

A TAKING PART PROJECT FROM **Young Vic**

INNOVATE

Research Briefing Paper

Young Vic
Taking Part

Royal Holloway, University of London 2022

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INTRODUCTION

INNOVATE was developed by Taking Part^[1], the Young Vic's creative engagement department, to support teachers to use creativity as a teaching tool. The programme aims to encourage pupils' engagement with school and learning by embedding creativity within the everyday curriculum in a way that is sustainable beyond the life of the programme. Artists collaborate with teachers to plan and adapt their lessons to incorporate a wide range of arts activities.

INNOVATE is inspired by the influential work of Dorothy Heathcote (MBE) and Sir Ken Robinson. Together, their individual approaches to education (Heathcote's drama for learning, which encouraged children to be playful, take responsibility and act pro-socially in exploring issues across the curriculum, and Robinson's writing on the arts in schools, which advocated a broad and arts-rich curriculum focused on igniting curiosity through creative teaching) aligned with the ethos of Taking Part and underpinned the development of the programme.

Secondary schools in the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark were invited to submit an expression of interest to become an INNOVATE school in October 2020. This was followed by an application and interview process in which two schools were chosen: South Bank University Academy and Dunraven School.

Six artists were recruited to work as Project Associates in the schools. Each from diverse arts disciplines, including theatre making, drama, dance, improvisation and film, but all of them sharing a vision of how creativity could help inspire learning. Visiting Associates were also commissioned to work in schools as part of the programme. This offered more diversity in terms of artists' backgrounds and the kinds of artistic disciplines on offer and improved the ability to respond to the needs and requests of schools. Please see Appendix A for more details on the Project Associates and Visiting Associates.

An Advisory Panel of experts from creative, cultural and educational sectors was convened to inform the development of the programme (see Appendix B). Their role is to act as critical friends, to contribute their expertise and experience and ensure the programme is being implemented effectively. Meetings happen typically once per term.

[1] Shereen Jasmin Phillips, Director of Taking Part is credited with the concept of INNOVATE

As part of the programme's implementation, orientation meetings were held with the schools' Senior Leadership Teams. Participating teachers also attended an induction meeting which supported discussions about INNOVATE and any questions about their involvement before the start of the intervention. These meetings, together with the orientation sessions, were organised and led by Taking Part's Learning Producer[1]. In parallel to the meetings, Project Associates visited schools as part of 'listening days', which supported classroom observations, introductions with pupils and discussions with members of staff within the departments they were assigned to work in. Listening days also focused on planning lesson content and delivery with participating teachers.

INNOVATE was introduced to Dunraven School and South Bank University Academy in September 2021(see Appendix C for a full timeline of project activity in Year 1). In March 2022, the Young Vic commissioned a two-year evaluation to find out what impact INNOVATE has on young people's learning across all subjects. The evaluation is being carried out by Professor Helen Nicholson and Dr Yvonne Robinson at Royal Holloway, University of London. This briefing paper summarises the research underway.

[1] Taking Part's Learning Producer, Melanie Anouf, oversees implementation of INNOVATE in schools, supporting artists in their school placements and everyday management of the programme.

Schools

Based in two inner-city London secondary schools - Dunraven School and South Bank University Academy, the research explores the process of embedding creativity across all parts of school life and the impact of this on teaching and learning.

'We are thrilled to be chosen to participate in the project and look forward to a productive and innovative partnership with The Young Vic. Dunraven always strives for 'Excellence for All' and we are excited to see how our work and planning with the artists can support our curriculum principles and how our students understand the stages of learning. As a school where the arts truly matter, we look forward to discovering and sharing with others what can be achieved when artists, teachers and students bring their talents together.'

Nicholas Hargreaves, Assistant Headteacher

'We are delighted that the University Academy of Engineering Southbank has been selected to partner with The Young Vic in this innovative project. We look forward to collaborating on developing creative and engaging lessons with the theatre team. We are excited about the prospect of enhancing creativity across the whole curriculum as it will further our efforts to embed the importance of the Arts'

Rebecca Thomas, Head of Drama and Hannah Dalton, Assistant Vice Principal

What are the aims of the research?

The research seeks to support the Young Vic's learning about INNOVATE and inform its development and future delivery. Specifically, it seeks to:

-  Examine what programme success looks like, for whom and how programme activities achieve these
-  Examine how artists collaborate with teachers and students to centre creativity in teaching and learning
-  Understand the role of the Young Vic within local schools and wider community
-  Explore the benefits and challenges of using a creative, place-based approach to learning
-  Understand the civic responsibility of artists and arts organisations in education and in the lives of students and teachers in the Young Vic's local boroughs

Information Gathering

Desk based research

We have been reviewing the historical evidence base on programmes and initiatives in the UK that are similar to INNOVATE, to put the programme in context and explain how it might work. There has been a long tradition of cross curricular learning and the arts. Theatre companies such as Molecule Theatre established in 1967, produced plays directed at 5 to 11 year olds, which aimed to teach scientific concepts through theatre.

INNOVATE also builds on Creative Partnerships, a creative learning programme designed to support primary and secondary aged pupils by fostering partnerships between schools and creative professionals. The ambitious scheme involved 1 million children and over 90,000 teachers in England and ran from 2002 – 2011. Bridge Organisations are a legacy of Creative partnerships.

Organisations such as A New Direction, Artsworld and Curious Minds seek to connect the cultural sector and the education sector to give children and young people access to the arts and cultural opportunities.

The Durham Commission on Creativity and Education is a collaboration between Arts Council England and Durham University that is drawing on international expertise to identify ways in which a creative cultural education can play a larger part in young people's lives. Their report, published in 2019, sets out the Commission's vision for promoting creativity in education and recognises that creative learning is a fundamental part of childhood and supports children's wellbeing and achievement. The report also highlights concerns around the perceived lack of high-quality engagement in the arts, both in and out of school, and within the curriculum itself. Creativity Collaboratives is an intervention supported by Arts Council England and the Freeland Foundation. The programme, which has been running since 2021, aims to develop the creative capabilities of children and young people by building a network of schools to trial innovative practices of teaching.

We are also exploring wider literature to better understand the context in which INNOVATE is being delivered in schools. This review is ongoing and summarised below are some key considerations:

Declining arts curriculum. Access to arts education has declined in schools (Warwick Commission, 2015), a trend likely to continue because of the reduction in state support which has meant state-funded schools are more accountable for the impact of their spending decisions. This, along with the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBACC) in 2010, which measures students' achievement at GCSE in five subject areas (arts subjects are not included), has led to a more controlled curriculum with limited provision for formal or informal arts learning. Concerns over disparities in young people's access to a broad and balanced curriculum have also been raised, with those attending private schools more likely to have access (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2019; Institute of Education, 2013). The Department for Education has recently published its White Paper (March 2022), which includes a pledge to work with the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England to develop a National Plan for Cultural Education. This comes with growing recognition of the value of arts in schools (A New Direction, 2022; Beghetto, 2018), and the ways in which creativity contributes to young people's personal, social and academic development (James et. al, 2019).

COVID 19 and lost learning. COVID-19 has negatively impacted the attainment of all pupils, however a recent study showed particularly negative impacts on reading for secondary school students (DfE, 2022). Research has shown that partial school closures had a greater impact on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (EEF, 2020) and the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils has grown since the onset of the pandemic (Hutchinson et al, 2020). There is evidence that pupils have made progress since returning to in-person learning, yet this has not made up for the learning loss experienced. Lost learning is thought to account for nearly half of pupils needing intensive additional support (Sharp et al., 2020).

Student voice. It is recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic has had wider impacts on pupils aside from their learning. A number of reports stress the social and emotional impacts of the pandemic and the significance of this in relation to a dwindling student voice. For example, work carried out by UNESCO and the Council of Europe showed a significant loss in opportunities and learning on student voice during the pandemic (UNESCO, 2021). The research suggests participation in school life and decision-making was severely impacted, together with the ability of students to participate in classroom discussions and local projects centred on student engagement (see also, NFER, 2020). In addition to a declining student voice, research has indicated the pandemic has negatively impacted students' well-being and mental health (Bussières et al., 2021), which has also been identified as a significant challenge in the classroom.

INNOVATE may have the potential to ameliorate these negative impacts. As a creative, placed-based intervention, the programme may be particularly important for schools and students living in the schools' boroughs where there are multiple barriers to accessing the theatre.

Lesson observations & conversational interviews

In addition to desk-based research, we have been observing lessons (see Appendix D for an outline of lessons visited) and planning meetings in schools and talking with teachers. Conversational interviews with teachers explored their motivations for becoming involved in INNOVATE, how the programme has worked in the context of lessons and their perceptions of what has worked well and challenges they have encountered. Artists delivering INNOVATE activities have also spoken to some pupils. This information has been used to cross-check researcher observation notes.

What have we learnt so far?

Observations and conversational interviews with participating teachers indicated that INNOVATE is generally well-received in schools. Teachers reported relatively few practical difficulties in relation to co-delivery of lessons with the main issues being a lack of planning time and timetabling constraints. Some teachers questioned the need for INNOVATE as a project title used in schools. One teacher felt the title distinguished INNOVATE from everyday school activities rather than it being seen as an embedded part of school life. Many of the teachers felt that in order to maximise the impact of the programme in Year 2, INNOVATE needs to be reinforced in other areas of teaching and learning and in whole-school improvement activities and messaging.

Discussions with teachers also identified facilitators and barriers to the delivery of INNOVATE, which we highlight below.

Programme Successes

Buy-in from schools' senior leadership teams

is a key factor facilitating delivery of INNOVATE that supports adequate ring-fencing of time for teachers to plan and select the most useful activities for each lesson.

Planning ahead.

When enough time is allocated to planning lessons and preparation for classroom activities involves teachers and artists working collaboratively. This might involve face to face or virtual meetings and typically last up to 45 minutes.

Building trusting relationships.

A good relationship between teachers and artists and a positive experience of working together appeared to facilitate the delivery of successful lessons. Lessons worked particularly well when they were jointly led, rather than the onus being placed on artists to lead the lesson content.

Delivered by experts.

Teachers appreciated artists' expertise and the modelling of activities which encouraged them to try out new methods of teaching and increased their repertoire of ideas for teaching creatively. They felt this extended the student offer.

Fun-filled activities

Teachers reported that students enjoyed engaging in fun activities and games grounded in subject knowledge. Teachers said this created a good climate for learning.

'Lessons have definitely helped to solidify students' learning and help them to retain more information.' (Teacher, Dunraven School)

Civic Theatre.

Teachers felt INNOVATE provided a unique opportunity to facilitate students' connection with theatre and arts practice. They valued opportunities to go on planned theatre trips and which allowed students to participate in extended theatre experiences. For example, pre-show pizza and refreshments, and a chance to chat with ushers and members of the Taking Part team.

Programme Challenges

Buy-in from schools' senior leadership teams.

Senior leadership buy-in has not always been evident. This has sometimes meant that the benefits and requirements of the project has not been communicated across schools. Teachers who did not have good levels of support from senior members of staff could struggle to find the time for planning INNOVATE lessons on top of usual teaching responsibilities.

Planning ahead.

Planning time for lessons was variable across schools. Typically, it did not involve face to face meetings and took place via email. Teachers unable to meet artists in-person or virtually said they found co-delivery more challenging.

'There was a point where we didn't have weekly meetings to plan lessons and things really dropped.' (Teacher, Dunraven School)

Scheduling.

In some cases, timetabling constraints presented challenges to the scheduling of INNOVATE. For one school, this meant planning time was sometimes reduced from weekly to fortnightly sessions, usually to accommodate a two-week cycle (that is, week A/B). This also meant that some teaching for individual subjects happened across more than one day. Last minute changes to the timetable and teacher availability could compound the issue. Artists appeared to deal with these challenges, nonetheless, sometimes by scheduling additional days in schools.

Preparedness to deliver INNOVATE.

Some teachers were a little apprehensive about the prospect of delivering creative activities independently, particularly those who had built up good relationships with artists and who felt they had complimentary expertise.

'We tend to work to each other's competencies. I take on a more behaviour management role and [name of artist] does the extra stuff' (Teacher, South Bank University Academy).

Recommendations

Senior leadership buy-in.

Buy-in from senior members of staff appears a key factor facilitating delivery of INNOVATE. It supports adequate ring-fencing of time for teachers, along with artists, to plan and deliver lessons. It also demonstrates the value schools place on the programme. An important step has been the scheduling of termly meetings with senior leaders in one school. Young Vic might also consider additional strategies for keeping key members of staff on board throughout delivery of INNOVATE. One strategy could be to provide evidence of the ways INNOVATE allows schools to achieve in the way schools are being asked to achieve - by Ofsted for instance.

Scheduling and planning.

Scheduling INNOVATE lessons has, at times, required a considerable level of flexibility on the part of artists. While this has often been appreciated by teachers, this has sometimes been a challenge for freelance artists. Supporting clear expectations and communication between artists and schools of what is reasonable outside of pre-agreed planning and lesson time is crucial. Teachers' time for planning and delivering INNOVATE lessons needs to be accounted for and communicated at the outset. Guidance for how long and what form preparation for lessons should take is also important, while not being too prescriptive and mindful of competing commitments on teachers' time.

Programme clarity.

Ensuring school partners are clear about what the programme entails and have a good understanding of its aims and rationale will support on-going delivery of INNOVATE. Young Vic should continue its efforts to offer training, support and resources that will help schools develop whole school confidence and capacity to embed creative activities across the curriculum.

Training and CPD.

Working in new ways can present challenges for teachers as well as artists. The Young Vic provides formal ongoing support through Advisory Panel meetings – a space where Project Associates can troubleshoot ideas and share thoughts or concerns – and Project Associate training days. It is a challenge to ensure that teachers, working within rigidly set curriculum and assessment frameworks, will prioritise time to access CPD opportunities. However, trying to engage and support teachers develop their pedagogy and practice should continue to be a priority for Young Vic. This could mean Young Vic invite staff members previously involved in INNOVATE and/or with pre-existing interest in creative learning, to attend training that will help them develop their practice. This could be aligned with existing learning needs or skills development, for example ‘effective voice training’. These staff could then serve as champions for creative learning / teaching in their departments and schools.

Civic theatre.

The Young Vic offers schools additional opportunities for arts participation as part of INNOVATE and wider commitment to a civic role. Opportunities offered include theatre trips for students and teachers (with a chance to meet practicing artists), free ticketed arts events, and support with CPD. When schools have tapped into these opportunities, Young Vic have played a connecting role, in developing relationships with theatre practice and encouraging individual creativity. To build on this success, Young Vic should continue to maximise opportunities to build relationships across different year groups and school departments. One area of impact might be in existing work with older year groups, to nurture students’ understanding of options for career progression in the creative and cultural sector or further study in the arts.

Sustainability.

There is an appetite amongst teachers to build on opportunities to pool ideas, expertise, and skills they have developed over the past year. This could be leveraged to support a whole-school approach to INNOVATE, and to ensure that teachers and school departments less inclined to participate have opportunities to be involved in the programme. This will enhance the programme’s potential impact.

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Appendix A

Project Associates

Mikey Bharj

Jordana Golbourn

Lerato Islam

Sheryl Malcolm

Joseph Prestwich

Amy Robinson

Visiting Project Associates

Bruno Correia

Anyebe Godwin

Vicky Moran

TD. Moyo

Nadège René

Vincent Shiels

Appendix B

Advisory Panel

Dr Sylvan Baker

Dr Vickey Storey

Kay Rufai

Dr Javeria K. Shah

Darren Chetty

Advisory Panel Meetings

22 February 2021

28 June 2021

27 September 2021

06 December 2021

07 March 2022

30 May 2022

Appendix C

| Month / Year | Activity |
|-----------------------------|--|
| October 2020 – May 2021 | <p>INNOVATE Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lambeth and Southwark schools invited to submit an expression of interest to become an INNOVATE school• Interviews with schools held and two schools selected: South Bank University Academy and Dunraven School• Project Advisory Panel formed• Project Associates interviewed and selected• Visiting Associates interviewed and selected |
| June 2021 | <p>INNOVATE ‘Listening weeks’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three Project Associates embedded in each school setting |
| July 2021 | INNOVATE Press Announcement |
| September 2021 – March 2022 | INNOVATE delivery |
| March 2022 | Royal Holloway University of London commissioned to conduct INNOVATE evaluation |
| April 2022 - July 2022 | INNOVATE delivery |

Appendix D

Curriculum subjects covered in Year 1
(Autumn term 2021 – Summer term 2022)

Dunraven School

English

Media

Science

Form time

Referral Centre

History

South Bank University Academy

Humanities

English

Inclusion Hub

Day 10 (Enrichment)

Author

Dr Yvonne Robinson, Royal Holloway University of London

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