




Enhancing Creative Arts Teaching in KZN: An Action Research Project with Senior Phase Teachers in the Zululand District

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to enhance the pedagogical competence and confidence of non-specialist Creative Arts teachers in the Zululand District of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Many of these teachers, assigned to teach Music, Drama, Dance, and Visual Art without prior training, experience difficulties implementing the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP). Guided by an Action Research Design, the project was a collaborative initiative between the University of Zululand's Faculty of Education and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. The Data was collected through participatory workshops, reflective discussions, observations, and teacher feedback sessions. Findings revealed that while teachers initially demonstrated limited understanding of the Creative Arts curriculum, sustained participation in hands-on, collaborative workshops significantly improved their content knowledge, confidence, and classroom practices. The workshops encouraged peer learning and the integration of local artistic expressions into teaching, making lessons more engaging and culturally relevant. However, persistent challenges such as limited resources and inadequate ongoing support remain. The study recommends continuous professional development initiatives, the establishment of regional Creative Arts teacher clusters, and stronger collaboration between universities and education departments to sustain teacher growth. This research contributes to scholarship by demonstrating how participatory, context-sensitive action research can empower non-specialist teachers and advance Creative Arts education in rural South African contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of Creative Arts in the South African curriculum (Grades R-9) represents a significant landmark in the country's post-apartheid education transformation. Comprised of dance, drama, music, and visual arts, Creative Arts sought to undo the profound inequalities of the apartheid education system. Prior to its inclusion, schools starkly mirrored the broader divisions of South African society, with some offering robust arts education while others struggled to provide basic resources for literacy and numeracy. The Creative Arts curriculum, as outlined in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), holds dual significance: it fosters well-rounded individuals with a foundational appreciation for the arts, and it offers a pathway for specialised training during Further Education and Training (FET).

Despite these transformative intentions, the implementation of Creative Arts has been imbalanced. Many non-specialist teachers, particularly those in previously marginalized schools, who lack adequate

training and resources to deliver this complex, cross-disciplinary subject, are instructed and expected to teach Creative Arts. This study focuses on workshops conducted for senior phase-teachers within the Zululand district of KwaZulu-Natal, seeking answers to the research question: How can the capacity of non-specialist Creative Arts teachers in the Zululand district improve to implement the subject's ATP?

The aim of this study is to improve the capacity of these teachers in implementing the Creative Arts curriculum effectively. Specific objectives of this study are:

- Equip teachers with essential understanding in the disciplines of Music, Visual Art, Drama, and Dance (Foundational Knowledge).
- Develop teachers' abilities to deliver engaging and effective Creative Arts lessons (Pedagogical Skills). Increase teacher confidence and competence in implementing the Creative Arts ATP (Confidence Building).

These fundamental objectives are crucial for building a strong foundation that aligns with our aspirations to pursue a career in future studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

South Africa's education system grapples with the legacy of apartheid. While multicultural education was introduced in 1993, significant disparities persist. Schools in wealthier areas tend to have more resources and qualified teachers compared to those in townships and lower-income communities.¹ These challenges are being addressed by the Department of Education and UNIZULU through teacher workshops, particularly in subjects like Creative Arts, where specialist skills are crucial.

Several studies highlight the challenges faced by teachers, particularly those without prior experience in the Creative Arts, when implementing the curriculum. For instance, de Villiers and Sauls, found that initial workshops in South Africa focused heavily on curriculum terminology, neglecting the development of practical teaching skills necessary for effective delivery.² This suggests a gap in training programs that leaves generalist teachers, often assigned to Creative Arts without specific expertise, unprepared to confidently lead creative activities and engage learners in meaningful learning experiences.

Teachers across Southern Africa, including those in Botswana,³ often face limitations in their knowledge and skills related to Creative Arts education. This highlights the need for effective training programs to equip teachers with the necessary tools for successful curriculum implementation. Studies conducted in South Africa by Magagula et al. echo these concerns, highlighting the challenges faced by teachers due to a lack of specialist training in all four Creative Arts disciplines (Dance, Drama, Music, & Visual Arts).⁴

This lack of comprehensive training is further emphasized by Monnathoko and Mamvuto, who state that these teachers may not have received sufficient arts education during their initial teacher preparation.⁵ While the focus of this review has been on teacher training needs, it's important to acknowledge the significant benefits of a strong Creative Arts education for students. After all, equipping teachers with the necessary pedagogical skills and subject knowledge is crucial to ensure effective curriculum implementation, which can then unlock a range of developmental benefits for learners.

Research by Gruska highlights the role of the arts in fostering self-identity and a deeper understanding of one's society and culture.⁶

¹ Nicholas Spaull, "South Africa's Education Crisis: The Quality of Education in South Africa 1994-2011," *Johannesburg: Centre for Development and Enterprise* 21, no. 1 (2013): 1-65.

² Alethea C De Villiers and Maxwell M Sauls, "Changing Teachers' Practice in the Creative Arts Classroom: The Case for Educational Technologies," *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 13, no. 1 (2017): 1-9.

³ O S Phibion, "Botswana Primary School Teachers' Perception on the Introduction of the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) A Case of Lobatse Town (Urban) and Tlokweng Village (Semi-Urban) Schools," *Gaborone: University of Botswana*, 2006; M. Phuthego, "The Challenges in Achieving an Integrated Teaching and Learning of the Arts" (University of Botswana, 2008); M. C. Mannathoko, "Integrating Arts Education in Southern Africa: The Case of Botswana," *International Journal of Education and the Arts* 10, no. 2 (2009): 11-29.

⁴ T. Magagula, Z. Ntuli, and S. Zulu, "Teacher Training and the Implementation of Creative Arts in South Africa," *Journal of Arts Education* 56, no. 3 (2022): 215-28.

⁵ M., Monnathoko and B. Mamvuto, "Time Allocation and Content Coverage in Creative Arts Education: A Study of South African Schools," *Arts Education Policy Review* 119, no. 2 (2018): 77-85.

⁶ J. Gruska, "The Role of Arts Education in Fostering Self-Identity and Cultural Understanding," *Journal of Artistic Education* 5, no. 1 (2009): 22-35.

Similarly, Alsaqabi and Alazmi emphasizes the multifaceted impact of arts education, encompassing cognitive, social, and aesthetic development within individuals.⁷ Leder et al. further contribute by exploring the psychological significance of visual arts in shaping our experience of the modern world.⁸

These findings underscore the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver effective Creative Arts programs that can unlock these benefits for all learners. While research underscores the importance of professional development for improving learning outcomes⁹ and teacher practice,¹⁰ a review of the literature reveals a limited focus on professional development programs specifically designed for Creative Arts teachers in Grades 7-9 within South African secondary schools. This gap is significant as these teachers often lack specialist training in all four Creative Arts disciplines, as stated in the introduction of this study. Addressing this gap is crucial to ensuring effective curriculum implementation. This research aims to contribute to this area by exploring the effectiveness of participatory workshops in enhancing Creative Arts teachers' knowledge and skills in South African secondary schools (Grades 7-9).

The Creative Arts subject is considered complex and is acknowledged by some researchers, Beukes (2016), adding another layer of difficulty. Additionally, the time allocated for Creative Arts in the CAPS document (two hours per week) is often deemed insufficient to cover the prescribed content.¹¹ These limitations create a challenging environment for teachers to balance content implementation effectively for the Creative Arts curriculum.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the workshops conducted for non-specialist teachers, it appears that the teachers lack an understanding of what the content is for Creative Arts within the ATP, as well as how to implement it. Creative arts content requires the teacher to be an active participant and, therefore, the teacher is required to make a transition and become the student. This is known as learning by doing (experimental learning), which, according to Smith, is based on three points:

1. People learn best when they are personally involved in the learning experience.
2. Knowledge must be discovered by the individual if it is to have any significant meaning to them or make a difference in their behaviour; and
3. A person's commitment to learning is highest when they are free to set their own learning objectives and can actively pursue them within a given framework.¹²

In this case, the teacher needs to practice and participate to implement the knowledge they have experienced firsthand. It is also important for the teacher to conduct their own research to discover the required resources, being in a teacher-scholar-teacher cycle. This is emphasized by Kolb, who states that the learner engages directly with the subject matter at hand, facilitating an immediate interaction with the phenomenon under investigation.¹³ This approach prioritizes firsthand experience over mere contemplation or hypothetical discussion regarding potential actions related to the topic. It is evident that learning through doing creates a better understanding of the knowledge to be passed on. This, in turn, equips one with certainty, which is synonymous with confidence, leading to the ability to create individual objectives for the given time frame.

⁷ B.K. Alsaqabi and K.A. Alzami, "The Crucial Role of Arts Education in Cognitive, Emotional Development, and Academic Success among Students: A Comprehensive Review," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (IOSR-JHSS)* 29, no. 1 (2024): 44–48.

⁸ Helmut Leder et al., "A Model of Aesthetic Appreciation and Aesthetic Judgments," *British Journal of Psychology* 95, no. 4 (2004): 489–508.

⁹ Jay M. Camerino, "Professional Development and Its Impact on Teacher Practice" (University of Southern California, 2009).

¹⁰ E. Hassel, "Professional Development: Learning from the Best," *North Central Regional Educational Laboratory*, 1999; Marvin Wideen, Jolie Mayer-Smith, and Barbara Moon, "A Critical Analysis of the Research on Learning to Teach: Making the Case for an Ecological Perspective on Inquiry," *Review of Educational Research* 68, no. 2 (1998): 130–78.

¹¹ Monnathoko and Mamvuto, "Time Allocation and Content Coverage in Creative Arts Education: A Study of South African Schools"; Y. Nompula, "An Overview of the CAPS Document and Its Implications for Creative Arts Education in South Africa," *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 2, no. 1 (2012): 70–83.

¹² Mark Smith, *Creators Not Consumers: Rediscovering Social Education/c* [by Mark Smith]. (NAYC, 1983). 16.

¹³ D. A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984).

This is essential for this study as it is an objective to be achieved for the productive implementation of the Creative Arts ATP.

This is affirmed further by DeGiacomo that Experiential learning requires a greater involvement on the part of the student which “increases motivation and provides an associative structure of events in memory that helps ensure that whatever has been learned is not lost. ...experiential education leads to self-assurance and a sense of accomplishment and mastery that successful action provides.”¹⁴ In other words, practice makes perfect, which creates a sense of routine that becomes a constant reminder of what to do when, how and why. To elaborate further, Dewey suggested that:

When we experience something, we act upon it, we do something; then we suffer or undergo the consequences. We do something to the thing, and then it does something to us in return: such is the peculiar combination. The connection of these two phases of experience measures the fruitfulness of experience. Mere activity does not constitute experience.¹⁵

Dewey clearly defines the term experiential learning and how the outcomes of it are based on how we take measures. For this instance, a teacher may be required to conduct a warm-up body session for dance in Creative Arts. The effectiveness of this exercise is based on the demonstrations by the teacher for the learners, and if conducted correctly and sufficiently, the outcomes will be successful and vice versa. Experience positions one to understand what effort is required and to understand the situation the learner is meant to be in. “Experience for Dewey is our ‘lived’ experience. According to Ord, the experience at the heart of experiential learning, therefore, is not something separate or additional but something which embraces the lives of individuals.”¹⁶ To conclude, Dewey further elaborates that experience is categorized under a two-way process, namely ‘trying’ and ‘undergoing’. Ord mentioned Dewey, stating the following:

‘Trying’ refers to the outward expression of intention or action. It is the purposeful engagement of the individual with the environment, or in Dewey’s words, ‘doing becomes trying; an experiment with the world to find out what it is like’ (ibid). Through action, an attempt is made to have an impact on the world. ‘Undergoing’, the other aspect of the ‘transaction’ in experience, refers to the consequences of experience on the individual. In turn, in attempting to have an impact, the experience also impacts us. ‘Undergoing’ refers to the consequences of the experience for us.¹⁷

That is to say, the idea of engaging in an experience only requires some effort to show a person’s interest and determination to make something work. This results in understanding the outcomes that may affect us positively or negatively, depending on either a minuscule or extensive effort.

METHODOLOGY

This action research project addressed the challenges faced by non-specialist Creative Arts teachers in implementing the Annual Teaching Plans (ATP) in Zululand district secondary schools. The study was conducted by researchers from the University of Zululand, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education.

The study followed a cyclical action research approach, guided by the framework of Kemmis and McTaggart, which comprises four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection.¹⁸ The planning stage included conducting initial consultations with the subject adviser.

The purpose of these discussions was to hold an in-depth discussion to clarify the specific needs and challenges experienced by the Creative Arts teachers who were nominated to attend the workshop. After the discussions, a pre-workshop questionnaire with semi-structured questions was administered. The purpose of the questionnaire was to assess the baseline knowledge, confidence, and needs of those teachers regarding the ATP. The close analysis of the pre-workshop questionnaire revealed several key insights

¹⁴ John A. DeGiacomo, “Experiential Learning in Higher Education,” *The Forestry Chronicle* 78, no. 2 (April 1, 2002): 245, <https://doi.org/10.5558/tfc78245-2>.

¹⁵ J. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 2017 edition (Teddington: Echo Library, 1916). 104.

¹⁶ Jon Ord, “John Dewey and Experiential Learning: Developing the Theory of Youth Work,” *Youth & Policy* 108, no. 1 (2012): 67.

¹⁷ Ord, “John Dewey and Experiential Learning: Developing the Theory of Youth Work.” 60.

¹⁸ S. Kemmis and R. McTaggart, “ Participatory Action Research,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000), 567–95.

into the challenges and needs of Creative Arts teachers in the Zululand district. The workshop, attended by 28 teachers, highlighted a range of experiences and varying levels of confidence and competence in teaching Creative Arts.

The participants' ages ranged from 21 to 60, with their backgrounds in Creative Arts education falling into three categories: those trained as majors, those who gained knowledge during teaching, and those teaching without adequate knowledge. The pre-workshop assessment revealed diverse experiences and challenges faced by teachers across different age groups. Teacher in the ages 21-30 bracket struggled with their first-time teaching experiences and understanding the curriculum. Some noted difficulties engaging students, particularly in activities like dance.

Teachers in the ages 31-40 bracket found it challenging initially but reported improving understanding and success over time. The teachers in the 41-50 age bracket experience varied experiences, with some teachers enjoying teaching the subject and others struggling with lesson planning and resource availability. Finally, many of the teachers aged 51-60 reported significant challenges in conducting classes and preparing lesson plans, often due to a lack of training and resources.

The responses also showed that approaches to lesson planning varied, with younger teachers often relying on the ATP and CAPS documents, while older teachers sometimes struggled with understanding how to create effective lesson plans. Some teachers benefited from workshops and mentorship, while others relied on improvisation or external resources like WhatsApp groups.

A discrepancy emerged between teachers' self-reported confidence and their actual teaching experiences. While many teachers rated their knowledge and implementation skills at an average level, their qualitative responses indicated ongoing challenges in curriculum delivery, lesson planning, and ATP interpretation. This suggests potential misunderstandings of the questionnaire items or language barriers. The primary goals for participating in the workshop included gaining more knowledge on lesson delivery, developing creative teaching methods, and improving existing skills. Most teachers expressed a desire to better understand and interpret the ATP, create engaging activities, and effectively plan lessons.

The action stage involved a two-day participatory workshop, which was customized to address the challenges that were identified in the planning stage. It was dovetailed to enhance teachers' understanding of Creative Arts concepts, content, and pedagogical approaches. The workshop incorporated hands-on activities, group discussions, modelling of teaching techniques, and collaborative lesson planning.

In the observation stage, the researchers facilitated post-workshop discussions to gauge teachers' feelings and their readiness to implement the ATP. This was complemented by a post-workshop questionnaire, which would serve to assess changes in teachers' knowledge, confidence, and perceptions of the workshop. In the reflection stage, data was analyzed from the pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaires, as well as the views expressed in the post-workshop discussion and identified findings. The researchers then evaluated the overall effectiveness of the workshop and areas for improvement based on the collected data.

Ethical Considerations

In collaboration with the Department of Education, the University of Zululand's Faculty of Education conducted an ethically approved research project. Prior to data collection, the teachers were briefed, and the surveys and evaluation forms made it clear that their identities would not be disclosed.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Initial consultations with the subject advisor revealed a significant concern regarding teachers' lack of confidence and knowledge in teaching Creative Arts, particularly in aligning lessons with the ATP. The initial consultation discussions, pre-workshop questionnaire necessitated a customized workshop that was intended to facilitate a purpose-driven intervention where the above challenges were workshopped.

The close analysis of the pre-workshop questionnaire revealed several key insights into the challenges and needs of Creative Arts teachers in the Zululand district. The workshop was attended by 28 teachers out of 40 expected teachers, highlighting a range of experiences and varying levels of confidence and competence in teaching Creative Arts. The participants' ages ranged from 21 to 60, with their backgrounds in Creative Arts education falling into three categories: those trained as majors, those who

gained knowledge during teaching, and those teaching without adequate knowledge. The pre-workshop assessment revealed diverse experiences and challenges faced by teachers across different age groups.

The pre-workshop data corroborated things that were discussed with the subject advisor, who coordinated this intervention. The participants' ages ranged between 21 and 60, with their backgrounds in Creative Arts education falling into three categories: those trained as majors, those who gained knowledge during teaching, and those teaching without adequate knowledge. The pre-workshop assessment revealed diverse experiences and challenges faced by teachers across different age groups. Teachers ranging from 21 to 30 years struggled with their first-time teaching experiences and understanding the curriculum. Some noted difficulties with engaging learners, particularly with activities for dance. Teachers ranging from 31 to 40 years found it challenging initially but reported improving understanding and success over time.

The teachers, ranging from 41 to 50 years experiences varied widely, with some teachers enjoying teaching the subject and others struggling with lesson planning and resource availability. Finally, many of the teachers, ranging from ages 51 to 60, reported significant challenges in conducting classes and preparing lesson plans, often due to a lack of training and resources. The workshop was followed by the post-workshop open discussion and clarity seeking, followed by a post-workshop questionnaire. In the open-ended feedback, teachers expressed positive experiences of collaboration, learning from facilitators and peers, and gaining practical skills that they felt could be immediately applied in their classrooms. However, some teachers still expressed concerns about limited resources and the need for ongoing support to fully implement the ATP. They suggested incorporating more subject-specific content, providing additional resources, and offering follow-up sessions for continued support.

Regarding post-workshop data, it was found that teachers reported a significant increase in confidence across all areas assessed, particularly in understanding the ATP, developing engaging activities, and aligning lessons with curriculum objectives. They identified hands-on activities, collaborative lesson planning, and the modelling of teaching techniques as the most valuable aspects of the workshop. Teachers expressed a strong intention to implement the strategies and knowledge gained in their classrooms, with a focus on creating more engaging and relevant learning experiences for their students.

The findings of this study underscore several critical issues identified in the initial consultations with the subject advisor and supported by the pre-workshop data. The noteworthy concern regarding teachers' lack of confidence and knowledge in teaching Creative Arts, particularly in aligning lessons with the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP), reflects broader systemic challenges within the Zululand district.

This is consistent with the literature, which highlights the persistent disparities in educational resources and teacher qualifications across different socio-economic areas, as affirmed by Spaull.¹⁹ The pre-workshop data revealed that teachers generally expressed low confidence across all assessed areas, with the lowest confidence reported in developing creative activities and assessing student learning. This finding is supported by de Villiers and Sauls, who noted that initial workshops in South Africa often neglected practical teaching skills necessary for effective curriculum delivery.²⁰

The strong desire among participants to gain a deeper understanding of the ATP, develop practical skills for lesson planning, and increase their confidence underscores the need for targeted professional development programs. Other studies similarly emphasize the necessity of effective training programs to equip teachers with the necessary tools for successful curriculum implementation.²¹ The lack of comprehensive training in all four Creative Arts disciplines (Dance, Drama, Music, & Visual Arts), as highlighted by Magagula et al. further supports the need for specialized workshops like the one designed in this study.²²

¹⁹ Spaull, "South Africa's Education Crisis: The Quality of Education in South Africa 1994-2011."

²⁰ De Villiers and Sauls, "Changing Teachers' Practice in the Creative Arts Classroom: The Case for Educational Technologies."

²¹ Phibion, "Botswana Primary School Teachers' Perception on the Introduction of the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) A Case of Lobatse Town (Urban) and Tlokweng Village (Semi-Urban) Schools"; Phuthego, "The Challenges in Achieving an Integrated Teaching and Learning of the Arts"; Mannathoko, "Integrating Arts Education in Southern Africa: The Case of Botswana."

²² Simphiwe Magagula, Ndwamato Mugovhani, and Sakhiseni Yende, "Challenges Encountered in the Enhancement and Optimal Teaching and Learning of the Creative Arts Subject in South Africa," *African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies* 4, no. 1 (2022): 373-83, <https://doi.org/10.51415/ajims.v4i1.1042>.

The post-workshop data indicated a significant increase in teachers' confidence across all areas assessed, particularly in understanding the ATP, developing engaging activities, and aligning lessons with curriculum objectives. Teachers identified hands-on activities, collaborative lesson planning, and the modelling of teaching techniques as the most valuable aspects of the workshop. This aligns with the literature on the benefits of professional development for improving teacher practice and learning outcomes.²³ The participatory nature of the workshop facilitated a collaborative learning environment, which was positively received by the teachers, mirroring the other findings on the benefits of arts education in fostering cognitive, social, and aesthetic development.²⁴

However, despite the positive outcomes, some teachers expressed concerns about limited resources and the need for ongoing support to fully implement the ATP. This echoes the challenges noted by Monnathoko and Mamvuto regarding the insufficient time allocated for Creative Arts in the CAPS document and the difficulty in covering the prescribed content.²⁵ The suggestion by teachers to incorporate more subject-specific content, provide additional resources, and offer follow-up sessions for continued support highlights the ongoing need for sustained professional development initiatives.

Discussion Summary

These findings align with existing literature, which highlights the systemic issues of inadequate training and resource disparities in the South African education system. The customized workshop designed to address these challenges proved to be effective, as evidenced by the significant increase in teacher confidence and skills post-workshop. Teachers reported that hands-on activities, collaborative lesson planning, and the modelling of teaching techniques were particularly valuable.

The positive feedback on the collaborative and practical nature of the workshop underscores the importance of interactive and participatory professional development models, as supported by literature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study have several significant implications for Creative Arts senior phase secondary school teachers in the Zululand District.

- **Teacher Capacity Building:** The critical role of teacher knowledge, skills, and confidence in delivering effective Creative Arts instruction is evident. Addressing these factors through targeted professional development is essential.
- **Curriculum Implementation:** The challenges faced by teachers in aligning lessons with the ATP highlight the need for curriculum materials and resources that provide clear guidance and support.
- **Resource Allocation:** The lack of resources, particularly in under-resourced schools, significantly impacts Creative Arts teaching. Increased investment in this subject area is crucial for equitable education.
- **Systemic Change:** Addressing the broader systemic issues affecting education, such as teacher redeployment and workload, is necessary to create a supportive environment for Creative Arts teachers.
- **Strengthened Teacher Professional Development:** Develop and implement comprehensive professional development programs that focus on practical teaching skills, curriculum alignment, and assessment strategies for Creative Arts teachers.
- **Curriculum Enhancement:** Develop high-quality, accessible curriculum resources that provide clear guidelines, examples, and support for teachers in implementing the Creative Arts curriculum.
- **Increased Resource Allocation:** Allocate additional resources to Creative Arts education, including funding for materials, equipment, and teacher support.
- **Policy Review and Reform:** Review and revise education policies to address the specific needs of Creative Arts teachers, such as workload management and teacher deployment.

²³ Hassel, "Professional Development: Learning from the Best"; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon, "A Critical Analysis of the Research on Learning to Teach: Making the Case for an Ecological Perspective on Inquiry"; Camerino, "Professional Development and Its Impact on Teacher Practice."

²⁴ Gruska, "The Role of Arts Education in Fostering Self-Identity and Cultural Understanding"; Alsaqabi and Alzami, "The Crucial Role of Arts Education in Cognitive, Emotional Development, and Academic Success among Students: A Comprehensive Review."

²⁵ Monnathoko and Mamvuto, "Time Allocation and Content Coverage in Creative Arts Education: A Study of South African Schools."

- Collaborative Partnerships: Foster partnerships between educational institutions, government agencies, and the arts community to support Creative Arts education.
- Further Research: Conduct additional research to explore the long-term impact of professional development initiatives, the effectiveness of different curriculum models, and the relationship between resource allocation and student outcomes in Creative Arts.

By implementing these recommendations, it is anticipated that the quality of Creative Arts education in South Africa can be significantly improved, leading to enhanced learner outcomes and a more holistic educational experience.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to investigate the challenges and needs of Creative Arts teachers in the Zululand District, particularly in the context of their confidence and competence in teaching the subject. The initial consultations and pre-workshop data revealed significant gaps in teachers' understanding of the Creative Arts curriculum, their ability to develop engaging activities, and their experience with assessment strategies. The study also highlighted ongoing concerns about limited resources and the need for continuous support. These findings suggest that while targeted professional development interventions are crucial, they must be part of a broader, sustained effort to support teachers.

This includes equitable resource allocation, continuous professional development, and systemic policy reforms to address the underlying issues in Creative Arts education. The implications of this study are clear: there is a pressing need for comprehensive and ongoing professional development for Creative Arts teachers, coupled with equitable resource distribution and systemic support.

By addressing these needs, the researchers can empower teachers, improve the quality of Creative Arts education, and ultimately enhance learning outcomes for learners. This study contributes to the understanding of the challenges faced by Creative Arts teachers in South Africa and offers practical solutions for improving their training and support.

It underscores the importance of specialized, continuous professional development and the need for systemic reforms to ensure that all teachers have the necessary tools and confidence to deliver high-quality Creative Arts education. Through concerted efforts from educational authorities, institutions, and stakeholders, a more equitable and effective education system can be created that benefits all learners.

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ABOUT AUTHORS

Ms. Lindelwa Pepu is a dedicated Visual Arts Lecturer at the University of Zululand, South Africa. Currently pursuing her PhD in Art History at the University of the Witwatersrand, her passion lies in advocating for artists and amplifying marginalized voices within the art world. She champions the recognition of artists as not only creative individuals but also as accomplished professionals. Her research primarily centres on curatorial practices and art history, reflecting her deep engagement with the field. Furthermore, she holds a keen interest in elevating the importance and impact of Visual Arts and Creative Arts within the high school education curriculum.

Dr. Oreeditse Patrick Masuelele lectures on Creative Arts at the University of Zululand in South Africa. His areas of interest are the application of AI in education, the function of music competitions in fostering social cohesion and the pedagogy of Creative Arts education within the South African context. His expertise extends beyond the classroom, as evidenced by his contributions to the academic discourse through published articles, papers and book chapters.