ARTS AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: CREATIVITY IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

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This paper provides an overview of a Scottish based precursor to the British Academy Funded Creativity in Science Education project examined in this symposium. The precursor,--Arts as a Tool for Learning Across the Curriculum (ATLAC) initiative--was funded by the Scottish Arts Council (now Creative Scotland) and involved collaboration between the School of Education in the University of Aberdeen and the Aberdeen City Arts Education team. ATLAC was introduced as an action research initiative involving tutors and students in the initial teacher education programmes working in collaboration with artists to develop arts-based creative pedagogies across a range of disciplines. The funded ATLAC initiative took place over the period 2007-2010 and has continued since in alternative form as an embedded part of the programme, with additional funding available since 2012 for further involvement of artists.

The collaborative project created scope for the teacher-educators to investigate the impact of using various forms of expressive arts, with the aim of increasing creativity in the teaching and learning process through enhanced cross-curricular links. The approach of ATLAC is based on the concept of ‘connected-knowing’ (Belenky et al,1986) and the theories of experiential learning (Smith,2001) and contextual learning (Hull,1993). Greater creativity enhances engagement and motivation leading to better learning.

In the ATLAC initiative artists using different forms of expressive arts: dance, visual art, drama, music, film-making, story-telling, art and design worked in collaboration with tutors and students to devise cross-curricular teaching and learning methods in combination with 7 specific curricular areas: mathematics, language, religious and moral education, science, social subjects, technology and health and wellbeing. This cross-curricular learning approach is referred to as the ‘ATLAC approach’ in this paper.

This paper will provide an overview of the initiative, present some of the key findings, provide an update on how the initiative has impacted on programmes and lessons to be learned.

References

