

YOUNG VIC TAKING PART'S RADICAL ARTS IN EDUCATION PROJECT RELEASES RESEARCH FINDINGS

- **INNOVATE** is a two-year project in which teachers and artists collaborated to use creativity and the arts to transform teaching approaches across the curriculum.
- The **INNOVATE** project research by Royal Holloway, University of London finds that embedding arts and creative activities in subjects including maths and science resulted in increased student confidence and participation, deeper reflection and an enhanced enjoyment of learning

Young Vic Theatre and **Royal Holloway, University of London** today release research findings from **INNOVATE**, a radical two-year arts in education project in which teachers and artists collaborated to thread creativity and the arts through the curriculum to enhance, develop and transform learning experiences for young people. At a time when arts provision and take up in schools is in continuing decline, the report published today finds that using the arts to teach subjects such as maths, history and sciences resulted in increased student confidence and participation in the classroom, deeper student reflection and an enhanced enjoyment of learning, as well as increasing teacher confidence and improving professional development.

Established in direct response to the challenges faced by schools following the pandemic, **INNOVATE** was led by **Young Vic Taking Part** in collaboration with two partner schools **South Bank University Academy** and **Dunraven School** in Lambeth and Southwark, twelve multi-disciplinary artists and an advisory panel of educational and cultural experts during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years.

Working with Year 7 and Year 8 teachers, **INNOVATE** artists skilled in improvisation and drama, comedy, art and dance collaborated to plan and adapt lessons to incorporate a wide range of arts activities and demonstrate how creativity could help inspire learning. This included, for example, using basketball to teach film skills, teaching numeracy through cookery, and improving English-speaking skills by creating video game characters.

Shereen Jasmin Phillips, Director of Taking Part, said: *"INNOVATE was born out of a simple question – 'how do we make children excited to learn?'. From maths classes to history lessons, it's been amazing to see the impact of this project on teachers and students. Bringing artists and creative teaching into classrooms is a vital and effective tool for engaging students. We're excited to share these learnings with educators, artists and wider communities."*

Led by **Professor Helen Nicholson** and conducted by researcher **Dr Yvonne Robinson** at **Royal Holloway, University of London**, the report finds that teachers observed a visible increase in confidence in students who were previously reluctant to speak up in class. Additionally, subjects taught creatively encouraged deeper reflection from students about the topics presented, and students articulated the importance of enjoyment and playfulness to their learning process in **INNOVATE** lessons. Teachers also reported that their own confidence increased, and their professional development and learning was enhanced through **INNOVATE**.

Dr Yvonne Robinson from the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance at Royal Holloway, said: *"The arts are declining in schools at a time when they are more important than ever. Creative learning*

exposes young people to broader education opportunities that help them to fulfil their potential. Arts education programmes like INNOVATE are crucial, not only in helping schools fully recover from the pandemic, but also for moving learning forwards in creative ways that support young people’s wellbeing.”

The INNOVATE multi-disciplinary artists are Mikey Bharj, Jordana Golbourn, Lerato Islam, Sheryl Malcolm, Joseph Prestwich and Amy Robinson; Visiting Project Associates are Anyebe Godwin, Bruno Correia, Nadège René, TD. Moyo, Vicky Moran and Vincent Shiels. The advisory panel members—a guiding group offering advice and expertise and ensuring the project achieves its aims—are Dr Sylvan Baker, Darren Chetty, Kay Rufai, Dr Javeria K. Shah and Dr Vicky Storey.

Nicholas Hargreaves Assistant Head, Dunraven School, said: *“After the dark, insular days of COVID-19, INNOVATE got teachers talking and working together again and provided them with the opportunity to step back and look at their practice through the eyes of an expert in a different field. This brought new perspectives, new ideas and the opportunity to create together. As a school leader, it was great to see teachers sit and talk about teaching and learning, share their difficulties and hear new perspectives on how to fix them. Teachers know that engagement and active participation are important parts of learning, and now they have developed their arsenal for making it happen in their lessons. Creativity allows students to apply their learning in new ways. The more ways they can apply and use their learning, the more chance they have that it will stay with them.”*

Annette Moses, Principal at South Bank University Academy, said: *“I highly recommend collaborating with artists for future teaching and learning across the curriculum, as this adds another dimension to learning. It enriches the curriculum and provides unique engagement opportunities. Our students really enjoyed the collaborations and grew in confidence as a result of the work with the artists. Creative learning is fundamental to all learning; it is how we all began our learning journey. This can sometimes be diminished in schools or seen as less important. We need to challenge that view and remember that creative learning is engaging, fun and enriches student experiences. To ensure the success of the collaboration the curriculum must include regular meetings for the artist and teacher to review and amend the plan so that it is responsive to the needs of students.”*

The INNOVATE project research is available [online](#) for more information. Young Vic Taking Part will also host *INNOVATE: Legacy & Learning* to share the learnings of the report with teachers, freelance artists, creative engagement departments and applied theatre practitioners. More details will be announced in due course.

**INNOVATE is supported by The Rix-Thompson-Rothenberg Foundation,
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INNOVATE Research Report and images:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/06ouil44myc6e2smke4tt/h?rlkey=3h5fai4hq7ojdtz08yuvndyb9&dl=0>

Dr Yvonne Robinson

Yvonne Robinson is a researcher with over ten years' experience of delivering commissioned research and evaluation within the arts and education sectors. Her PhD, obtained from University College London in 2004, examined the work of community arts organisations, and since then Yvonne has worked at the Nottingham Trent, Institute of Education, King's College London and London South Bank University, where she has held various senior research positions. Undertaking research and consultancy for government and public funding agencies, Yvonne has written on the value of the arts in promoting young peoples' wellbeing and fostering inclusive educational practice. Yvonne is also a trained actress.

Professor Helen Nicholson

Helen Nicholson is Professor of Theatre and Performance in the [Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance](#) at Royal Holloway, University of London. She has written several books on applied theatre, including research on the arts in dementia care, theatre education and performance with people who have experienced trauma, displacement and homelessness. She recently led research on the National Theatre's Public Acts Programme, a nationwide initiative of participatory performance with community partners. Helen's research has won major awards in both the UK and the United States, and she regularly works with academics and practitioners internationally, most recently in Scandinavia, India and Singapore.

About Royal Holloway, University of London

Royal Holloway, University of London, is ranked in the top 25 universities by the UK by the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide. Through world class research that expands minds and changes lives, the dedication of our teachers and the feel of the Royal Holloway experience, it is a community that inspires individuals to succeed academically, socially and personally.

The university was founded by two social reformers who pioneered the ideal of education and knowledge for all who could benefit. Their vision lives on today. As one of the UK's leading research-intensive universities we are home to some of the world's foremost authorities in the sciences, arts, business, economics and law. We are strengthened by diversity, and welcome students and academics who travel from all over the world to study and work here, ensuring an international and multi-cultural perspective within a close knit and historic campus.

Royalholloway.ac.uk

About the Young Vic Theatre

Founded in 1970 as a space for world-premiere productions and unexpected takes on classic plays that speak urgently to our present, the Young Vic Theatre has been one of London's leading theatres for more than fifty years.

Welcoming more than 100,000 visitors a year to its London Waterloo location, the Young Vic stands out in the city's cultural landscape for balancing daring commercial drive, success and artistic flair with genuine grassroots social impact change in our neighbourhood. We forge deep connections in our neighbourhood through our Taking Part programme, where we engage with over 15,000 people every year via a wide range of projects, from skills-based workshops to on-stage performances. We give 10% of our tickets free to schools and neighbours, irrespective of box office demand, and we are committed to keeping ticket prices low.

The Young Vic's Creators Program is our space for multi- and anti-disciplinary artists, and is the only scheme of its kind. Launched in 2001, and formerly known as the Directors Program, we offer artists and producers a unique opportunity to develop their craft through opportunities that range from trainee and assistant director roles to a two-year residency through the Genesis Fellow/Associate Director position. The Genesis Network provides an online community to over 2,000 artists and producers. Each year, the recipient of the Genesis Future Directors Award directs a show in the Clare Theatre with full support from the Young Vic team.

Built upon the principles of access, innovation, and community, the Young Vic is now deepening its roots nationally and internationally. Recent transfers include Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *The Collaboration* (Broadway), the multi-award-winning *Best of Enemies* and the smash hit musical, *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* (West End).

The Young Vic's founding spirit is iconoclastic and pushing at the forefront of possibility, bringing together artists and audiences on a global scale and using the power of stories to change our world.

Artistic Director: Kwame Kwei-Armah

Executive Director: Lucy Davies

www.youngvic.org

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