation in this. It must be stressed that this evaluation procedure is not discrete, not judgemental, but provides a basis for evaluating development and is very much a general attitude that is encouraged. These evaluations provide valuable information on the relevance of the programme in general, and for future planning.

6. EVALUATION.

In terms of the information gathered and analysed from evaluations of the whole programme 1983, it appears that:

- a) The children enjoyed the experience, saw it as relevant, and gained confidence in their own creative ability;
- b) The teachers, although very self-critical in evaluating their own participation, felt that the courses/workshops were relevant and successful and that they had learnt from the experience about the children and themselves;
- c) A greater appreciation of creative expression in the other art disciplines was generated;
- d) While acknowledging the complex nature of creativity and the uniqueness of each child and teacher's creative expression, that creative thinking abilities were developed, and particularly that attitudes conducive to a creative environment were encouraged.

It must be noted, that despite continual discussions, both teachers and students were initially hesitant about accepting the relevance of this form of evaluation, and sought out "productions" as evidence of the success of the course (showing that such attitudes need greater exposure to overcome previous educational expectations of evaluating in terms of products only). Furthermore, parents demanded such "products" as evidence. In the secondary level Integrated Arts / Creativity Workshop, the group chose to create an audio-visual (tape/slide) programme, wherein their own paintings, relevant photographs, and images were combined with sounds

and selected lines from poetry and prose that they had written. In this same workshop, aspects of sociodrama led to activities outside the workshop, such as designing posters for a campaign, etc. Although such activities were seen as a synthesis, they were also used to validate the success of the course.

Bearing in mind that this programme was initiated on an experimental basis and remains flexible in terms of its structure, far greater evaluation, particularly in terms of research on the development of creative thinking abilities, needs to be undertaken in order to determine the long-term effects of such a programme.

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APPENDIX.

CART PROGRAMME: 1. LIST OF COURSES FOR 1984.

1.1. CORE COURSES.

- C1. Face to FaceS4up....p7
- C2. Speakers CornerS1-3.....p7
- C3. When Fact becomes FictionS6up....p7
- C4. Graphic Communication.....S6up....p7
- C5. People, Problems and Prejudice....S6up ...p7
- C6. Problems and PuzzlesS1-3.....p8
- C7. Creative ThinkingS4up....p8
- C8. Effective ThinkingS4up....p8
- C9. Perception: Vision and space.....S1-4.....p8
- C10. Move Alive.....S1-3.....p8
- C11. Body LanguageS7up....p9
- C12. Ways with wordsS4-7.....p9
- C13. Study SkillsS8-10...p9

1.2. SELF-STUDY AND CONTACT COURSES.

- T1. The Schmerenbeck ScrapbookS1up..p9
- S2. Creative WritingS1up..p9
- 20. Architectural ZoomS1-5.....p9
- E21. Livir_ in the year 2000.....S1-5.....p10
- E34. Introduction to the Marionette Theatre.10
- E35. Making PuppetsS1-4.....p.10

1.3. CREATIVE ARTS WORKSHOPS.

- A1. Visual Arts Workshop.....S1up.....p11
- A2. Ways with WordsS1-3.....p11
- A3. Music WorkshopS1up.....p11
- A4. PhotographyS4up....p12
- A5. Dance WorkshopS5 up....p11
- A6. Drama WorkshopS1-8.....p11
- A7. ShowtimeS1-4p11

1.4. CREATIVE CRAFTS WORKSHOPS.

- E33. Ceramics (pottery)S1up....p10
- E31. Scale ModellingS1up ..p12
- E30. Creative WoodworkS1up..p10
- E36. CalligraphyS3up..p10

1.5. INTEGRATED ARTS WORKSHOPS

- A8. Courses for S1 to 8p12