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**"Children are people:
they are more than a score."**



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Strategies and conditions to foster creative thinking and creative behaviours in young children

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The purposes of this research were:

- to identify the effect of a music and movement program on the creative thinking of young children,
- to recognise how a spherical comprehension of creativity may apply in educational settings, and
- to provide extensive pedagogical and practical implications on conditions and strategies that facilitate creativity in school.

Recurring findings on creativity research in school settings indicate that creative thinking in young children can be fostered when students are exposed in creative activities and stimuli within the original curriculum. More specifically, the contribution of music and movement activities in children's creative thinking has been suggested by many researchers (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 2000; Niland, 2009).

The rationale of this research is innovative as it goes beyond the interpretation of the effect that music and movement have on creative thinking. The current study attempts to explore certain strategies and conditions that should co-exist during creative teaching and to suggest how a music and movement programme can be applied in school in order to enhance creative thinking of young students.

The basic theoretical frame for this research refers to the four dimensions of creativity, press, product, process and personality (MacKinnon, 1965), which interact and operate as an entire system. Isolating these dimensions may provide misleading conclusions, thus, creativity should be considered and analyzed as a multi-faceted phenomenon (MacKinnon, 1970). Relations and effects of these 4 directions (4P's) during a music and movement educational program in preschool students are examined in this study through a quasi-experimental research.

The research was conducted with a sample of young children aged 5 to 6 years old. One group of students (experimental group) was engaged in a music and movement educational program, while another, equivalent group of students (control group), followed the original curriculum. Sixteen educational interventions with 45-60min duration have been held to the experimental group. Pre/post evaluation was applied in both groups and provided a variety of outcomes. To obtain reliable results both qualitative and quantitative evaluation were used through the following complementary research tools, Torrance's tests (Torrance, 1974), participant's observation and semi structured interviews.

The findings suggest that in order to foster creativity, teacher should constantly encourage children's freedom of expression and exploration. Through movement and music improvisation, music play, role playing, circle discussions an atmosphere that supports communicational and emotional interaction is created and creative behaviors revealed. Apart from the educational tools that foster creativity, teachers' perception of creativity and their ability to identify and support creative potential is more than significant.

The impact of this research is that it highlights the need for redefining creativity education in two directions. One direction refers to the design of the educational

strategies that integrate creative skills while the other direction implies the necessity to broaden educators' comprehension on creativity and encourage them to explore and cultivate their own creative potential in order to incorporate creativity in the daily curriculum. The significance of current research is the specific framework proposed with the presence of four aspects (press, product, process and personality) that can be used to design educational methods that facilitate creativity. Furthermore, it suggests new perspectives and point of views in order to lead to further research.

Full article can be found at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03004279.2012.692700>

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