



# what works in stimulating creativity amongst socially excluded young people

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# Executive Summary

## 1 Introduction

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) to undertake a research project guided by the following aims.

- To identify what works in stimulating creativity in socially excluded young people
- To determine whether increased creativity has any impact on levels of social exclusion.

There were two strands to the research programme. The first strand entailed a review of the existing literature which embraced the areas of young people, creativity and social exclusion. The second strand consisted of qualitative case studies of five NESTA funded projects that work with socially excluded young people. This report presents data garnered from both the literature review and the case-study programme.

## 2 Literature review methodology

The literature review reported here covers the time-span 1985–2004. An initial literature search considered sources published in 1998–2004, from a range of educational, sociological and psychological databases. After consultation with NESTA, further searches were conducted in order to examine the literature in this field over a larger time-span, from 1985 to date. The searches were undertaken so as to identify literature which satisfied the three areas under consideration: young people AND creativity AND social exclusion. A range of key words and free-text search terms were employed to cover combinations across all three areas.

A total of 57 sources, published between 1985 and 2004 were included in the review.

### 3 What stimulates creativity amongst social excluded young people: evidence from the literature

The review of existing literature revealed that there is a distinct lack of research evidence on what stimulates creativity amongst socially excluded young people or indeed, whether a boost to creativity can make any impression on their social exclusion. Much of the material that does exist seems to skim the surface of these issues and does not directly examine the research questions posed in this study. Of the 57 pieces of literature summarised for the review, 14 explicitly mentioned the generation of creativity as an outcome and of these, only half concerned projects which overtly set out to stimulate creativity and stated this in their project/research aims. For example, studies from the earlier publication period in particular, sought to investigate the impact of training/intervention programmes on the creative thinking skills, higher level cognitive thinking and problem solving abilities of socially deprived/disadvantaged children. Amongst the remaining literature, creativity featured less as a desired outcome and more often as a process (e.g. as a means of engaging with young people).

From those projects/research programmes where creativity outcomes were reported, a number of factors were identified which appeared to play a role in the development of individuals' creativity. These were:

- Authenticity – Themes, stimuli and creative activity were found to work successfully when they were relevant and meaningful to the young people. Also, where young people could respect the practitioner delivering the workshop or programme as a 'real working artist' it was felt that they engaged well.
- Something different – Exposure to new ideas and concepts was particularly instrumental in provoking creative responses from young people. Use of new/different locations, learning styles and working with new people were also seen as helpful. In particular, experiences which contrasted with the learning offered in formal education environments were noted to be effective.
- 'Significant other' – Someone in the role of a mentor/mediator was found to be beneficial for creativity because they could provide encouragement, support and model expertise for the young people.
- Exploring ideas – The freedom to explore ideas and concepts was thought to facilitate creativity, because through this investigation, young people could begin to value their creativity and take ownership of their creative ideas.

- Challenge – The aspect of ‘challenge’ appeared to be an important factor in developing creativity. Challenge took the form of taking risks, intellectual challenge, personal challenge and resourcefulness.
- Working with others – Working alongside others, including peers and adults, was felt to have assisted in the development and exploration of ideas. It was also found to have built up young people’s confidence in their creativity through the sharing of ideas.
- Time – One important factor in the development of creativity in socially excluded young people was ‘time’. This refers to time in terms of having enough time to develop creative ideas. Similarly, making time for reflection on ideas and allowing learning to embed were also found to be important for creativity.

It should be noted that the above factors may be equally relevant for the socially ‘included’, as well as excluded. The research did not set out to compare how projects may work with these two groups and it could be argued that all young people, regardless of whether they are socially excluded, face certain barriers which can hinder their creativity e.g. lack of transport, limited finances, lack of confidence.

## 4 Impact on social exclusion: evidence from the literature

The second aim of the study was to determine whether increased creativity proceeded to impact positively on social exclusion. It must be noted that only eight out of 57 pieces of literature specifically reported the emergence of creativity alongside social inclusion outcomes. Furthermore, the interaction between these two effects did not feature in any discussions.

Despite widening the focus to examine references to creativity and social exclusion in all 57 pieces of literature, it was still difficult to ascertain whether increased creativity *as an outcome* in itself impacted on social exclusion. Specific, overt or evidenced connections between increased creativity and enhanced levels of social inclusion were rare; connections were more likely to be implied or suggested by the researchers, or evidenced through anecdotal work.

Furthermore, the areas most frequently associated with fostering social inclusion in the literature were participation in creative activity, and outcomes other than cre-



ative ones – rather than creative outcomes *per se*. Increased confidence, improved self-esteem, capacity for self-expression, enhanced social skills and raised motivation, were all documented in the literature as contributing towards reducing social exclusion, more often than creative outcomes such as developments in imagination, thinking skills, or capacities to invent or innovate. Apart from aptitude ‘testing’, there would appear to have been few tools with which to measure creativity. Could it be that other outcomes are easier to measure or to ask young people to talk about than ‘creative’ impacts? In addition, through *continued* participation and involvement in creative activity, a number of reports implied that social inclusion might become a real prospect. It is perhaps difficult to ascertain from one-off projects what the social inclusion impacts might be for young people.

The review also highlighted the negative impacts of social exclusion on young people’s creativity and creative potential. Socio-economic status was directly correlated with children’s creativity scores in much of the research carried out in the 1980s and early 1990s using creativity tests. Parents’ backgrounds, parenting and limited exposure and access to stimulus rich environments were all cited as dampening these children’s creativity.

On the other hand, other researchers showed that these very same areas might contribute to the creative development of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds – through social interactions in larger families, greater capacity for imagination and improvisation due to lack of access to play materials and their resilience in adverse circumstances.

From the literature reviewed, it can be suggested that one of the reasons for poor performance on creativity tests by children from disadvantaged backgrounds, might be a mismatch between their language and traditional language or standard verbal skills. In planning creative interventions, a number of researchers suggest that it is important to consider the language codes and dialects of these young people, and to balance the use of verbal and non-verbal media.

## 5 Case-study methodology

Five projects contributed to the second strand of the research: a comic drawing workshop, an initiative allowing young people to pursue their own individual creative interests, a digital media project, an interactive design project and creativity workshops followed by individual projects. In total 44 interviews were



conducted and the sample comprised of: 20 young people (as project participants), 14 project staff, 3 teachers and 7 parents.

Although efforts were made to identify projects which worked with socially excluded young people, it became clear during data collection that the levels of social exclusion differed widely amongst the sample. Whilst some of the young people displayed some of the obvious symptoms of social exclusion e.g. homelessness and educational disengagement, there were others in the sample which experienced much milder forms of exclusion e.g. a sense of alienation due to their interest in a particular art form.

## **6 What stimulates creativity amongst socially excluded young people: evidence from NESTA projects**

This chapter explored the interview data collected from NESTA projects in order to identify impacts on young people's creativity, what was felt to have generated these impacts and what might pose as potential barriers to the development of creativity amongst socially excluded young people.

Interviewees reported that young people's creativity was enhanced in all five projects. Young people commented that they had more ideas and felt more creative and imaginative. Staff members noted similar impacts, with the addition of recognising a change in young people's relationship with the world: through involvement in the project they were starting to see things such as technology, in terms of its creative potential.

On the question of what stimulates creativity among socially excluded young people, a number of factors were highlighted. These corresponded with those identified in the literature review, with the addition of a new category – 'tools and skills'.

Factors which appeared to be particularly instrumental (according to interviewee accounts) included the authenticity of the task; young people's creativity was more likely to be stimulated when they perceived that the task they were engaged in was of relevance to them and aligned with their experience of the world. Similarly, the authenticity of the creative practitioner was an important factor, especially an artist or mentor who was already working as a creative professional.

The factor ‘working with others’ comprised a variety of styles (sometimes opposing) which were linked to the development of young people’s creativity. For example, there was evidence that working in small groups was particularly effective in allowing the young people to share their ideas and receive feedback, but at the same time, value was seen in working individually and on a one-to-one basis with the artist or mentor. Similarly, allowing young people autonomy and control over their work were cited as conditions which gave them the freedom to explore their creative ideas.

It should be noted that the role of autonomy did not feature highly in the literature review. Other factors that were found to be efficacious in stimulating creativity, but were not discussed at any length in the literature, included networking (providing young people with a range of contacts in the professional world) and providing young people with tools (e.g. technology, equipment, resources) and new skills (e.g. introducing the young people to professional ways of working, learning how to develop an idea).

A number of potential barriers to creativity were posited, including socially excluded young people’s often unstable home lives and difficulties they face in accessing information. In addition, this chapter raised a number of factors that anyone wishing to run a project for this group of young people may wish to consider, including ensuring that the young people are motivated and the group is manageable, as well as recommendations relating to the timescale (e.g. deciding on the appropriate length) and structure of a project.

## **7 Impact on social exclusion: evidence from NESTA projects**

According to interviewees, the often ‘chaotic lives’ of socially excluded young people represented a barrier to creativity in terms of their access to creative opportunities. That said, many of the young people were described by project staff as ‘incredibly talented’ and ‘creative’ – although this in itself might contribute towards their exclusion, particularly where the young people’s creative interest was seen as alternative to traditional arenas, or was in a specialist employment area. It should also be acknowledged that across the sample the type and degree of social exclusion was seen to vary considerably.

Whilst evidence about the impact of creativity on social exclusion was somewhat limited in the literature review, the case-study element of this research provided

an opportunity to simultaneously explore these two factors. From the interviews, a range of impacts was identified as having the potential to improve social inclusion. These were: raised aspirations; improved self-esteem and self-worth; understanding yourself better and confidence in your abilities; greater maturity; improved social skills and better relationships; transferable skills such as communication and teamwork skills; and enjoying learning and a desire to pursue creative activity.

These outcomes contributed to young people's social inclusion in three arenas: educational inclusion, employment inclusion, and creative and cultural inclusion – evident to varying degrees across the projects and for individuals. To what extent 'creativity' contributed to these arenas, however, was difficult to tease out from the data. Certainly these impacts were generated through participation in the creative programmes under investigation. But to what extent creative *outcomes* or creative *processes* were the pathway to social inclusion was hard to pinpoint. Furthermore, despite the priority given to exploring the interaction between creativity and social inclusion in the case study programme, the time limited nature of the research meant that it is only possible to capture impacts which immediately proceeded involvement in the projects. Claims about the role of creativity in promoting social inclusion will only be strengthened by examining the outcomes for young people over an extended period of time.

What was evident, however, was the combination of effective features across all the projects which seemed to suit the particular needs of the intended target group. For example, participants responded well to the autonomy afforded by the projects – young people were given ownership over the process and products, were encouraged to use and express their own ideas, and were valued as creative individuals. For many, these experiences represented new opportunities, and often ones which they contrasted to other educational, vocational or home-life environments. It is easy to see therefore how an emphasis on creativity, either as an outcome or a process, could in some way tackle the issues which contribute towards a young person's inclusion within society.

## Conclusion

Finally, despite a paucity of literature embracing the issues under investigation, this research has sought to pinpoint the factors which created the optimal conditions for fostering creativity. Findings from the literature were augmented further

by data collected from active creativity projects. Hopefully, the eight factors identified will prove to be a source of reference for those wishing to develop initiatives focussing on socially excluded young people and creativity.

## **Part one**

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Aims of the research

In November 2004, NFER was commissioned by NESTA to undertake a research project guided by the following aims:

- To identify what works in stimulating creativity in socially excluded young people.
- To determine whether increased creativity has any impact on levels of social exclusion.

In meeting these aims, the research programme endeavoured to fulfil the following objectives:

- increase NESTA's understanding of the impact social exclusion has on creativity and what constitutes best practice in dealing with this issue
- assist the development of NESTA's Ignite! Programme
- inform NESTA's strategic direction on social inclusion.

A research programme was proposed that would, in the first instance, review the existing literature which embraced the areas of young people, creativity and social exclusion. The intention was to determine to what extent these issues have already been researched, evaluated and discussed, and to compile existing evidence which may go some way to addressing the research aims. An interim report was produced in March 2005 which relayed the findings of the literature review at that point in time.

The second strand of the research programme sought to gather primary data, by undertaking case studies of NESTA's own creativity funded programmes, specifically those that involved socially excluded young people. Data collection entailed interviews with young people who had taken part in these programmes, as well as interviews with programme staff, mentors and where appropriate, teachers and parents. It was intended that the insights gained from this element of the research be fed into the findings from the literature review.

This final report presents data garnered from both the literature review and the case-study programme.

## 1.2 Defining the research focus

The research programme was concerned with the issues of ‘creativity’ and ‘social exclusion’. It would therefore be helpful at this stage to provide some clarity as to the meaning of these two concepts.

### 1.2.1 Creativity

In its report ‘All our Futures’, the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCEE) defined creativity as:

*Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value.*

NACCE, 1999, p29

This definition encompasses the four key characteristics of creativity:

**Using imagination** is the process of generating something original: providing an alternative to the expected, the conventional, or the routine. Creative insights can occur when existing ideas are combined or reinterpreted in unexpected ways or when they are applied in areas where they are not normally associated. Often this arises by making unusual connections, seeing analogies and relationships between ideas or objects that have not previously been related.

**Pursuing purpose** refers to the application of imagination to produce tangible outcomes from purposeful goals. To speak of somebody being creative is to suggest they are actively engaged in making or producing something in a deliberate way.

**Originality** can be achieved at different levels. Firstly, creativity can generate outcomes which show ‘individual’ originality – where a person’s work is original in relation to their previous output. Secondly, outcomes may demonstrate ‘relative’ originality – where products are original compared to those of a peer group. Finally, creativity may result in work that is unique in relation to any previous work in a particular field, e.g. science or the arts, in which case ‘historic’ originality is achieved.

**Judging value** entails assessing the value of an outcome in relation to the task in hand – for example, is it effective, useful, enjoyable, satisfying, valid or tenable? The criteria of value will vary according to the field of activity in question. In this



way, creative thinking will involve some critical thinking in order to judge the value of a particular outcome.

### 1.2.2 Social exclusion

Social exclusion is a complex phenomenon and whilst it includes poverty and low income, it is actually a much broader concept and encompasses some of the wider causes and consequences of deprivation. The Social Exclusion Unit offers the following description:

*Social exclusion happens when people or places suffer from a series of problems such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, ill health and family breakdown. When such problems combine they can create a vicious cycle. Social exclusion can happen as a result of problems that face one person in their life. But it can also start from birth. Being born into poverty or to parents with low skills still has a major influence on future life chances.*

<http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/page.asp?id=213>

Social exclusion can affect anyone, although research has found that people with certain backgrounds and experiences are disproportionately likely to suffer social exclusion. The key risk-factors include: low income; family conflict; being in care; school problems; being an ex-prisoner; being from an ethnic minority; living in a deprived neighbourhood in urban and rural areas; mental health problems, age and disability (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001).

## 1.3 About the report

The report is divided into two parts. Part One deals exclusively with evidence arising from the literature review whilst Part Two of the report turns to the findings which emerged from the case-study fieldwork. To aid comparison between these two sources of evidence the sections follow a similar format. The report is structured as follows:

### Part one

Chapter 2, *Literature review methodology*, outlines the approach taken to reviewing the literature, including the search strategy, key words used, databases

explored, criteria for inclusion in the review, and the process for summarising the literature.

Chapter 3, *What stimulates creativity amongst socially excluded young people: evidence from the literature review* attempts to tease out from the literature what factors, approaches and strategies appear to trigger or develop creativity amongst socially excluded young people. Before doing so, some consideration is given to the types of impacts reported, in particular, those associated with the outcome of the creativity.

Finally, in chapter 4, *Impact on social exclusion: evidence from the literature review*, there is a discussion of whether the emergence and development of creativity can be linked with a reduction in social exclusion.

## Part two

Chapter 5, *Case-study methodology*, presents details of the case-study research programme, including sample numbers and the approach to interviewing participants. This chapter also provides an outline of the five projects, covering aspects such as project content, aims, the target group and the staff involved.

Chapter 6, *What stimulates creativity amongst socially excluded young people: evidence from NESTA projects*, attempts to extrapolate from the interview data the ways in which creativity may have been sparked or nurtured amongst project participants.

In chapter 7, *Impact on social exclusion: evidence from NESTA projects*, the data was also scrutinised to determine whether enhanced creativity may, in some way, make an impact of participants' level of social exclusion.

Finally, the *Conclusion* synthesises the evidence from both the literature review and case study fieldwork. From these conclusions, implications for the development of NESTA work in this area are raised.

# 2 Literature review methodology

## Introduction

This chapter reports on the methodology employed for the literature review. It covers:

- literature search strategies
- databases searched
- criteria for inclusion
- summarising the sources.

## 2.1 Library search strategies

The literature review reported here covers the time-span 1985–2004. An initial literature search considered sources published in 1998–2004, from a range of educational, sociological and psychological databases. After consultation with NESTA, further searches were conducted in order to examine the literature in this field over a larger time-span, from 1985 to date.

The searches were undertaken so as to identify literature which satisfied the three areas under consideration: young people AND creativity AND social exclusion. A range of key words and free-text search terms were employed so as to cover combinations across all three areas. These search terms were matched to the databases under consideration, and words not recognised by the databases could still be searched for by using a facility known as a free-text search. (Appendix 1 lists the key words and search terms considered. Appendix 2 presents the search strategies employed by the NFER library.)

In addition to the database searches, hand-searches of other available literature highlighted as of potential interest by NESTA or otherwise known to the research team, were undertaken, in order to find relevant literature.

## 2.2 Databases searched

The following databases were used for the searches.

- ASSIA – an index of articles from English language social science journals.

- BEI – British Education Index.
- CBCA Fulltext – Canadian education database.
- ChildData – the National Children’s Bureau’s database of publications concerning the education, health and welfare of children and young people.
- ERIC – the Educational Resources Information Center database, covering 750 professional journals.
- PsycInfo – an international database of references to psychological literature.
- SIGLE – System for information on grey literature in Europe.

## 2.3 Criteria for inclusion

When the results of the database searching and hand-searching were available, a two-step selection process was then applied to the identified literature, in order to decide upon its inclusion in the review.

- The first step was applied to the references and abstracts uncovered in the search results – these were scrutinised for their pertinence to the review. In order to be considered for potential inclusion, abstracts should highlight *young people, an element of creativity and an aspect of social exclusion/inclusion*. Full sources of the references and abstracts which appeared pertinent were then obtained.
- The second step was applied to the full sources that were obtained. The chief criteria for inclusion in the review were that the literature should have something to say about either of the key areas under consideration – ‘what works in stimulating creativity in socially excluded young people’ and ‘does increased creativity have any impact on levels of social exclusion’.

A range of types of literature was considered – from empirically-based research, to programme evaluation, project description and theoretical discussion. There were no exclusions on the type of literature considered, although generally, it was found that shorter articles and opinion pieces did not provide sufficient substantive comment on creativity and social exclusion/inclusion to warrant incorporating into the review.

(Section 3 of this report explains in more detail the results of these literature searches, selecting the material, reasons for rejecting literature, and the volume and types of literature included in the review.)

## 2.4 Summarising the sources

A summary sheet was compiled for each of the sources included in the review. The summaries provide details of theoretical understandings, project information, research and evaluation methods, effects and effectiveness of projects, factors which facilitate or hinder the stimulation of creativity, and impacts on social inclusion, as raised in the literature reviewed. (An example of a summary sheet is included in Appendix 3.)

The summaries were then entered on to a MAXQDA database (a software package which facilitates the investigation of qualitative data) and classified for analysis. This allowed for some quantitative results to be obtained, as well as a more qualitative and discursive exploration of the literature.

Appendix 3 provides a detailed discussion of the types of literature uncovered by the review in terms of the date of publication, focus (i.e. young people/creativity/social exclusion), nature (e.g. research study, opinion piece, project evaluation) and the types of projects/programmes featured.

# 3 What stimulates creativity amongst socially excluded young people: evidence from the literature review

## Introduction

The report now considers one of the central questions that the research has set out to explore. According to the literature, what has been found to stimulate creativity in young people who are socially excluded? To move towards an answer, it is first necessary to identify those pieces of literature which reported that creativity had indeed been triggered. The factors which these authors highlight as precipitating or linked to creativity can then be given more serious consideration (as opposed to those sources that posit ideas without any firm evidence of creativity having been triggered). Section 3.1, therefore, identifies the amount and type of literature which cites this specific outcome, whilst section 3.2 considers how the presence of creativity was determined/measured. Section 3.3 gives summaries of the relevant literature which has been discovered through the review. Lastly, section 3.4 delves into these specific pieces to extrapolate the factors which may be associated with the emergence or growth of creativity.

### 3.1 The quantity and types of literature featuring ‘creativity’ as an outcome

Of the 57 pieces summarised, just 14 explicitly mentioned the generation of creativity as an outcome.

In terms of the type of literature, six of the 14 pieces were classified as project evaluations, six as research projects, one piece concerned theory development in the spheres of art education and social exclusion, and one presented case studies illustrating the role of creativity in regeneration.

Of the 14 items, 11 covered the issue of creativity amongst socially excluded young people specifically, whilst two items discussed this issue with reference to young people generally (Baehr, 2004 and Craft, *et al.*, 2004) and one piece, look-

ing at the role of creativity in regeneration, reported on some projects that worked with socially excluded young people as a target group.

Of those that did address creativity within the particular context of social exclusion, the more recent publications tended to feature young people who could be regarded as educationally excluded. For example, two projects worked with target groups which comprised young people from a learning support unit and a pupil referral unit (Pigneguy, 2004 and Cooper, 2004) and one project worked with students from a cluster of schools, which included a special school (Balshaw, 2004). The image and identity projects evaluated by Downing *et al.* (2004) identified ‘non-traditional gallery goers’ as the target group, amongst which were refugees, disadvantaged youngsters and those from ethnic minorities. Just one piece of literature, from the later publication period, dealt with young people who were excluded in the broadest sense – Lord *et al.* (2002) assessed the impact of media education projects on young people who were marginalised (in terms of employment, culture and education) in three European countries.

In the literature identified from the earlier time period (i.e. pre 1997), the samples/target groups seemed to comprise both forms of exclusion – educational and the broader category of economic exclusion, with terms such as ‘destitute’, ‘educationally at risk’, ‘disadvantaged’, ‘educationally disadvantaged’, ‘economically disadvantaged’ and ‘socially deprived’ being used to describe the young people.

It is worth stressing that only half of the 14 items concerned projects which overtly set out to stimulate creativity and stated this in their project/research aims. For example, studies from the earlier publication period in particular, sought to investigate the impact of training/intervention programmes on the creative thinking skills, higher level cognitive thinking and problem solving abilities of socially deprived/disadvantaged children (Naval-Severino, 1993a and 1993b; Pogrow, 1996; and Verma, 1994). Thus, there appeared to be a flurry of this type of research during the early to mid nineties, which has direct relevance to the aims of the current literature review. However, after this time, activity in the field of stimulating creativity amongst socially excluded groups (as a specific aim) comes to an abrupt halt. Indeed, amongst the remaining literature, creativity featured less as a desired outcome and more often as a process. For example, four pieces focussed on projects which appeared to employ creative approaches as a means of engaging with young people. Hence, creativity was seen more as a tool for inclusion, rather than as a desired outcome. Indeed, as signalled earlier, some



pieces of literature concerned projects which were aimed at the educationally excluded, and this alternative approach (based around creativity) was utilised in order to foster collaboration and integration. It appears, therefore, that in recent years there has been relatively little activity in the area of generating creativity amongst socially excluded young people, even though as a process it has been used to capture their interest and commitment, particularly in the sphere of education.

## 3.2 The ‘measurement’ of creativity

Before we consider how the outcome of creativity was reported in the literature, it is first useful to know how it was construed and measured. Often, it was the impact of the project overall that the researchers/evaluators set out to capture (rather than detecting changes in young people’s creativity). Impacts were determined through questionnaires (3 pieces of literature), observations (5), interviews (4), creativity tests (4) and one evaluation made use of a participant reflective diary, whilst another piece mentioned collating and analysing documents pertaining to the projects under evaluation.

Not surprisingly, it was only where projects/interventions explicitly set out to foster creativity that data collection was geared to measuring creativity (e.g. Baehr, 2004; Craft *et al.*, 2004; Naval-Severino, 1993; Verma, 1994). The literature from the earlier publication period stood out in that it employed tests, in particular the Torrance Tests, which were devised for the specific purpose of measuring creativity. Developed in the 1960s and 1970s, the Torrance Tests measured aspects of creative thinking – namely, fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration, under the following ‘definitions’:

- fluency – the ability to generate a ready flow of ideas, possibilities, consequences and objects
- flexibility – the ability to use many different approaches or strategies in solving a problem; the willingness to change direction and modify given information
- originality – capacity to produce clever, unique or unusual responses or the degree of deviation from the traditional or commonplace ideas
- elaboration – the ability to expand, develop, particularise and embellish one’s ideas, stories and illustrations.

Tests such as these were used to identify children to take part in interventions that would develop their thinking and problem-solving skills, gifted children from socially disadvantaged groups, in particular, were targeted through this method (Torrance, 1968; Torrance, 1971; Ali, 1987; Vann, 1985; Spicker *et al.*, 1996).

In more recent years, creativity outcomes appear to have been determined more through self-report methods. For example, interviews or questionnaires were used to detect signs of creativity which may have surfaced amongst participants e.g. respondents to a questionnaire were asked to indicate to what degree they had ‘learned more about my creative abilities’, ‘learned more about how to use my imagination’, ‘learned more about how to solve problems’, ‘I can find my own time to be creative’. It appears that there has been a distinct shift in the measurement of creativity from ‘testing’ to the use of more qualitative measures. Could it be that changing ‘definitions’ and purposes of creativity warrant different methodologies for their measurement – do the previous measures developed in the 1960s and 1970s no longer apply to 21st Century nuances of creativity – seen as an ‘essential life skill’ and vital to the economy (Craft *et al.*, 1997; NAC-CCE, 1999)?

Also significant is that most of the literature (across the entire time span of the review) did not attempt to track creativity as a long term outcome (i.e. whether participation in a particular project had sparked an individual’s creativity, which then made some lasting impression on their capacity/willingness to be creative). Hence, with regards to identifying what triggers creativity, this can only be attempted in terms of its immediate emergence. The ultimate success of a project with regard to this outcome may lie in its ability to inculcate a more permanent desire amongst young people to explore their creativity. Baehr (2004), for example, did establish that young people felt more confident and able to take up creative activities since their involvement in creativity labs (although the time-frame since the labs is not reported). This, however, is the sole example of research which attempts to investigate the longer term effects on creativity. This apparent lack of literature on what actually sustains creativity in the long-term might reflect funding structures, which can be short-term in nature, both in creative programming and in the evaluation and research into such areas. Indeed, the literature review identified several examples of projects where funding issues had arisen. For example, Rider and Illingworth’s (1997) compilation of museum and gallery education work with young people, cited the Baltimore CityLife Museum project in the USA as terminating due to lack of funding.

### 3.3 Reports of creativity outcomes

The following 14 pieces of literature reported the emergence of creativity after a project/intervention/programme. The summaries below give details of these pieces, including the nature of the project/research featured, the effects reported and how those effects were measured. This is followed by a summary which draws together some of the issues related to creativity outcomes.

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Naval-Severino (a 1993)	
Focus	A research project to determine the effects of training on the development of higher level cognitive thinking and creative thinking skills with children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds in the Philippines. The techniques utilised during the training included creative dramatisation, debates, brain storming and creative problem solving.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased levels of cognitive thinking in the areas of knowledge, comprehension and evaluation.</li><li>• Increased levels of creative thinking in the areas of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.</li></ul>
How measured	An experimental design involving a control and experimental group. The experimental group was exposed to cognitive level and creative thinking training. After training, both groups were then tested on their levels of cognitive thinking and creative thinking (using the Torrance Tests).

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Naval-Severino (b 1993)	
Focus	Research to demonstrate the importance of training programmes in developing creative thinking skills among gifted disadvantaged children from poor urban communities. Focused on the use of structured and unstructured activities designed to enhance the creative abilities of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved performance in all categories of creative thinking (fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration).</li><li>• Ability to apply a variety of approaches and perceptions in responding to stimuli and problem-solving.</li><li>• Enhanced development in creative abilities (excluding elaboration) for the group exposed to the most training suggesting that increased exposure and/or training in activities which stimulate creative thinking will result in the development of creative abilities.</li></ul>
How measured	Two groups of children attended creative thinking training activities (each for different lengths of time). Each group was then compared on pre and post test creativity scores (using the Torrance tests).

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### Verma and Verma (1994)

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Focus	An experimental project to explore the impacts of an intervention programme which aimed to: (i) enhance the problem-solving abilities of socially deprived children in India (ii) to devise and implement an intervention programme for developing effective problem-solving skills in deprived children and (iii) to study its impact. The intervention programme involved: encouraging the young people to generate alternatives to problem solving (i.e. alternative perspectives, alternative ways of structuring and/or arranging information); brainstorming activities; hypothetical problem solving through creative expression (i.e. using drawing instead of words); tasks to practice reasoning and abstract hypothetical skills and; evaluative sessions to review and set future goals.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved techniques and strategies to solve problems.</li><li>• Increased ability to solve problems.</li><li>• Enhanced confidence and increased motivation to solve problems.</li><li>• A possible reduction in cognitive lag (where children from deprived backgrounds lag behind their peers in their cognitive abilities).</li></ul>
How measured	An experimental and control group were pre-tested on using a range of instruments (the time taken to complete tasks and the number of errors were measured). The experimental group then engaged in a 16 week intervention following which a post test was carried out with both groups (again measuring the time taken to complete tasks and the number of errors made).

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### Spicker, Beard and Reyes (1996)

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Focus	A project to identify gifted children from economically disadvantaged areas through the development of instruments and identification procedures (using creativity measures), and to find ways of addressing their needs through the development of a science curriculum, teaching strategies and training for teachers.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhanced creative writing skills.</li><li>• Improved problem solving skills (scientific).</li><li>• Enhanced self-confidence and increased motivation.</li></ul>
How measured	Tests relating to various 'creative measures' (e.g. analysis of creative writing samples, Torrance tests for creativity thinking and observation of a storytelling festival ).

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**Pogrow (1996)**

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Focus	A project to explore the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) programme, a creative programme designed to build the thinking skills of educationally disadvantaged students. The programme included the use of computers, drama and Socratic dialogue (creative and logical conversations between teacher and pupil that requires more than one-word answers, pupil explanations and elaborations). Participants received daily 35 minute lessons in the computer lab that coordinated computer activities with conversations.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhanced skills in explaining ideas.</li><li>• Enhanced ability to engage in conversation.</li><li>• Developed problem-solving skills.</li><li>• Increased confidence and motivation.</li></ul>
How measured	Description and discussion of the HOTS programme.

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**Moriarty and McManus (2003)**

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Focus	A project which examined the role of creativity in regeneration through the collation of 16 examples of different projects and their outcomes. The report did not focus solely on young people, although some of the projects identified include impacts on young people and feature creativity as a process and/or outcome of the project. For example, 'We are what we are' (WAWA) was a multi-media project which gave young people the opportunity to explore media tools and produce work in digital art, animation, moving image, website design and multi-media performance. The young people were encouraged to make decisions regarding the contextual and intellectual content of the work, encouraging self-expression and creativity as well as developing their skills.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The opportunity to develop their own creative expressions.</li><li>• Increased demand for further ICT and creative based training.</li><li>• Other outcomes included learning new skills, increased confidence, working together, breaking down social barriers, challenging stereotypes and promoting cultural diversity.</li></ul>
How measured	Collation of examples of different case study projects and their outcomes. It was not stated how specific project outcomes were measured.

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<b>Baehr (2004)</b>	
Focus	A research project which tracked the progress of a pilot programme (Ignite!). The programme aimed to develop young peoples' creativity in terms of their self-confidence with regard to sharing ideas, working in groups and experimenting with new ideas.
Effects	<p>Young people mentioned the following effects (amongst others):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gained lots of creative ideas for the future.</li> <li>• Learned more about how to explore their ideas in depth.</li> <li>• Learned more about their imagination.</li> <li>• Learned more about how to solve problems.</li> <li>• More confidence about experimenting with new ideas.</li> <li>• More confident and able to take up creative activities since the Lab.</li> </ul>
How measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-administered questionnaires using a pre and post design.</li> <li>• Observation.</li> <li>• Group discussion.</li> <li>• Individual interviews.</li> </ul>

<b>Balshaw (2004)</b>	
Focus	A research project focussing on descriptive case studies from Creative Partnerships. One case study looked at a cluster of schools including a special school, which aimed to use creativity and the arts to build collaboration and an identity to the cluster. One project involved developing a wallpaper sample book, via sensory stimuli, masks, feathers, cloths and moulds. The work was 'installed'. This was followed by work with a dance company. The dance company encouraged students and staff to respond creatively and imaginatively to the wallpaper. There was an INSET session with staff at the end of the project for reflection. The duration of the dance work is described as relatively 'longer-term', over five weeks, and not just a one-off workshop. Following this, the special school worked with the dance company in partnership with the other schools in the cluster to explore difficult as well as light-hearted issues (such as privacy, fear, risk, weather and clothing). The work involved cross-curricular links, and explored young people's creative responses to emotional, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning. The work was performed in school. The second case-study entailed making a model of an elephant in the playground and to work with film to engage teenagers interested in the arts. Pupils produced scripts, animation, vocals and drawings to create a seven minute animated film.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teachers reported seeing their pupils in a new light.</li> <li>• One pupil was felt to have tapped a deep originality in their dance work.</li> <li>• For the cluster schools, mainstream pupils gained an experience of working with special school peers.</li> <li>• Young people's dance skills and creativity were felt to have developed.</li> </ul>
How measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data, although exact details of data collection were not stated.</li> </ul>

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**Cooper (2004)**

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Focus	An account of the approach taken by the Big-Brum theatre-in-education company, which uses imaginative and creative work with children. Big Brum's programmes last half a day or a full days' work in a school. The project illustrated here, the Eye of the Storm, based on Shakespeare's The Tempest, was a half-day Key Stage 2-3 project. The project was based on changing images, which the children were encouraged to comment on, explore, 'stare at', and step into role as 'scholars' so that they were deciding what would happen to the characters in the play.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One boy with learning difficulties gained the freedom to act, through his 'imagination being unlocked'.</li><li>• His expressive skills came through.</li><li>• Another child was confronted to use his imagination, where he would normally have been resistant to do so.</li></ul>
How measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participants were interviewed three days after the project</li></ul>

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**Craft *et al.* (2004)**

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Focus	An evaluation of Ignite! – a project which aims to support exceptionally creative young people.
Effects	There was evidence of the following creative behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Question and challenge.</li><li>• Envisaging what might be.</li><li>• Exploring ideas and keeping options open.</li><li>• Reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes.</li><li>• Confidence, engagement and enjoyment.</li></ul>
How measured	A range of data collection methods were used including observation, questionnaires, interviews, participant reflective diaries.

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**Downing *et al.* (2004)**

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Focus	Evaluation of six projects mounted by galleries aimed at non traditional gallery goers. Projects focussed on image and identity and used photography, textiles, sculpture.
Effects	Evidence of creative development - e.g. using imagination, experimentation, exploration, risk taking, more freedom and confidence to use their own ideas.
How measured	Interviews and observations.

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<b>Kinder and Harland (2004)</b>	
Focus	A theoretical piece which reviews existing research to examine the overlap in effects and effective practice in the realms of the arts and pupil disaffection.
Effects	Article highlights the effects of arts education. Creative outcomes include developing imagination, taking risks, freedom to experiment, etc.
How measured	Not explicitly stated, but mainly qualitative data.

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<b>Lord et al. (2004)</b>	
Focus	A comparative study of three informal education providers in media education for socially excluded young people in France, Spain and the UK.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity outcomes were the smallest category of effects, but included thinking skills, ability to solve problems.</li> <li>• Other outcomes related to personal and social skills, enhanced confidence, self-esteem, technical and communication skills.</li> </ul>
How measured	Interviews, observations, collection of relevant documents.

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<b>Pigneguy (2004)</b>	
Focus	An account/evaluation of a video/film-making project to offer students at a learning support unit the experience of a different style of teaching and learning, in order to develop their social skills, gain new technical skills and facilitate integration with mainstream pupils.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The '<i>course has allowed me to express myself creatively</i>'. 86% replied yes, 14% replied in part, 0% replied no.</li> <li>• Desire to take part in further arts projects in the future was unanimous (100% gave a yes response).</li> </ul>
How measured	Pupil evaluation sheet.

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The existence of creativity amongst research/project participants was variously described using words such as originality, imagination, questioning, exploring ideas, experimentation, risk taking. However, in some cases, the depth of investigation was more limited – for example, participants in the Pigneguy (2004) research simply stated that the project had enabled them to express themselves 'creatively'.

Let us now consider what other impacts may have been reported alongside creativity in order determine whether a chain of effects is apparent. For example, are

there any effects which appear to lead to creativity? Or conversely, what does the outcome of creativity give rise to? Unfortunately, there is no discussion of these relationships in the literature, although it is notable that increased confidence was mentioned in 12 of the 14 pieces of research that cited creativity as an outcome. Often, it was referred to as a separate effect, but in some cases (Baehr, 2004; Verma, 1994) the two outcomes were associated in the sense that the young people felt more confident about experimenting with new ideas and for sharing ideas with others. Thus, apparently, not only had their creativity been nurtured, but they had also been given the confidence to communicate and explore these ideas.

Other impacts which were reported alongside creativity were enhanced self-esteem, technical skills, enjoyment and teamwork skills. Again, it should be emphasised that the literature did not draw out any connections between these effects and creativity. It would be unwise, therefore, to make any attempts to speculate as to the directionality of effects.

### **3.4 What works in stimulating creativity: assessing the evidence**

In seeking to answer the central research question: ‘What works in stimulating creativity among socially excluded young people’, this section takes as its main source the 14 pieces of literature identified in section 3.1 that explicitly identified creativity as an outcome. Where appropriate, however, literature in which ‘creativity’ was regarded as a process or activity will be drawn on to illustrate factors relating to the effectiveness of working with groups of socially excluded young people on creative projects.

On the question of whether creativity is something that can be ‘triggered’ or provoked by particular stimuli, opinion was divided within the eight pieces of literature. On the one hand, creativity was seen as something innate that could be nurtured or developed through either the arts or other activities (e.g. Baehr, 2004; Cooper, 2004 and Kinder and Harland, 2004) but not necessarily ‘triggered’. However, in some projects, ‘triggers’ were used to stimulate creativity. Balshaw (2004) reports the use of visual arts stimuli to encourage creative responses from young people involved in a dance project and the projects evaluated in Downing et al (2004) used gallery and museum collections and non-western stimuli to elicit creative responses from young people. However, in their evaluation of the Ignite! project, which attempted to discover what might be responsible for trig-

gering creativity, Craft *et al.* (2004) suggest that it ‘may not be fruitful to consider creativity as something that can be seen as being ‘triggered’ in any direct or simple way’. The projects described in the 14 pieces of literature discussed here, covered an array of creative activities and thus it would seem that a variety of stimuli might rouse creative responses in young people. However, creativity itself appears to be considered as an approach or thought process that can be developed and worked on, but may not be initiated by a single activity or stimulus.

For those projects in which creativity was an outcome for young people, a number of factors or strategies appeared to play a role in the development of individuals’ creativity. These include:

- authenticity
- something different
- the significant other/mentor/mediator
- exploring ideas
- challenge
- working with others
- sustainability.

### 3.4.1 Authenticity

One factor that appeared to be of importance in generating creativity as an outcome in the literature discussed here was the idea of ‘authenticity’. This factor was two-fold. Firstly, it appeared that themes, stimuli and creative activity worked well when they appeared to be **relevant and meaningful** to the young people (Nelson, 1993; Runco, 1993; Spicker *et al.*, 1996; Vidall-Hall, 2003; Downing *et al.*, 2004; Craft *et al.*, 2004; Baehr, 2004). Areas of relevance to specific groups of young people evident in the literature included:

- a ‘Bollywood’ theme for young Asian participants in Birmingham
- the use of the theme ‘identity’ for young people with a refugee/asylum seeker background in London (Downing *et al.*, 2004)
- a ‘club mix’ dance music project run by DJs with teenaged participants in Vidall-Hall (2003)
- the use of sensory stimuli with young people attending a special school (PMLD and SLD) (Balshaw, 2004).

In particular, some openness in the themes/activities chosen for the projects or programmes, such that they could resonate with the young participants' own lives appeared to be an important feature of those projects that stimulated creativity amongst young people. For example, Nelson (1993) describes an improvisational theatre project in which situations for performance had been chosen to relate to the participating teenaged mothers' own lives, to generate an imaginative response and to echo their African-American cultural history. This strategy had been felt to be particularly effective in developing creative responses and a sense of pride and confidence in their identity.

Secondly, the authenticity of the creative practitioner was deemed significant. That is, where young people could respect the practitioner delivering the workshop or programme as a 'real working artist' it was felt that they engaged well (e.g. Craft *et al.*, 2004; Downing *et al.*, 2004; Kinder and Harland, 2004; Vidall-Hall, 2003). In turn, the authenticity of the practitioner conferred authenticity to the task. Craft *et al.* (2004) describe participants' growing understanding and appropriation of the artist's own ways of working and seeing work created as part of the artist's own artistic and commercial practice, i.e. seeing it in context. Thus, if the disciplinary or professional knowledge/processes had authenticity, there was a greater chance that there would be authenticity in the task.

### 3.4.2 Something different

An element of the 'new' or 'different' was a common factor in projects or programmes that described creativity as an outcome. For all of the more recent projects, exposure to new ideas and concepts was seen to be particularly instrumental in provoking creative responses from young people. However, other areas such as location and space, learning styles, pace and working with new people were also covered.

Working in a different space – i.e. not school – whether it be a museum or gallery, a stately home, a field trip or youth centre was an important factor in most projects described in the literature considered here (e.g. Spicker *et al.*, 1996; Lord *et al.*, 2002; Baehr, 2004; Craft *et al.*, 2004; Downing *et al.*, 2004; and Pigneguy, 2004). This was felt to be of significance for particular groups of young people. Downing *et al.* (2004) describe one project with looked-after young children who were excluded from school, for whom an environment as unlike school as possible in terms of rules and structures was essential for their engagement. The 'new' spaces in which other projects took place were felt to renew participants' enthu-

siasm for learning (Downing *et al.*, 2004). Similarly, a trip to a community film organisation's premises was felt to have been an important learning experience for the young people involved in the project described by Pigneguy (2004), whilst visits to galleries and museums were described as important in the development of creativity by Nelson (1993) and participation in cultural activities was also noted by Verma and Verma (1994). However, too much of the 'new' could be potentially distracting to young participants who might be thrown off-task in the excitement of exploration (Baehr, 2004).

Creating a different learning experience, in which the pace and style of learning was taken into consideration, was also described as a factor that enabled the development of creativity. That the learning be active and about 'doing' was of prime importance (e.g. Spicker *et al.*, 1996; Baehr, 2004; Cooper, 2004; Craft *et al.*, 2004; Downing *et al.*, 2004). In particular, developing a model of teaching and learning different to that in school appeared to have worked well – especially when the learning was seen to be outside of national curriculum requirements (Cooper, 2004; Craft *et al.*, 2004). Establishing an informal learning environment with a structure different to the 'school' model was also important (Baehr, 2004; Downing *et al.*, 2004; Lord *et al.*, 2002; and Pigneguy, 2004). A further aspect of the learning experience was highlighted by Runco (1993), who describes how stimulus rich environments were highly important for socially disadvantaged young people who may have had limited access to cultural/educational/material/informational experiences. In some of the literature with an earlier publication date, learning environments in which children are exposed to educational experiences that allow them to learn in creative ways, were found to be effective in stimulating creativity (e.g. Naval-Severino, 1993a; 1993b; Verma and Verma, 1994; Pogrow, 1996). Pogrow (1996) for example, highlights the benefits of a 'self-contained, intensive thinking environment' in which computer assisted learning, can help build a bridge between visual and verbal styles of learning. This is of particular relevance to socially excluded young people. Overuse of verbal rewards and verbal materials is cautioned against by Runco (1993) since they tend to be biased against economically disadvantaged children and non-verbal tasks may be the easiest to elicit original thinking. To corroborate this, those researchers involved in measuring creativity using tests described in section 3.2, found that socially excluded young people scored poorly in tests that relied on verbal skills (Naval-Severino, 1993a; 1993b; Verma and Verma, 1994).

Working with other schools and with new faces (both adults and peers) can also be effective in developing creativity and creative activity. For example, Balshaw

(2004) reported that a cluster of special and mainstream schools working together on a project gained much from one another, with particularly positive outcomes in the realm of social inclusion. Lord *et al.* (2002) reported that for particularly disadvantaged or marginalised young people, the opportunities to work with organisations that had a function over and above that concerned with education (for example, economic regeneration, social integration or arts organisations) was attractive and allowed them to engage better with the projects. Although this was not linked to particular developments in their creativity, it would seem that the first step towards this aim would be to engage the young people in the first place. Downing *et al.* (2004) reported that new learning relationships were particularly stimulating for young people – this meant that working with gallery educators, artists and other creative practitioners as well as ‘making friends’ with other participants.

### 3.4.3 The significant other/mentor/mediator

The role of a ‘significant other’ was identified in several pieces of literature where creativity was described as an effect on young people. In some projects the significant other was a formalised arrangement. For example, **mentors** chosen by the young people were of particular significance in the ‘Creativity Labs’ and ‘Creative Sparks’ programmes described by Baehr (2004). Young people reported that receiving encouragement for what they were doing, support when it went wrong and support in learning from mistakes was critical to their creative development. The young people further felt that their mentor should be someone they could relate to, someone they had chosen for themselves and who they valued in terms of their creativity.

Craft *et al.* (2004) do not describe a mentor per se, but ascribe importance to adults who can mediate the creative process when running workshops and can interact with young people in such a way that the adults and participants share ideas for creative purposes and build new bonds. Of particular importance for the development of creativity was the facility in the significant adult to **model expertise** such that the young people were able to appropriate it. However, it was felt significant that the right balance between autonomy and support was found, particularly for young people to feel ownership for their creativity and creative product.

Kinder and Harland (2004) in their examination of factors that facilitate the development of creativity also highlight these features of a ‘significant other’ –

namely, a praise culture within the learning environment, with constructive criticism, encouragement and unconditional positive regard, practical modelling and intervention. They further posit that a mentor fulfilling such a role might have positive benefits for both creativity and may impact on the degree of engagement from socially excluded young people.

In the body of literature with an earlier publication date, the role of the significant other tended to be undertaken by [an adult delivering either problem-solving/thinking-skills workshops](#) (e.g. Naval-Severino, 1993a; 1993b; Verma and Verma, 1994) or as the educator ‘teaching’ or encouraging creativity amongst their students (Runco, 1993). Feedback in learning situations, praise, as well as exposure to successful problem-solving tasks were thought to be vital to the role of educator (Hickson and Skuy, 1990; Nelson, 1993; Runco, 1993; and Verma and Verma, 1994). Runco (1993) posits a number of recommendations for the educator – many of which relate to qualities an educator should work on displaying. These included:

- monitoring their own expectations of creative individuals and ensuring that these were not unreasonable
- recognising that creativity is multi-faceted and may arise in different areas
- recognising that creativity is a sign of, and contributor to psychological health
- giving helpful and supportive evaluations
- avoiding pre-judging non-conforming students
- avoiding suggesting that your own way of doing things is the only way.

### 3.4.4 Exploring ideas

A further factor that appeared to be crucial to the development of creativity in the literature under consideration here is the [freedom to explore ideas and concepts](#). Exploring ideas in depth and experimenting with the ideas as they occurred was thought to have been a vital ingredient in the creativity of young people involved in ‘Creativity Labs’ and ‘Creative Sparks’ (Baehr, 2004). Through investigating possibilities it was thought that young people begin to value their creativity (Baehr, 2004) and take ownership of their creative ideas (e.g. Craft *et al.*, 2004; Downing *et al.*, 2004). Similarly, making time for reflection on ideas and allowing learning to embed were also found to be important for creativity (Pogrow, 1996; Naval-Severino, 1993a; 1993b; Baehr, 2004).



One project used the method of ‘**brain gym**’ activities in order to explore ideas and stimulate creativity in the young people. While this was thought to have been successful, it was noted that creativity might have been more effectively stimulated if brain gym exercises had been integrated more thoroughly into workshop activities, rather than being a stand-alone activity (Baehr, 2004). The actual teaching of creative thinking skills (Naval-Severino, 1993a; 1993b) and problem-solving skills (Verma and Verma, 1994) were both found to be highly effective, with a significant impact, in the development of creativity among socially excluded young people in the Philippines and India respectively. For example, teaching techniques to improve problem-solving skills helped children to ‘explore’ and restructure information, apply lateral thinking and improved thinking through expressive media – children learnt to break problems into smaller parts and use appropriate strategies to solve them (Verma and Verma, 1994).

**Developing the imagination** was seen as being a particularly useful tool in exploring ideas and stimulating creativity (e.g. Nelson, 1993; Cooper, 2004; Craft *et al.*, 2004; Downing *et al.*, 2004). Cooper describes the benefits of this thus:

*...the imagination brings creativity to the process of learning and liberates the mind from the actual by projecting us into the possible. If we are to practise inclusively ... we must ... make the imagination pervasive in all fields of education.*

2004: 87

Cooper suggests that encouraging young people to question, respond and to role-play teaches them how to think creatively and develops creativity. The importance of questioning to creativity is also highlighted in Baehr (2004) and Craft *et al.* (2004).

### 3.4.5 Challenge

The aspect of ‘challenge’ appeared to be an important factor in developing creativity amongst (socially excluded) young people. Challenge took a number of forms, such as taking risks, intellectual challenge, personal challenge and resourcefulness.

A central theme in those projects reporting that young people’s creativity had been developed was that of ‘**taking risks**’. This could be teachers taking risks to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, which had positive outcomes

for one project (Balshaw, 2004). It could also be about the young people taking risks in the activities they were undertaking. For example, Downing *et al.* (2004) describe the satisfaction young people expressed at trying something they did not 'know' they could do (a risk) and in one case, an artist attempting a technique that s/he did not know was achievable and the subsequent learning from the experience was noted – that the process of making art is one of trial and error, adjustments and new attempts. Indeed, taking risks, failing and learning from mistakes was deemed central to the creative process and to young people's creative development in two further pieces of literature (e.g. Baehr, 2004 and Craft *et al.*, 2004). However, it is noted by Craft *et al.* (2004) that for particular groups of young people, an atmosphere of risk-taking might lead them to stray into emotionally charged areas and it was important for adults leading projects/programmes to safeguard such participants.

The notion of challenge as [solving a difficult problem](#) was of particular relevance in projects with an earlier publication date, in which problem-solving (Verma and Verma, 1994), higher-order thinking skills (Pogrow, 1996) and creative thinking skills Naval-Severino, 1993a; 1993b) were delivered to children in an intervention/workshop environment. Strategies were taught to enable children to break problems/challenges into smaller parts and this was felt to develop creative responses to problems. In particular, in the face of challenge, the use of goal setting helped to improve the manner in which a child approached a challenge and consistent exposure resulted in children learning to select appropriate strategies to resolve their challenge (Verma and Verma, 1994).

The notion of [intellectual or personal challenge](#) was addressed in two pieces of literature, neither of which were particularly concerned with socially excluded young people. For the creatively gifted young people involved in the projects described, encouragement to move beyond adult support (Craft *et al.*, 2004); contact with more challenging boundaries than they were used to (Baehr, 2004) were vital ingredients in the creative development of individuals. In particular, these projects were concerned with addressing any over-dependence on adult-defined structures and opportunities, rather allowing the young people themselves to carve out their own opportunities and make their own connections (Baehr, 2004 and Craft *et al.*, 2004).

[Restricting or limiting young people's access to technology](#) and materials was found to have been an effective provocation to invention and innovation in one piece of literature. Baehr describes too much or too readily available technology,

material or resources as a hindrance to the development of creativity since staff suggested that although ‘...a magnet for young people’s interest [it] might be detracting from developing their creativity’ (2004:6).

### 3.4.6 Working with others

As described in section 3.4.3 on the ‘significant other’ above, working with others was considered to play an important role in the development of creativity within the literature in which creativity was discussed as an outcome. Working with others was felt to have [assisted in the development and exploration of ideas](#) – another vital factor (see section 3.4.4) – for example, brainstorming ideas with others (e.g. Baehr, 2004), and working together towards a resolution (e.g. Craft *et al.*, 2004). Working with peers was felt to build up young people’s confidence in their creativity through sharing ideas (Baehr, 2004). Indeed, the sharing of ideas with other creative professionals is seen as vital to the creative process at every stage (NESTA, 2002).

Elsewhere in the literature, there is evidence that working in groups can stifle creativity. Harland (1990) for example, provides an account of a performing arts experiment in a special school in which working with others in groups had been shown to limit individual creativity. Similarly, findings from a more recent evaluation of the Arts Education Interface (a series of arts interventions led by artists in schools) showed that visual arts – an individual experience often with no working with others involved – had more ‘creative’ outcomes than artforms such as drama and dance, both of which have a tendency to work in groups (Harland *et al.*, 2005). Hence, this evidence prompts the question – do groups dilute creativity?

Indeed, Runco (1993) suggested that allowing young people to work individually was very important for stimulating creativity. One recommendation he made was for independent and small group assignments. This was noted to be of particular value for ‘socially disadvantaged’ children because they may have their own interests or special needs. Runco indicated that both the literature he reviewed and his own research, suggested that intrinsic motivation, which contributes to creative expression is maximised when an individual follows his or her own interests. Also, since disadvantaged students tend to be very heterogeneous, their interests can often best be met through individual work. However, Runco further observes Torrance’s (1968) view that occasionally, small group activities are also advantageous for the disadvantaged.

While perhaps not specifically generating ‘creative’ outcomes, working together might be particularly important for groups of young people who have difficulty engaging in education or are marginalised for other reasons. Pigneguy (2004) describes the benefits to a group of girls attending a Learning Support Unit (LSU) of working together and with others in their local community on a film about their community. The social aspect of the programme provided particularly positive outcomes for the pupils, and working with the local community gave a sense of local pride and involvement. Similarly, Downing *et al.* (2004) describe the creative exploration of culture within groups of peers as leading young people from ethnic minorities to feel more confident about themselves and their identity, and that their culture was more accepted by their peers, which might lead to them being more participatory in the future.

At the programme level, Runco (1993) highlighted the value in the creative instructor working together with other skilled practitioners and with the parents of participating individuals.

### 3.4.7 Sustainability

One important factor in the development of creativity in young people is ‘time’, both in terms of having [enough time to develop creatively](#) and what happens once an intervention (project, workshop, programme) ends. Balshaw (2004) suggested that an important factor in the successful development of creativity through dance workshops was the fact that the artists had a longer period of time with which to work with the young people. Similarly, Downing *et al.* (2004) note that longer engagements generated a greater understanding of creative processes (see also Nelson, 1993). In earlier interventions designed to develop creative thinking skills (Naval-Severino, 1993a; 1993b), it was felt that exposing children to training activities in the area of cognitive thinking and creative thinking skills over the long-term would be particularly beneficial for the development of creativity. Again, time is of particular importance for those young people who are socially excluded due to their special educational needs. Pogrow (1996) stresses the need for an investment of time in order to develop creativity in the sense of higher order thinking skills among SEN pupils, suggesting that it took three months of almost daily sessions before pupils were able to start to take responsibility for their ideas and begin to develop them.

In projects where time is more limited, the literature highlighted several caveats. Downing *et al.* (2004), for example, reported that where time was short it was

essential that activities were tailored to the time available such that young people were able to see them through. Craft *et al.* (2004) highlight the difficulties involved in young people not seeing their work through to the finished product, and the resulting impact on learning; much can be gained in terms of young people's understanding of the creative process if they are involved in the important final stages.

While few items of the literature considered in this review tracked the long-term development of creativity in young people, where they did, the long-term effects were difficult to establish. Pogrow (1996) found that the long-term effects of intervention projects for four groups of socially excluded young gifted and talented students in the United States diminished as the children began to attend secondary school and were faced with discontinuous learning experiences. While summer schools for these children helped to maintain enthusiasm, it was felt that without them, long-term impact would not occur.

There was some discussion in the literature of the future intentions of young people in terms of their creativity (Baehr, 2004; Craft *et al.*, 2004; Downing *et al.*, 2004). It would appear that future willingness to take up creative activities owes a great deal to the overall success of a particular intervention. Where a young person has gained in confidence, in enjoyment and in their creative development, it would appear that they are more likely to pursue creative activities in the future in both workshop-type settings and from their own motivation. (e.g. Baehr, 2004; Craft *et al.*, 2004; Downing *et al.*, 2004; Pigneguy, 2004; and Vidall-Hall, 2003). Projects in which problem-solving and other thinking skills had been taught were hopeful that these skills would remain with the young people (e.g. Naval-Severino, 1993a; 1993b).

### 3.5 Summary

Of the 57 pieces of literature summarised for the review, 14 explicitly mentioned the generation of creativity as an outcome and of these, only half concerned projects which overtly set out to stimulate creativity and stated this in their project/research aims. For example, studies from the earlier publication period in particular, sought to investigate the impact of training/intervention programmes on the creative thinking skills, higher level cognitive thinking and problem solving abilities of socially deprived/disadvantaged children. Amongst the remaining literature, creativity featured less as a desired outcome and more often as a process (e.g. as a means of engaging with young people).

From those projects/research programmes where creativity outcomes were reported, a number of factors were identified which appeared to play a role in the development of individuals' creativity. These were:

- **Authenticity** – themes, stimuli and creative activity were found to work successfully when they were relevant and meaningful to the young people. Also, where young people could respect the practitioner delivering the workshop or programme as a 'real working artist' it was felt that they engaged well.
- **Something different** – exposure to new ideas and concepts was particularly instrumental in provoking creative responses from young people. Use of new/different locations, learning styles and working with new people were also seen as helpful.
- **'Significant other'** – someone in the role of a mentor/mediator was found to be beneficial for creativity because they could provide encouragement, support and model expertise for the young people to appropriate.
- **Exploring ideas** – the freedom to explore ideas and concepts was thought to facilitate creativity, because through this investigation, young people could begin to value their creativity and take ownership of their creative ideas.
- **Challenge** – The aspect of 'challenge' appeared to be an important factor in developing creativity. Challenge took the form of taking risks, intellectual challenge, personal challenge and resourcefulness.
- **Working with others** – Working alongside others, including peers and adults, was felt to have assisted in the development and exploration of ideas. It was also found to have built up young people's confidence in their creativity through the sharing of ideas.
- **Time** – One important factor in the development of creativity in socially excluded young people was 'time'. This refers to time in terms of having enough time to develop creative ideas. Similarly, making time for reflection on ideas and allowing learning to embed were also found to be important for creativity.

## 4 Impact on social exclusion: evidence from the literature

### Introduction

This chapter considers the second set of key aims of this research.

- To determine whether increased creativity has any impact on levels of social exclusion.
- And in particular, to consider what is the relationship between social exclusion and creativity? How does one impact on the other? Does increased creativity have an impact on levels of social exclusion; and does social exclusion have an impact on creativity?

Section 4.1 begins by outlining those pieces of literature which [specifically](#) referred to the stimulation of creativity and its impact on social exclusion (i.e. improvements to social exclusion as an outcome, as a result of enhanced creativity).

Section 4.2 then surveys [all](#) the literature to consider the types of connections made with regards to the interaction between creativity and social inclusion – in particular, does increased creativity have an impact on levels of social exclusion? And what aspects of creativity (e.g. participation in the arts, creative outcomes) would seem to be linked to increased social inclusion?

Also surveying all the literature, section 4.3 discusses the question of whether social exclusion has an impact on young people's creativity, and in particular, whether young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more or less likely to be creative or have creative potential.

### 4.1 Literature which specifically cited creativity as an outcome, alongside reduced social exclusion

The second aim of this research was to establish whether the emergence of creativity amongst socially excluded young people has the capacity to reduce their exclusion. For example, is there any evidence that creativity helps them in some

way to re-engage with education, secure employment or connect with their community and peer group?

Amongst the 57 pieces of literature, there would appear to be just 12 which may potentially address or explore this question. Referring back to section 3.1, it can be seen that 14 items referred to creativity as an outcome, although two of these did not deal with socially excluded young people specifically. Thus, there are 12 pieces of literature pertinent to this issue.

Of these, eight pieces of literature mentioned an outcome pertaining to (although sometimes rather tentatively) the increased social inclusion of participants after involvement in a creative activity.

- Balshaw (2004) suggests that collaboration and integration was achieved between mainstream and special school pupils as a result of two creative arts projects:

*...the creative learning emerging as young people work to develop their imaginative ability, solve the artistic, logistic and interpersonal problems to working collaboratively in cross-solve and cross-ability teams.*

- Similarly, the article by Cooper (2004) describes a positive reaction amongst students from a pupil referral unit to a theatre-in-education project, the implication being that the approach taken succeeded in securing their interest in learning. The project was based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the children were encouraged to comment on and step into the role as 'scholars' so they could decide what would happen to the characters in the play.
- A third piece of literature, again dealing with the issue of educational inclusion reported that a film making project offered to pupils at a learning support unit developed their social skills, their sense of feeling value and of being more involved in the community (Pigneguy, 2004). When asked to complete an evaluation sheet at the end of the project, 86 per cent agreed that the course 'allowed me to express myself creatively'. However, no concrete link was made between the ability to think creatively and the effects which may lead to greater inclusion.
- A whole range of outcomes were reported by Lord *et al.* (2002) in the research into media education programmes targeted at socially excluded young people. The students involved expected effects such as enhanced confidence, technical skills and the ability to communicate with others to eventually facilitate a progression into education and/or employment. Creativity related outcomes were



also noted, although these were amongst the smallest category of effects mentioned by the young people, hence it is unclear as to their ultimate link with social inclusion.

- Following participation in thinking skills/problem-solving programmes (Pogrow, 1996; Verma, 1994 and Spicker et al, 1996), outcomes were reported which could be seen to impact positively on young peoples' educational inclusion – for example, increased confidence in their abilities, motivation to embrace intellectual changes and improved maths and reading scores.
- Involvement in a multimedia youth arts project (Moriarty and McManus, 2003) was also said to have boosted young people's confidence in their abilities and equipped them with the necessary learning skills to gain access to further educational or the workplace.

In addition, one piece of research (Allison, 1993) examined the impact of a critical thinking skills programme on children's academic performance. Although increased creativity was not measured or reported as an outcome (and thus not included in the list above), the young people were found to perform better in maths and reading which may lead to positive impacts in terms of their educational inclusion.

Thus, from 57 pieces of literature the above eight examples were the only pieces which reported creativity as an outcome, alongside increased social inclusion of some form. In all these cases, no discussion was undertaken as to whether there was a causal link between creativity and social inclusion outcomes. Rather, they were seen to co-exist and any relationship would have to be inferred by the reader.

## **4.2 Surveying all the literature: does increased creativity have an impact on levels of social exclusion? Specific and implicit links**

Having considered the literature which simultaneously cited *creative outcomes* and *improvements to social exclusion* (in section 4.1 above), a further investigation of *all* the literature was undertaken in order to establish the interaction between social exclusion and creativity and how one might impact on the other. Each piece of literature was examined to determine how the relationship between creativity and social inclusion was expressed, in particular, does increased creativity have an impact on levels of social exclusion?

Two levels to the possible relationship were apparent (numbers in brackets refer to the number of sources where this relationship occurred):

- a specific, overt or evidenced connection (2)
- an implicit, suggested or anecdotal connection (17).

### 4.2.1 Specific connections

An overt connection between creativity and social inclusion was evident in Cooper (2004), where the author cited the development of the imagination as ‘bringing creativity to the process of learning’ and being ‘liberating’ for students with learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties. In turn, such impacts could facilitate more inclusive education (p.87). The author based this connection on evidence from current and previous work in the field of theatre-in-education. The other source providing a specific connection between creativity and social inclusion was a case-study of a single child living in rural poverty, in Hebert (2001). This child’s creative traits were tracked over time by the researcher, from age 9 to age 10. Despite ‘chronic adversity’, the child’s development demonstrated resilience, and his social inclusion was evident amongst his peer group and the community – who appreciated his creativity and intelligence.

### 4.2.2 Implicit connections

More tentative indications of a relationship between creativity and social inclusion were based on anecdotal evidence (e.g. Allin, 2001; Karkou and Glasman, 2004). Suggestions of a link were prominent across the range of literature types. For example, the NACCCE report (1999) (an advisory collation for policy and strategic development) suggested that creative education could impact on standards and achievement in all areas, as well as potential job and life prospects, thus tackling elements of social exclusion. A handbook for teachers by Thousand *et al.* (2002) suggested that if problem-solving and critical skills are developed in the classroom, then this might promote more inclusive education where the teacher can both address the individual’s learning needs as well as the collective needs of the class.

One study suggested a two-way relationship between creativity and social inclusion. Working in the fields of dance and drama with clusters of schools (including mainstream and special schools), the author found that creative activity appeared to promote the children’s social integration through allowing them

to learn about each other and respect each other (outcomes were positive in this regard for both special needs pupils and mainstream pupils) (Balshaw, 2004). In addition, taking an inclusive (or integrative) approach to the work was deemed by the author to challenge the young people to be creative.

#### **4.2.3 Aspects of creativity and their impact on social exclusion**

All the literature which suggested that creativity might contribute to improved social inclusion was then investigated for the cause of the association. Four key areas were implicated (numbers in brackets refer to the number of sources where this area was suggested – more than one type of relationship might be implicated in each source):

- other outcomes related to the creative activity undertaken (13)
- participation in creative activity (10)
- the arts (5)
- creative outcomes (4).

From this list, it can be seen that participation in creative activity was cited over and above creative outcomes as fostering social inclusion. That is, creativity as a process would seem to be more commonly referenced in the literature than creative outcomes, in this regard (e.g. engaging young people in creative pursuits, Bond, 1998; participating in arts and culture as a creator, not just a passive consumer, as in McKeever, 2002; creative education, as in the NACCCE report, 1999; the use of creative activity in prison education work, such as in Peaker, 1998). Where creative outcomes were referred to as impacting on social exclusion, these focused on developments in young people's imagination (Cooper, 2004) and their thinking, critical and problem-solving skills (Klein, 1999; Thousand *et al.*, 2002).

From the literature reviewed, the most frequently discussed association between these two areas would appear to be that outcomes other than creative ones, arising from participation in creative activity, might impact on social inclusion. Such outcomes typically included increased confidence (e.g. Baehr, 2004); improved self-esteem and sense of identity (Downing *et al.*, 2004; Pigneguy, 2004; Spicker *et al.*, 1996); finding a voice and a means of self-expression (McKeever, 2002; Vidall-Hall, 2003); enhanced social skills and peer interaction (Lord *et al.*, 2002; Zero2nineteen, 2004); raised motivation and capacity for perseverance in learn-

ing situations (Pogrow, 1996); and technical skills in the arts and digital media (Peaker, 1998; Pigneguy, 2004; Vidall-Hall, 2003). In addition, the arts were also implicated in these kinds of relationship, perhaps more generally than specific creative outcomes (e.g. Allin, 2001; Ings, 2001; Neustatter, 2003; Shaw, 1999). Generally, it was the social benefits of involvement in the arts that were espoused.

It could, of course, be of some debate as to whether such outcomes are indeed ‘creative’ outcomes in themselves, or whether they describe some other forms of personal or social development. For the purposes of this literature review, creative outcomes are those which refer to developments in imagination, thinking skills, capacities to invent and innovate, to take risks or experiment – as documented in the previous chapter. Could it be that these other outcomes documented here are easier to measure or to ask young people to talk about than ‘creative’ impacts? Are such outcomes indicative of creative skills and capacities? Are they a proxy for creative developments?

It should be noted that many of these relationships were inferred or implied by the literature, with little specific evidence given of improved social inclusion. Inferences were also made by the NFER literature review team. For example, examining Downing *et al.* (2004) (an evaluation of a museum-education scheme on the theme of ‘*Image and Identity*’), it was possible to suggest that the girls’ improved confidence, self-esteem and sense of identity and cultural acceptance, *might* lead to increased participation and engagement in education and in accessing museums. Reports on other projects would seem to imply that, if the young people *continued* to be involved in this ‘creative’ activity, social inclusion might become a real prospect (via outcomes such as better behaviour, improved concentration, motivation, and so on, e.g. Vidall-Hall, 2003; Zero2nineteen, 2004).

However, there was little, if any, evidence across the literature, of long-term tracking of social inclusion outcomes upon which to test this hypothesis. Of note though, is a reference to a project which related the young people’s improved social inclusion to the sustainability of their work (Tranter and Palin, 2004). No specific link between creativity and social inclusion was made, but rather, it was the possibility for the young people to work with the gallery in a sustained way, long-term, that was attributed by the authors to improving the youngsters’ prospects vocationally, socially and personally. Evidence of young people continuing to work or have links with the gallery was documented.

## 4.3 Surveying all the literature: does social exclusion have an impact on young people's creativity?

### Specific and implicit links

Again, a further investigation of *all* the literature was undertaken in order to establish the interaction between social exclusion and creativity, this time in the direction of social exclusion impacting on creativity or creative potential. In particular:

- Does young people's social exclusion or disadvantage have an impact on their creativity or creative potential?

A number of specific and evidenced connections were made for this relationship between social exclusion and creativity. Indeed, eight sources contributed directly to this debate, with a further three inferring possible connections. Two directly opposing themes were evident in the literature:

- social exclusion has a negative impact on young peoples' creative abilities and creative potential
- socially excluded young people can have higher levels of creative ability and creative potential than their peers.

In order to explore these two areas further, the characteristics and experiences of socially excluded young people were scrutinised in the literature. These are presented in the tables below.

Overall, there would appear to be greater emphasis on the first argument in the literature included in this review – i.e. on the negative impacts of social exclusion on young people's creativity and creative potential. As shown in Table 4.1, socio-economic status was found by a number of researchers to be directly correlated with children's creativity scores, in research using creativity tests. Although it should be noted that Vann (1985) provided an exception here – in her study of 163 children from grades 1–6 in six Catholic urban parochial schools in the USA, Vann found no statistically significant difference between groups when divided between high and low socio-economic levels. On the other hand, some researchers have noted that scores from creativity tests (e.g. the Torrance tests) do not always correspond with children's creative abilities according to other judgements. Jarvis (1992) stated firmly that a low score on a creativity test should not limit perceptions of a student's creative abilities. Whilst there would

**Table 4.1 Characteristics and experiences of socially excluded young people – leading to NEGATIVE IMPACTS on their creativity or hindrances to their creative development**

Characteristics and experiences	Impacts on creative abilities and creative potential	References
<b>Socio-economic status</b>	<p>Children from low socio-economic status backgrounds have been shown to have lower creativity scores, according to standardized tests (e.g. Torrance Test), than their peers.</p> <p>Researchers have undertaken creativity tests with comparative groups. A number concluded that children's social exclusion in this regard meant they had less capacity to be creative – due to circumstance.</p>	<p>Ali (1987); Aranha (1997); Dhillon and Mehra (1987); Dudek et al. (1993); Verma and Verma (1994).</p>
<b>Parents' backgrounds and parenting</b>	<p>Also affecting children's creativity, and related to their socio-economic backgrounds, were: family background, education of parents, professional background and vocational independence of parents, and child-rearing practices.</p> <p>Located in India, Verma and Verma's study (1994) noted that deprived groups tended to treat children as subordinates to adults; whilst children in non-deprived families were active participants in the family, e.g. involved in conversations and decision-making.</p>	<p>Dhillon and Mehra (1987); Verma and Verma (1994).</p>
<b>Limited exposure to stimulus rich environments</b>	<p>Amongst children from deprived backgrounds, lack of access to educational games and toys, challenging materials, limited travel and recreational experiences, and so on, were felt to have a negative impact on children's creativity.</p>	<p>Runco (1993); Verma and Verma (1994).</p>
<b>Nature of social interactions and communication</b>	<p>Children from disadvantaged backgrounds were deemed to experience poor social interaction with adults and/or with peers, and were shown to have poor communication skills – written and verbal – according to tests.</p> <p>Spicker et al. (1996) found that gifted and talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds produced poor written work with regard to grammar and punctuation.</p>	<p>Verma and Verma (1994); Spicker et al. (1996); Naval-Severino (1993b).</p>

seem to be consensus that children from 'at-risk' or 'disadvantaged' populations may perform poorly on verbal elements of creativity tests, a number of studies pointed out that these types of children scored highly on the 'figural' aspects of such tests (e.g. Jarvis, 1992; Verma and Verma, 1994).

In contrast, Table 4.2 shows elements which might contribute to children's creativity, despite their disadvantaged background. An element of resilience in overcoming adversity was apparent in the literature, or as Hickson and Skuy

**Table 4.2 Characteristics and experiences of socially excluded young people – leading to POSITIVE IMPACTS on their creativity or enhancing their creative potential**

<b>Characteristics and experiences</b>	<b>Impacts on creative abilities and creative potential</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Nature of social interactions</b>	Children from disadvantaged backgrounds might grow up in larger families, which might encourage social skills, play, group activities and problem-solving interactions.	Hickson and Skuy (1990).
<b>Greater imagination and improvisation skills</b>	Less access to play material and expensive toys might contribute to the development of children's imagination and ability to improvise with everyday materials.	Hickson and Skuy (1990); Jarvis (1992); Hebert (2001).
<b>Positive family values</b>	Positive family values regarding music, rhythm, dance, humour, story-telling and so on, might encourage greater participation and experience in these creative areas.	Hickson and Skuy (1990); Spicker et al. (1996).
<b>Use of non-standard dialects</b>	Children from rural disadvantaged backgrounds in the US have been shown to have creative talents in story telling, and display rich oral imagery.  Spicker et al. (1996) found that gifted and talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds were likely to produce high quality content in their written work; African-American children from disadvantaged backgrounds were seen to display rich oral language and story telling skills.	Spicker et al. (1996).

(1990) put it, the areas shown in Table 4.2 would ‘sustain disadvantaged youngsters in adverse circumstances’ (p.296).

Comparing both tables, the emphasis on language is clear in the debate about impacts of social exclusion on creativity. On the one hand, creativity scores as ‘measured’ through the testing of verbal skills (such as in the Torrance Test), have been shown to be poor in disadvantaged youngsters. This would seem to reflect both a mismatch between these children’s language and traditional language/standard verbal skills, and the finding that these children are less likely to perform well on standardized or timed tests than their peers. (Some researchers have found that the verbal tests in the Torrance Tests produced spurious results, e.g. Spicker *et al.*, 1996; Verma and Verma, 1994; or that verbal creativity tests seemed biased against economically disadvantaged children, e.g. Runco, 1993).

On the other hand, Spicker *et al.*, 1996, shows that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds might have creative talents (e.g. story telling, rich language, kinaesthetic and physical strengths, and artistic traits) that might be under-served

by ‘traditional’ teaching and learning (i.e. which might emphasise standard verbal skills and test orientation). In planning interventions, a number of researchers suggest that it is important to remember the cultural norms, differences and experiences of the children involved (Spicker *et al.*, 1996, Verma and Verma, 1994; Jarvis, 1992). For example, to consider their language codes, their goal-orientation and values, and to balance the use of verbal and non-verbal media.

## 4.4 Summary

This chapter has examined the second set of key aims of this research: to determine whether increased creativity has any impact on levels of social exclusion. And in particular, what is the relationship between social exclusion and creativity?

### Does enhanced creativity have an impact on social exclusion?

Whether increased creativity *as an outcome* in itself impacted on social exclusion was difficult to ascertain from the literature. Specific, overt or evidenced connections between increased creativity and enhanced levels of social inclusion were rare; connections were more likely to be implied or suggested by the researchers, or evidenced through anecdotal work.

Furthermore, the areas most frequently associated with fostering social inclusion in the literature were participation in creative activity, and outcomes other than creative ones – rather than creative outcomes *per se*. Increased confidence, improved self-esteem, capacity for self-expression, enhanced social skills and raised motivation, were all documented in the literature as contributing towards reducing social exclusion, more often than developments in imagination, thinking skills, or capacities to invent or innovate. Apart from aptitude ‘testing’, there would appear to have been few tools with which to measure creativity. Could it be that other outcomes are easier to measure or to ask young people to talk about than ‘creative’ impacts?

In addition, through *continued* participation and involvement in creative activity, a number of reports implied that social inclusion might become a real prospect. It is perhaps difficult to ascertain from one-off projects what the social inclusion impacts might be for young people.



## **Does young people's social exclusion have an impact on their creative abilities or creative potential?**

The review also highlighted the negative impacts of social exclusion on young people's creativity and creative potential (see Table 4.1). Socio-economic status was directly correlated with children's creativity scores in much of the research carried out in the 1980s and early 1990s using creativity tests (Ali, 1987; Aranha, 1997; Dhillon and Mehra, 1987; Verma and Verma, 1994). Parents' backgrounds, parenting and limited exposure and access to stimulus rich environments were all cited as dampening these children's creativity.

On the other hand, other researchers showed that these very same areas might contribute to the creative development of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds – through social interactions in larger families, greater capacity for imagination and improvisation due to lack of access to play materials, sustaining their resilience in adverse circumstances.

From the literature reviewed, it can be suggested that one of the reasons for poor performance on creativity tests by children from disadvantaged backgrounds, might be a mismatch between their language and traditional language or standard verbal skills. In planning creative interventions, a number of researchers suggest that it is important to consider the language codes and dialects of these young people, and to balance the use of verbal and non-verbal media.

## **Part two**

## 5 Case-study methodology

### Introduction

The second part of this report moves away from the existing literature to examine primary data collected from active projects working in the areas of social exclusion and creativity. The case-study strand of the research involved fieldwork visits to five NESTA funded projects to speak to participants and staff about their experiences. The following chapter sets the scene by outlining the methodology used and also provides a description of the projects that contributed to the research.

### 5.1 Identifying suitable projects

Initially, NESTA provided the NFER with a list of eight possible projects which they felt might be appropriate for the research. Each project was contacted and further details obtained about the project's aims and target group. It transpired that three projects did not particularly work with socially excluded young people, hence were not asked to participate further.

The tables below provide a brief description of the projects visited for the evaluation in terms of the target group, staffing, timing of the projects and also details of the particular approaches used.

#### **Project A Comic drawing workshops**

##### ***Approach and content***

The comic drawing workshops were aimed at being vocational, by 'giving them a group to work in, giving them contemporaries and then introducing them to the wider comic world and getting them into a network'. The young people worked individually on their styles and improving their skills, but together in the sense that they had chosen a theme to work on, and to base a comic on. They were each allocated a two-page spread in a comic, which had a story line running throughout.

### **Target group**

- 12 young people were selected to participate in the project from entries to a competition flier.
- Girls were specifically targeted and invited to enter, as it was felt that girls were often excluded from the ‘comic’ scene, due to low confidence.
- The 12 participants were selected by talent, not by social inclusion criteria.
- Participants ranged from 16–40 in age (only 3 under 22).
- Participants came from a range of backgrounds, including those already in employment or in education (university, sixth form college, school) as well as the unemployed and foreign students. Hence, they could not necessarily be regarded as a uniform socially excluded group. What may contribute to any social exclusion they might experience, is their interest in comics and cartoons as these can be seen as excluded art forms, which are not taken seriously, and the young people themselves feel they have no-one to share their interest with ‘I’ve got no-one to talk to about comics or comic art ... so it’s really nice to get the chance to talk about it in these sessions’.

### **Staffing**

A number of artists were involved over the duration of the workshops including writers, cartoonists, graphics people, etc. There was a lead artist on the project. Most of the artists were unpaid volunteers.

### **Timing**

The project consisted of a series of ten Saturday workshops, every other weekend, culminating in a trip to a Comic Convention in Bristol to showcase their work.

## **Project B Individual creative projects**

### ***Approach and content***

The project was a joint venture between YouthWork Plus and Camden Arts. Youth Work Plus is an initiative set up by schools and the Education Welfare Service which targets young people experiencing problems at school e.g. exclusions, under-achievers, non-attenders, etc. and also those at risk of offending. Camden Arts is a community arts centre with studio, performance and other facilities.

YouthWork Plus organised mentors for young people whilst Camden Arts identified artists and matched artists to the young people (based on their interests, backgrounds and personalities). The approach was fairly flexible in that the young person would discuss their interests with the artists, agree a project to work on, set their own goals and decide how often they would like to meet. Projects covered such areas as sculpture, music, video, photography and art. The young people worked individually on their projects (with the support of an artist), but came together at the end of the year to showcase their work.

### ***Target group***

The project appeared to attract young people interested in the arts already, although some came along with friends who were not as enthusiastic initially. The young people included involved under-achievers, and those referred to YouthWork Plus by their schools/education welfare because they were deemed to be at-risk of exclusion or offending.

Young people generally ranged in age from 13–18 years.

### ***Staffing***

Young people were supported by artists and mentors.

### ***Timing***

The project started three years ago. Attendance at the centre was negotiated between the young person and the artist.

## **Project C A digital media project**

### ***Approach and content***

The project involved integrating the use of media software (ISADORA) with live performance. Participants spent time exploring a Greek poem 'Narcissus' in great detail, line by line and this was the inspiration for a final performance. The software is able to interact with the performer, for example it is possible to project multiple images onto a screen and to shake hands with yourself. The performance did not involve the use of many words, instead it was based more on symbolic movement.

### ***Target group***

A number of local secondary schools were contacted and drama teachers were asked whether they were aware of any young people who might be interested in the project. Potential participants were then invited to a workshop so they could find out about the project and what it entailed. Four girls who knew each other (from the same school) were invited to take part in the project. They were chosen because staff felt they would benefit most from the experience and perhaps would not normally have the opportunity to take part in this kind of project. The girls came from a school located in a socially deprived area and were in the last year of their A levels (all were taking drama).

### ***Staffing***

The project was staffed by two mentors and four emerging artists. The mentors, with expertise in theatre direction and technology, provided overall support to the project, including both the young people and the emerging artists. The emerging artists included a dancer, actor, a cineographer and a theatre designer. The artists and mentors worked alongside the young people during the project. Additionally, the project was attended by two peer motivators whose function was to motivate project participants who were of a similar age. This particular role was part of the wider summer arts project and was offered to all workshops taking place during this time.

### ***Timing***

The project entailed a two week workshop within a larger summer arts project. The group reconvened in December for two days in order to develop their work further.

## **Project D An interactive design project**

### ***Approach and content***

The project consisted of four different groups which met at different locations in order to make the project accessible to young people. Project content involved a number of areas within interactive design, including media software, electronics, video and web design. Emphasis was placed on allowing the young people to engage directly with objects of technology – to take them apart and rebuild them. After working through several workshops/mini-projects in different areas, including working with other artists, the participants focussed on their final project, with the guidance of their mentor. The four groups met up regularly over the course of the project, to present the work they had been doing, as well as to go on trips to various institutions. In one case this included a visit to Barcelona.

### ***Target group***

Each project comprised of four or five young people working with a mentor. Participants were between the ages of 17 and early twenties. The project decided to work with young people of this age because they are no longer classed as a young person, and therefore the range of services on offer to them shrinks.

The young people were selected on the basis that they were ‘at risk’. Generally speaking, they came to the project through an assisted housing project, which offers support to young people who are homeless. Some had learning difficulties that prevented them from succeeding in mainstream education, and some had left school with few qualifications. Some of them worked part time, and attended college on the other days and some were unemployed the rest of the time. Compared to the other projects in the evaluation, the target group here could be considered the most social excluded of the five projects.

### ***Staffing***

There was an overall project manager, who oversaw the four projects, then each project also had a mentor and a ‘newish’ artist/practitioner working in the area of interactive design who worked with the young people.

### ***Timing***

The initiative consisted of four projects based in West Sussex: Gatwick airport, Crawley, Brighton and Worthing. Each project met up for two days every week over an academic year.

## **Project E Creativity workshops and follow up projects**

### ***Approach and content***

During two residential creativity labs young people were involved in a range of activities for example, brainstorming sessions, drama, dance, animation. Beyond the labs, the young people were awarded £1600 to continue with creative projects within their own time (building a racing car, making a pin ball machine, animation models). They were assigned a mentor to work with, who was additionally supported by staff at NESTA and the young people fed back on their progress to NESTA at regular intervals.

### ***Target group***

Initially recruited through a ‘creativity workshop’ at their schools, young people were then selected for involvement in the project. The young people interviewed for the research were from a mix of backgrounds, although the schools they attended were in quite deprived neighbourhoods. Participants ranged in age from 10–14 years.

### ***Staffing***

The project was staffed by a programme coordinator and mentors (who in some cases were also teachers at the childrens’ schools). The mentors would support the young people in working on their projects.

### ***Timing***

After the creativity workshop, the young people then attended two residential weekend workshops.



## 5.2 Data collection

Interviews were requested with young people and staff at the five projects and where appropriate, teachers and parents. In total 44 interviews were conducted and the sample comprised of:

- 20 young people (as project participants)
- 14 project staff
- 3 teachers
- 7 parents.

Young people, when interviewed, were asked to talk about what they had gained from the experience; what they had learnt; what they had enjoyed most; and what was it about the project that had really motivated them/inspired them. These questions were intended to find out whether their creativity had been stimulated and what had perhaps contributed to this impact.

Staff, parent and teacher interviews were undertaken to corroborate the impacts reported by the young people and also to gain their views on what aspects of the projects were responsible for developing participants' creativity.

## 5.3 Backgrounds of the target groups

The preceding tables provided a broad outline of the five projects and their target groups. To help set the scene further, it is necessary to summarise here the different ways in which the young people could be regarded as socially excluded. In addition, pre-existing expressions of creativity (e.g. through their hobbies, past times, etc) are also highlighted.

### 5.3.1 Types of social exclusion

Taking first the dimension of social exclusion, it was apparent that across the sample the type and degree of social exclusion were seen to vary considerably. At one end of the spectrum were young people attending Project D (interactive design), whose intake included participants who were homeless, suffering from mental health problems, drug abuse or had an history of offending behaviour. Thus, these young people were experiencing significant issues which prevented them from participating fully in society or from reaching their full potential.

A less obvious brand of social exclusion was found amongst participants at Project A (comic drawing workshops). Most would not be regarded as socially excluded in the traditional sense – often they were either employed or in some sector of education. However, their interest in the comic world was seen to contribute to a sense of cultural alienation. As an artform, it was said that comic drawing can be overlooked and underappreciated. Furthermore, the employment opportunities in this field are somewhat limited. Thus, the project sought to offer an outlet for participants' creative energies and to provide a setting in which they could meet with others, network and develop their skills to enhance their employment prospects.

Project B (individual creative projects) worked predominately with young people who were, in various ways, struggling to achieve their full potential in mainstream education, either they had been excluded from school, were non-attenders or were under-performing academically:

*They're young people who, for one reason or another, whether it's an unsupportive family background, or they don't get on at school, have not realised their potential in the formal education system. They're all creative young people, they all have creative potential, but that potential isn't being realised through the formal educational channels. And so this project offers them a less formal set of circumstances in which they might begin to do that.*

Then, there were young people who, although engaging well with education, resided in an area with limited opportunities to pursue their creative interests. Specifically, the girls attending Project C (digital media) came from a school located in an area which received the lowest Ofsted rating in terms of socio-economic status. Thus, a project staff member commented:

*They are articulate young women who have an idea of what they want to do in the future but in terms of access and provision, they are unlikely to be the kind of people who would be able to get near it.*

### 5.3.2 Creativity

At the beginning of the interviews young people were asked about their hobbies, interests and whether they had done anything creative in the past. Taking the group as a whole, it must be said that most reported involvement in activities which included opportunities for creativity. Young people mentioned interests in the following areas:

- drawing
- composing music
- drama
- creative writing
- singing
- playing a musical instrument
- constructing models
- dance
- playwriting.

Thus, the five projects were not necessarily working with young people who could be regarded as ‘blank slates’, devoid of creative experiences. Rather they represent a group of young people who appeared to be open to creativity and perhaps for that reason were attracted to, or selected for the projects.

The following chapters will now discuss the two central research questions, drawing on interview data collected during the case-study programme.

# 6 What stimulates creativity amongst socially excluded young people: evidence from NESTA projects

## Introduction

Having examined the factors that were attributed to stimulating creativity within the relevant literature in chapter 3, this chapter considers the same question in relation to primary data collected from five NESTA projects.

First of all, section 6.1 will explore the interview data in order to discover the types of creativity outcomes that were reported for the projects.

Section 6.2 will then turn to the central research question: What stimulates creativity amongst socially excluded young people?

Finally, section 6.3 will look at the potential barriers to creativity, as highlighted in the interview data, and factors that one might wish to consider in designing a project for socially excluded young people.

## 6.1 Reports of creativity outcomes

Increased creativity, in various forms, was an outcome across all five NESTA projects visited in the course of the research and was described variously by the young people themselves, their parents and also staff at the projects. They spoke of creative outcomes in terms of:

- having new ideas
- feeling more creative and imaginative
- being more willing to take risks
- being more involved in creative activities after the projects
- increased awareness of ‘creative worlds’
- seeing themselves as creative individuals.

Further details on these outcomes and more are provided below.

## 6.1.1 Young peoples' experiences

Participants from all projects reported having had **new ideas, feeling more creative and imaginative** since being involved and were also **more willing to take risks** or try new things. The young people also described having discovered their creativity; this was particularly the case for those who were involved in Project E (creativity workshops). These children were younger than the participants involved in the other four projects and the project had been a voyage of discovery for them as they had never previously considered themselves to be 'creative'. Becoming aware of creativity was not an outcome that applied only to the younger interviewees: one young person involved in Project C (digital media) also described a new awareness of his/her creativity: 'I thought outside the box – I didn't realise how much I did it'. Further creativity outcomes reported by the young people included being more involved in creative activities outside the project time and noticing an increase in creativity in other areas – this was also an outcome that applied particularly to the younger children who saw a difference in their technology and art and design lessons at school.

## 6.1.2 Views of staff

The various staff members involved in the five projects, including mentors and artists, also reported creative outcomes for the young participants. These tended to confirm those already highlighted by the young people, including noting new or more ideas and more confidence in the validity of these ideas, as well as an increase in risk-taking, experimenting and making mistakes. Increases in creativity and developments in creative expression were also identified by staff across the five projects. As with the young people, some staff members noted a change in the young people's perception of creativity and what it is: for example, that it can be about new technologies, as well as drawing or painting. Similarly, staff members also described a change in the young people's perception of themselves as creative individuals. One area of creativity in which mentors noticed a difference in the young people involved in Project D (interactive design) was a change in their relationship with the world. The mentor describes the young people **seeing new possibilities in raw materials and increases in their imaginations**, especially with regards to technology and ways in which it can be modified and adapted. A further creativity outcome discussed by staff in two projects with a more apprenticeship-like approach (Project A, comic drawing workshops and Project D, interactive design) was young people having the structures and knowl-

edge to take an idea from its raw form to finished product – being equipped for the challenge of creative work.

### 6.1.3 Parents' observations

Parents were interviewed only in the case of Project E (creativity workshops), in which the participating young people were younger (key stage 2 and key stage 3) than in the other projects visited. Parents mainly noted outcomes to do with **enjoyment, new skills and knowledge and increased confidence**. The parents of one young person, however, had noticed that their daughter's eyes had been opened to new creative worlds – she had told them about new ideas particularly in the area of film-making – and they felt she was using her imagination more than she had previously.

## 6.2 What works in stimulating creativity? Assessing the evidence

This section explores the interview data in order to determine the factors that emerged as potentially enabling the development of creativity amongst socially excluded young people. For the most part, the factors will be examined within the typology that was developed in Chapter 3 of this report, since many of the interviewees comments aligned with the salient points made in the literature. However, some new factors surfaced from the interview data and these will be highlighted where appropriate.

### 6.2.1 Authenticity

As was highlighted in the literature, 'authenticity' or relevance appeared to be an important factor in stimulating or aiding the development of creativity amongst participants in all NESTA-funded projects. This factor related both to the authenticity of the task and the authenticity of those imparting their creative knowledge.

In terms of the **authenticity of the task**, one staff member discussed 'tapping into things they recognise as valuable or important in their own lives, or cultural issues that make sense to them' (staff member, Project C). The example below, from a different project, illustrates how it is possible to gear the focus towards young people's interests in order to engage them in the activity.

### *The authenticity of the task*

The importance of working on tasks that the young people could relate to was apparent at one project where a number of topics had been covered. The topic relating to music, with which every young person had a relationship of some kind, had been successful, whereas the topic of coffee had worked less well. (Project D, interactive design). A mentor on this project attributed increases in young people's creativity partly to the authenticity of the media they were working with: 'we're talking about interactive installations and gaming and it's totally new and it's all around them with video games, television, technology, cell-phones. It's something that's in their reality. It's not like painting or sculpture, which aren't necessarily in their reality.' The project coordinator for this project similarly linked some of its success to the fact that it allowed the young people to engage directly with objects of technology, to take them apart, modify them and put them back together: giving them control of technology that they were familiar with. That technology was a lot closer to young people's experience was a facilitating aspect also commented on for another project (Project C, digital media).

The [authenticity of the creative practitioner](#) was also described as an important factor in generating creative outcomes for the young people. An artist/mentor at a project where young people were working individually with one artist in particular, related the value of engaging an artist that the young people would 'respect'. The project coordinator for this programme described the preparatory work and the 'matchmaking' that occurred prior to the programme where a great deal of thought was put into who the young person was, what would work for them, and what kind of artist would provide the most authentic experience especially in terms of culture and familiarity. For those projects involving the older age range (e.g. 16+), working with people who were creative professionals in their own right, and were therefore authentic, was also felt to have been a supporting factor in motivating creativity. Indeed, the authenticity of the professional experience was felt to be of particular benefit to those young people who might choose to pursue a creative profession of their own beyond the life-span of the project (Project A, comic drawing workshops and Project D, interactive design):

*This project has also been about putting these young people in touch with people that are actually working in industry. That's really important because often with these young people, they love creativity but they're also really keen to*

*prove themselves economically. So by connecting them with people that are doing this as a job, they can see the relevance.*

Project coordinator, Project D

## 6.2.2 Something different

As was discussed in Part 1: section 3.4, the literature highlighted the benefits of an element of the ‘new’ or ‘different’ for stimulating creativity amongst socially excluded groups. To some extent, this was also reflected in the interview data from the five NESTA projects visited for the research and fell into four categories:

- new or different artforms, media and technology
- a different learning experience
- a different space
- new people and places.

Staff members working with technology with participants noted the impact of developing a new relationship with the medium, ‘seeing things in a different light’ (Mentor, Project D). Indeed, access to [new or different artforms, media and technologies](#) was widely attributed with stimulating creativity by staff members and young participants alike. For the younger children involved in Project E (creativity workshops) animation sessions held on one of the weekend ‘creativity labs’ had been a revelation. All the young people interviewed cited this as their most motivating and stimulating experience of the project. For many of them this had been their first insight into animation and how it worked and it led them into pursuing their own animations outside the project.

Providing a [different learning experience](#) was also described as a facilitating factor in working with these groups of young people. An approach that was different to formal education, was flexible, informal and allowed the young people to work at their own pace without pressure, was felt by interviewees to be important in four of the five projects. Three quarters of the young people talked about the advantages to them of a ‘relaxed atmosphere’ (young person, Project D), ‘where you can be late without being in trouble’ (young person, Project A). That the project approach was ‘different from school’ was also appreciated. There were two aspects of this. One related to perceived restrictions on content at school, which were not present in the project environment:



*In school you are always fairly stifled because there is always some sort of curriculum that you have to definitely go by. You can't be as expressive because there is a set thing that you've got to complete in a set amount of time. However, with this we were allowed to explore a lot more, so I was able to mess around on computers and realise I wasn't a complete disaster and it was actually possible.*

Young person, Project C

The other related more to the supportive environment of the project:

*It's been completely different from normal college and I've learnt how to do so many different things on computers that I would never have bothered touching before. I've actually been given help, which I've never been given before at school or college, and having people actually being supportive instead of criticising every single thing I do.*

Young person, Project D

Staff members were very keen to use both a [different space](#) from school or college, and to provide a safe alternative approach for those (like the young person quoted above) who may have had a very difficult experience of formal education. One project coordinator stressed the importance of an awareness and sensitivity to each individual young person's personal circumstances, since they will all have different issues that will require a tailored approach or solution (Project C, digital media). An effective strategy was for the artists, mentors or other staff members to visit the spaces in which the young people spend their time (Project B, individual creative projects). Another was to develop a space that was theirs to use (Project C, digital media and Project D, interactive design). As well as the physical environment, staff were careful to create a supportive environment in which the young people felt it was okay to take risks, to think creatively and critically, and to question. That the young people felt relaxed and supported suggests that the approaches adopted in the projects had been successful in building an appropriate environment.

Another aspect of the new or different that was highlighted by the young people as a facilitating factor was [travel](#) which brought them into contact with [new people and new places](#). For all the younger children involved in Project E (creativity workshops), going away from their homes to attend the creativity workshops was a particularly motivating factor: 'Going on the trips, I think that's really good because I could be free and do what I wanted and really enjoy my freedom and be able to express my imagination' (Young person, Project E). Visiting galleries and museums

was also important to older participants, however. One young person described the inspiration for her own work that she had gained from visiting an exhibition in London (Project D, interactive design); another talked of an increased appreciation for architecture since a trip to Barcelona (Project D, interactive design); and another described excitement about a comic art exhibition in Bristol (Project A, comic drawing workshops). Meeting new people, both within the project and externally and sharing interests had been a positive experience for the younger children especially, but also those with special interests for example, comic art.

### 6.2.3 The significant other/mentor/mediator

As within the literature, the role of a ‘significant other’ emerged as an important factor in the development of young people’s creativity. Discussions covered:

- selecting the ‘right’ adults
- age difference
- allowing a relationship to develop
- the accessibility of the mentor.

Young people in all the projects talked about the importance of working with inspiring mentors or artists, of having a good relationship with them and feeling supported and encouraged by them. Staff members, including artists and mentors, talked at some length about the importance of selecting the ‘right’ adults to work on projects with socially excluded young people – for example, using staff who have previously worked with young people, are confident with the age group and able to communicate or connect with young people. It was especially important that they should be able to relate to socially excluded young people:

*You have to have a bit of ‘street nouse’ and the ability to empathise with the group or individual you’re working with. This is particularly the case with youngsters in this category, because they do need such a lot of support and encouragement and often their attention span isn’t very long. They need to be constantly brought back to the point in hand. So the artists themselves have often had to adopt mentoring roles as well*

Project supervisor, Project B

The [age difference](#) between the participant and the artist or mentor was another consideration for those setting up the projects. The project coordinator for Project D (interactive design) described that they had envisaged that the age

difference between the young people and mentors should not be too large. Consequently, they specifically targeted mentors who, although working professionally, had been doing so for perhaps only five years. Thus, they were at the early stages of their careers and equally open to learning new skills, trying out new things. Similarly, the project coordinator for Project C (digital media) remarked on the importance of the artist reflecting the kind of age and experience of the target group, and to some extent the different cultural backgrounds and ethnicities of the young people they were trying to reach.

Through [working with artists and mentors as peers](#), the young people were able to identify with, respect and feel inspired by them. This [allowed a relationship to develop](#) between the creative practitioner and the young person. The significance of this relationship is described by one project staff member thus:

*I think the shining beacon of success in the project is really that facility of working in a very close and intensive relationship with creative people, and with people who find it very easy to demonstrate that they care about these youngsters and their progress and development and can offer them a positive framework within which to develop themselves*

Staff member, Project B

A further aspect of Project C (digital media), which artists and staff felt was beneficial for the young people, was having other people around who were not seen as a figure of authority, that the young people could speak to. However, the young people themselves did not consider this to be of benefit to them since the people who were chosen were not motivated or engaged with their project. In other projects, this role was adopted by the mentor and was successful.

For the younger children it was felt by the mentors involved in Project E (creativity workshops) that it was important to find a [mentor they could access with ease](#) (e.g. within their school), felt comfortable in approaching and who could keep them motivated. For these children, it was also important that communication was good with parents in order for them to be supported in their involvement in the project.

## 6.2.4 Exploring ideas

Across the five projects that were visited over the course of the research, the [freedom to explore ideas](#) was raised by many of the young participants. Both the time

and space to generate ideas and the freedom to do it, rather than follow someone else's plans was particularly valued. Staff members described the benefits of [pushing boundaries and encouraging experimentation](#) for young people's creativity, especially in terms of exploring the performance in Project C (digital media), but also in Project A (comic drawing workshops) and Project D (interactive design).

The younger children involved in Project E expressed the benefits of exploring ideas slightly differently from the older participants. They described the excitement and stimulation they felt in [developing their imaginations](#) through various story-telling, animation and building workshops.

### 6.2.5 Working with others

As the review of the literature on stimulating creativity showed in Part 1, section 3.4, working with others was felt to have assisted in the development and exploration of creativity in all five projects. As well as the benefits of working with a creative professional, there were benefits to the young people of working with their peers. This section will discuss the benefits of the following factors:

- working together or individually
- networking
- autonomy.

#### Working together or individually

Mentors, artists and staff members stressed the importance of a [collaborative approach](#) between them and the young people and building a culture of mutual support, in which respect was shown for young people's ideas from their peers, as well as from the adults involved. Project C (digital media), which relied very heavily on group work, had set very clear ground rules regarding interactions and this was felt to have enabled the sharing of ideas and the group-work. It was also felt that a collaborative approach could help the creative professional to [model expertise](#) such that the young people could learn more about the creative process:

*They're not at the point where they can go 'Oh that could be this project', but in a collaborative environment like we've created, I think they're able to do it. Once he's been through the process once, he's continuing to come up with ideas.*

Mentor, Project D

On the question of whether working in groups could potentially stifle creativity, the interview data was not conclusive. In Project B (individual creative projects), young people worked individually with the support of a mentor and without contact with other young people. The young person who was interviewed from this project described having been *motivated by working individually and prioritising her own interests*. In Project C (digital media), the young people worked very much in a group, and talked about creativity in a group sense (i.e. ‘We’d make something up’ ‘our ideas’). It did not appear to be the case that, for this group, working together had had a negative impact on their creativity – their creative outcomes were as numerous and comprehensive as other young people’s, although it should be noted that nothing can be concluded about the degree of intensity of the impact. Rather, *sharing ideas and creating something together* appeared to have been a very motivating factor:

*Bouncing off each others’ ideas made me want to do more and say more because sometimes you think ‘better not say it’ but because everyone else is thinking exactly the same way and appreciating it and making it into something, it motivated me into wanting to do it and say more.*

Young person, Project C

It should be noted, however, that the individuals working on Project C had all been friends previous to the project and consequently: ‘We feel more comfortable with each other and therefore can express our ideas more freely’ (Young person, Project C). Thus, while working together did not have an inhibiting effect on creativity in this case, it may be that the creative impact of the project may not have been as great had they not known one another prior to the project.

The other three projects were unified by *a small group-work approach*, one singled out in the literature as being of particular benefit to socially excluded young people (Part 1, section 3.4.6). A mentor on Project D (interactive design) highlighted the benefits of small groups, which allow the creative professional to work more intensively with the young people than a larger group. This means that there can be more one-to-one or individual work with the advantage that small groups still allow the young people to share ideas and critique one another’s ideas in a non-judgemental way. For socially excluded young people, small groups may help them to feel comfortable expressing themselves once trust has been developed.

## Networking

Although not explicitly discussed in the literature, a further factor that was felt by staff members to have played a facilitating role in enabling the development of creativity was that of networking: [making contacts, networking with other young people and with professionals](#). In the case of Project B (individual creative projects), this led young people into possible future collaborations: ‘It has given her an arena within which to operate and a series of contacts and networks.’ (Artist, Project B). In Project A (comic drawing workshops), the young people met a number of other young artists that shared their special interest, which would help them in any future undertaking in the field. The project coordinator for Project D (interactive design) noted the importance of networking for the future prospects of socially excluded young people:

*This project has also been about putting these young people in touch with people that are actually working in industry. That’s really important because often with these young people, they love creativity but they’re also really keen to prove themselves economically. So by connecting them with people that are doing this as a job, they can see the relevance.*

Project coordinator, Project D

The young people themselves also talked about meeting other creative professionals and young people as being particularly important in maintaining motivation for their creative work, as well as stimulating ideas.

## Autonomy

In working together with others (both creative professionals and other young people), ensuring that young people had some autonomy over their ideas emerged as a theme in facilitating programmes that aimed to develop creativity. This was touched on in the literature (see section 3.4.3), though not widely represented. In the interview data, young people appreciated being guided, but not being told what to do. Young people in all projects spoke of the value of being able to ‘do what you want’, set your own targets, being treated as an adult and feeling that your own ideas are valuable:

*It’s about making targets for yourself rather than someone else making targets [...] It’s helped me to focus on me and not what others want for me.*

Staff members expressed some hope that encouraging autonomy and independent work might allow the young people to work as professionals on their own (Project A, comic drawing workshops). One staff member noted a change in some of the young people ‘to realise that you get out of something what you put in, and you have to do the work yourself’.

## 6.2.6 Sustainability

Time was noted by interviewees in all projects to be an important factor in enabling the development of creativity. This pertained to the [timescale of the project](#) itself, as well as the [time needed to develop creativity](#).

Timescale was very much determined by the subject matter or the artform of the project. In projects that took place over an intensive period of time, it was felt that building in some flexibility to allow for spontaneity and the development of ideas was important (Project C, digital media). All of the young people involved in the projects that took place less intensively over a longer period of time felt that their project would have been improved by increasing the amount of contact time.

### *An intensive project*

Project C (digital media) was the only project that took place over an intensive period of time. In this case, the intensiveness of the project was vital to its creative development. Participants worked every day over a period of time towards a performance involving movement and digital media at the end. This timescale meant that a great deal of momentum built up towards the development of the performance. However, both the emerging artists and the project coordinator noted that it was essential to build into such a tight timeframe, an element of flexibility and spontaneity about the end product, such that the young people could fully explore their ideas and creativity could flourish.

In projects with less intensive timescales, project coordinators felt that time should be allowed for creativity to develop at its own pace.

In terms of longevity of creative outcomes or stimulating young people’s creativity for the longer term, project coordinators spoke about the importance of an [exit strategy](#). This was an essential element of those projects that had aims of supporting young people to develop into creative professionals (Projects A, comic

drawing workshops; B, individual creative projects; and D, interactive design). Similarly, getting creative practitioners on board who would be willing to [maintain links](#) with the young people beyond the life of the project, possibly for the subsequent two or three years was also a consideration for Project B (individual creative projects).

### 6.2.7 Tools/skills

One aspect of the five projects that was widely considered to have been influential in the stimulation of creativity, but was not discussed in the literature was access to tools and skills. The importance of providing young people with the tools (technology, equipment, resources) and skills for creativity was highlighted as a stimulus for the development of creativity in all five of the projects that were visited over the course of the research. Indeed the tools and skills appeared to be the foundation from which creativity could be developed. Staff members/artists/mentors described the benefits of giving young people the tools, showing them how to use them and then ‘standing back’ (Project C, digital media). Tools included new equipment such as computers, software, different media or art-forms and professional materials.

The types of skills that were discussed by interviewees included introducing the young people to professional ways of working. This was particularly highlighted in those projects where the young people were older (e.g. Projects A, comic drawing workshops; B, individual creative projects; and D, interactive design) and were perhaps thinking about entering a creative profession. Further skills included learning to ‘look under the bonnet’: encouraging the young people to perceive technological equipment in a new light and to seek out the possibilities (Project D, interactive design). Staff also described the young people learning how to develop an idea – a process that they may not have previously been through (Project D, interactive design and Project E, creativity workshops). Some artists saw their role in a project precisely as offering their specific skills to the young people. This was true of the comic book project where the comic book artists were working with the participants to produce professional-quality comic art.

### 6.2.8 Other factors

The following list illustrates other factors not mentioned above, which were identified by smaller numbers of interviewees as enabling the development of creativity among socially excluded young people.



- Exhibiting, displaying or sharing work: this gave a focus to creativity, something to work towards and built momentum.
- Praising the young people and boosting their self-esteem.
- Paying attention to the structure and delivery of the programme: creativity was felt to be best served by a balance of structured and unstructured work.
- Providing appropriate equipment and resources for the young people to use freely.
- Consider running the project like an apprenticeship for older participants.
- Using a selection process – this helps to enlist only those young people who are motivated and aids their investment in the project.
- Make the project accessible – ensure that young people are not having to travel great distances, be aware that they may not be confident entering large institutions and run small workshops in very accessible places.

## 6.3 Barriers to creativity amongst socially excluded young people

As well as the many factors that were thought to have stimulated creativity, interviewees also posited a number of potential barriers to creativity that may be faced by the target group under consideration. Examination of the interview data yielded a number of factors that were felt to hinder the development of creativity amongst socially excluded young people.

### 6.3.1 Views of young people

The youngest interviewees, involved in Project E, felt that there were no barriers to their creativity. This may indeed be the case, although at 10–11 years of age the young people may have found it hard to perceive the concept of barriers. For example, they may not yet have had enough life experience to realise that life could actually be different for them. Or, the young people may not comprehend that, compared to other 10–11 year olds, they experience certain disadvantages. Interviewees from the other four projects, however, were aware of barriers that were impeding their creativity. Two young people (both male) described the [influence of their peers](#) as hindering their involvement in creative activities: ‘They’re negative about most things that’s not the norm. If it’s not what they

wanna do, then it's not worth doing'. For a further three young people it was a [lack of resources](#) that hindered their abilities to pursue creative activities. A number of young people indicated that a [lack of time](#) was a factor, especially if they were still in full-time education. Finally, [access to information](#) appeared to be a barrier for the young people, they talked about not knowing how to access opportunities, not having access to information such as the internet and not being able to find creative opportunities or creative work.

### 6.3.2 Views of project staff

The following factors were noted by staff members to be potential barriers to creativity amongst socially excluded young people.

- The difficulty of chaotic lives – attendance is not always possible and organisational skills may be poor.
- Age of young people – depending on their age they may well have other things going on in their lives that can hamper their involvement in creativity.
- There may be a lack of support for the young people's involvement in the project from their home environment and creativity may not be valued in their home environment.
- Isolation – some young people do not have access to certain amenities or facilities in society or education and this can be a barrier to creativity.
- The young people may not have experienced a stable enough home environment to be able to explore their creativity.
- The young people may lack the confidence to do creative things, or in themselves physically and creatively.
- The motivation and/or engagement of the young people – this can prevent others (and themselves) from developing creativity when they are not motivated to learn.

## 6.4 Points to consider in designing a project for socially excluded young people

Bearing in mind some of the issues just raised, interviewees provided a number of factors that anyone embarking on the design of a creativity project with socially excluded young people might like to consider.

## **Project aims**

- In some cases it may be wise to accept a variable success rate given the problems that socially excluded young people face. It may also be appropriate to set individual goals that reflect the circumstances/ability/talents of each young person.

## **Managing group dynamics**

- The facilitator needs to be aware of the power structures within the group.
- Socially excluded young people can be transient and may not be able to stay in contact beyond project. Projects should perhaps consider opportunities for extending contact between participants once the project has ceased.

## **Approach to working with young people**

- Making young people work too much on their own can hinder the development of creativity. There should be good support in place.
- Ensure that young people are praised and given encouragement along their creative journey.
- Lack of flexibility – make sure that there is flexibility in terms of structure and in dealings with young people.
- Avoid being too technical, as this can make young people lose interest.

## **Liaison with other agencies**

- There may be a number of other agencies involved in the young people's lives and it is important to be aware of them and be aware that the project has to sit alongside other things.
- For those young people who might still be engaged in formal education, it is important to ensure the support of educational establishments. This may assist the young people's involvement, either through allowing time for them to engage in projects or supporting them in school, in their creative pursuits. Additional good links with educational establishments were thought to perhaps promote the idea of re-entering formal education to socially excluded young people.

## Timing and resources

- Give thought to the timing and duration of a project – a programme should not be too short or too long or too many days a week.
- The project must be sustainable – consider building in an exit strategy to support the young people beyond the timescale of the project.
- Ensure that the project has access to sufficient finances, tools and space.

## 6.5 Summary

This chapter explored the interview data from NESTA funded projects in order to establish what impact they had on creativity, what was felt to generate these impacts and what might pose as potential barriers to the development of creativity amongst socially excluded young people.

Interviewees reported that young people's creativity was enhanced in all five projects. Young people commented that they had more ideas and felt more creative and imaginative. Staff members noted similar impacts, with the addition of recognising a change in young people's relationship with the world: through involvement in the project they were starting to see things such as technology in terms of its creative potential.

On the question of what stimulates creativity among socially excluded young people, a number of factors were highlighted. These corresponded with those identified in the literature review (see Chapter 3) with the addition of a new category – 'tools and skills'.

Factors which appeared to be particularly instrumental (based on interviewee's accounts) included the authenticity of the task; young people's creativity was more likely to be stimulated when they perceived that the task they were engaged in was of relevance to them and aligned with their experience of the world. Similarly, the authenticity of the creative practitioner was an important factor, especially an artist or mentor who was already working as a creative professional.

The factor 'working with others' comprised a variety of styles, sometimes opposing, which were linked to the development of young people's creativity. For example, there was evidence that working in small groups was particularly effective.

tive in allowing the young people to share their ideas and receive feedback, but at the same time, value was seen in working individually and on a one-to-one basis with the artist or mentor. Similarly, allowing young people autonomy and control over their work were cited as conditions which gave them the freedom to explore their creative ideas.

It should be noted that the role of autonomy did not feature highly in the literature review. Other factors that were found to be efficacious in stimulating creativity, but were not discussed at any length in the literature, included networking (providing young people with a range of contacts in the professional world) and providing young people with tools and new skills.

A number of potential barriers to creativity were posited, including socially excluded young people's often unstable home lives and difficulties they face in accessing information. In addition, this chapter raised a number of factors that anyone wishing to run a project for this group of young people may wish to consider, including ensuring that the young people that are recruited are motivated and the group is manageable, as well as recommendations relating to the timescale (e.g. deciding on the appropriate length) and structure of a project.

## 7 Impact on social exclusion: evidence from NESTA projects

### Introduction

This section explores the interview data in order to determine the relationship between creativity and social exclusion/inclusion.

Firstly, section 7.1 examines the interview data in order to establish:

- does the young people's social exclusion have an impact on their creativity or their creative potential?

Section 7.2 then discusses the impacts of the projects on the young people's social exclusion in terms of:

- the range of impacts that could be indicative of improved social inclusion
- realms of social inclusion in which these impacts might be felt (e.g. education, employment, creativity and cultural fields)
- are there any direct correlations between enhanced creativity and reduced social exclusion?

### 7.1 The impact of social exclusion on young people's creativity or their creative potential

According to Chapter 5 many of the young people were already engaged in creative or artistic activity, or at least, had some creative or artistic interests.

The interview data suggested however, that the young people's social exclusion might be impacting on whether that creative potential could be fully realised. Indeed, in addition to the barriers to creativity discussed in Chapter 6, the young people's social exclusion also represented a barrier to creativity. The following areas were identified by project staff.

- Young people's regular attendance at projects was not always possible (project staff described young people's 'chaotic lives' or noted that their organisational skills may be poor):

*If you are dealing with issues of social exclusion there are so many unknown factors in young peoples' lives which make it very difficult for them to even arrive, to feel safe about coming to an unknown venue and to keep to a timetable, to maintain commitment.*

Teacher, Project C

- Lack of support for what the young people are doing from home/parents (e.g. alcoholic parents), including instability in the home environment to be able to explore or be creative, and creativity not valued in the home environment.
- Lack of access to amenities or creative facilities in the community, or in education (formal and informal/lifelong learning).
- Lack of awareness of opportunities – a number of young people had not known that projects like these existed. Some found out about the projects by chance, through friends; although others were 'targeted' or referred in some way.

Having said that, many of the young people were described by project staff as 'incredibly talented'. On one project in particular, the very nature of the young people's creative interest and specialised skill had led somewhat to their employment exclusion – in a field (cartooning) that was deemed difficult to get into. Thus here, as elsewhere, the transferability of the creative skills being developed was also an important element of the programme.

Some of the older teenagers participating in the research also appeared somewhat resilient or resourceful in balancing their 'chaotic' lives. Here, project staff noted that a number of other agencies might be involved in the young people's lives, and acknowledged the importance of letting projects and programmes sit alongside other aspects in the young people's lives.

## **7.2 The impact of creativity projects on social exclusion**

The research then sought to identify whether the projects had impacted on young people's social exclusion.

Responses to the following range of questions are explored in this section, in terms of the types of impacts that could be seen as indicative of improved social inclusion, and any direct correlations made between enhanced creativity and reduced social exclusion.

**Adult interviewees (project staff, creative professionals, mentors and teachers) were asked:**

- *What do you feel has been the main impact of the project on the young people?*
- *Do you have any evidence that increased creativity amongst socially excluded young people has any impact on their social exclusion?*
- Researchers checked for any impacts on the young people learning new skills, finding out about jobs, their attitudes to education, future aspirations, relationships with peers, and relationships with adults.

**Young people were asked:**

- *What has been the main impact of this project for you?*
- *What other impacts have you noticed?*
- *What do you think you've gained from it? What have you learnt?*
- *Would you say it has changed you as a person?*
- *Has it affected how you ... are at school, with friends, with teachers, with your parents or family; think about your future, college, work?*

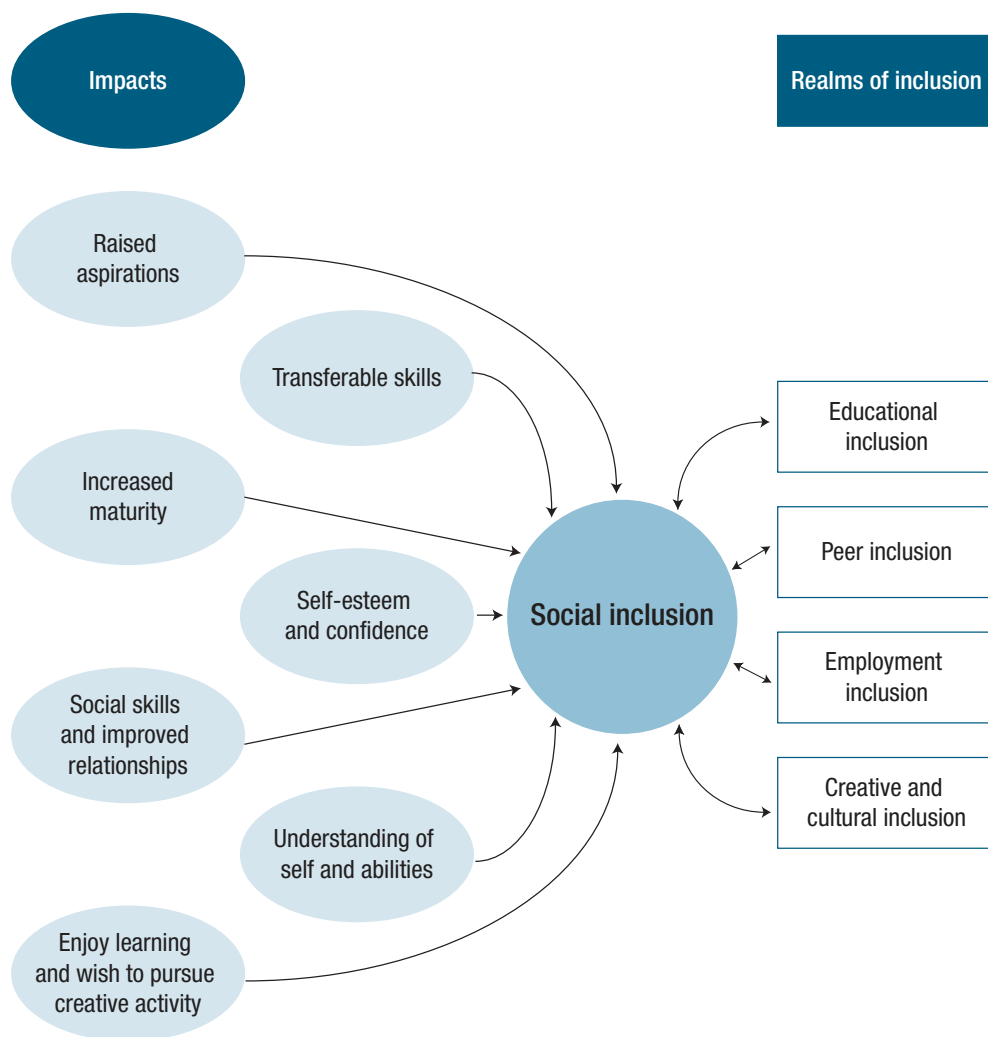
It was evident from the interviews, however, that the young people were unlikely to see themselves as excluded or disadvantaged (although a number did note problematic areas in their lives), and that a number of adult interviewees found it difficult to frame their views within the terminology of social exclusion. Having said that, a range of impacts were discussed which could be taken as indicative of improved social inclusion. And indeed, there were three arenas in particular where increased inclusion seemed to be evident – education and learning, employment prospects or aspirations, and creative and cultural inclusion. Figure 7.1 shows the types of impacts identified and the realms of inclusion where these impacts might be manifest.

## **7.2.1 The range of impacts relating to improved social inclusion**

As shown in Figure 7.1, impacts in the following fields were identified in the interview data.



**Figure 7.1 Social inclusion diagram**



### **Raised aspirations**

Just over half of the young people spoke about raised aspirations for their lives now and for their futures. For one or two young people, this was expressed as a real sense of new hope:

*It gave me somewhere I can come to be creative, instead of sitting there feeling like it's all falling down on me.*

Young person, male, Project D

*I don't want to go backwards again, because it's just going back into the same circle and I don't want that. I want to progress, and not go backwards. Ten steps forwards and then backwards, it's not good enough.*

Young person, male, Project A

They also noted their widened horizons in relation to the creative activity in which they were involved:

*Well, it's definitely broadened my look at the whole industry of comic books. I never knew that comic books were this big before. I'm quite young, and I was thinking that comic books weren't that big any more – you know, it's more like computer games, cartoons, TV.*

Young person, male, Project A

*Because I'd never really done drama before, I'd never thought about how to do things alternatively. They sort of put a whole new light on it ... I never really thought how to take a new spin on these things before and that helps us when we're devising it as well. Just sort of looking outside the box, rather than just taking it how it is.*

Young person, girl, Project C

Staff also mentioned the impacts on the youngsters' widened vision – 'in things that are outside themselves, looking at the wider world, seeing whether you can fit a round peg into a square hole' (project staff, Project A). Staff from one project in particular (Project C, digital media) espoused the career-aspirational impacts for the young people, all girls, involved. This was deemed important for these girls in an area where young people's desire to achieve or to aspire to a career appeared to be poor:

*So rather than leave school, get a job, get married, have kids which is very much the mentality around this area, they are now much more inspired in terms of getting a careers, whether it be in the arts or not.*

Teacher, Project C

## **Self-esteem and self-worth**

From all the young people across the projects, there was unanimous pleasure expressed at having taken part and a general sense of enhanced self-esteem in the immediate term. The youngest children involved in the research (Project E, cre-

activity workshops) spoke in particular about feeling happier, friendlier and more confident as a result of taking part in the project. Parents of these young people had also noticed they were more confident and ‘outgoing’. Staff noted impacts for the young people in terms of feelings of self-worth, the sense that they ‘matter’, and that they have a valuable contribution to make in whatever situation they find themselves.

## **Understanding yourself and confidence in your abilities**

Related to impacts such as raised self-esteem and confidence, were effects about understanding yourself and your abilities better. This was particularly the case in programmes aimed at older teenagers, rather than the younger children. For some of these young people, knowing more about themselves led to anticipated longer-term impacts in terms of their contribution to society: ... to become a youth worker, ‘to give back to the community’ (young person, Project C); ‘I want to be a mentor, to give something back, to help people find out what they want to do’ (young person, Project B).

In addition, as a result of feeling more confident of their abilities or realising your talents, one or two of the young people felt they would be more willing to try new things: ‘I am willing to try new things now, like going in with my eyes wide shut!’ (young person, Project A).

Staff described these kinds of impacts in terms of gaining a sense of identity, recognising strengths and weaknesses, discovering what you can do and ‘empowerment’. Confidence in their talents and abilities was emphasised by staff as an important outcome for young people engaged in ‘minority’ art forms, such as comic art, where youngsters might not previously have received praise for their talents, and perhaps themselves undervalued their capabilities.

## **Maturity**

Greater maturity was an impact amongst older teenagers on the projects involved in the research. They noted changed behaviours such as: taking more responsibility for their actions – instead of ‘messing around’ as they might previously have done; being more open-minded; and feeling more rounded as a person. Project staff also noted these changed behaviours – again, in the projects aimed at older teenagers (Project A and Project D).

## Social skills and relationships

There were numerous references from the young people to improved social skills and relationships with peers, such as making new friends, relating better to their peers, and mixing with and meeting new people – both of similar age and interest, and ‘different’ people. Staff too, noted these impacts:

*They’ve found people of like minds and the same interest, and they’re able to talk about things that they wouldn’t necessarily be able to talk about with their other friends because they could be laughed at maybe.*

Project staff, Project A

The style of relationship between the young people and the professionals and other adults involved in the projects seemed new to some of the young people. For example, the girls in Project C (digital media) described it as ‘informal’, ‘they relate to us in an informal studenty way’, and they saw it as ‘different to school’. However, at the time of interview, these new ways of relating to adults did not seem to have impacted elsewhere for these young people – on the whole they did not report changed relationships or enhanced skills in relating to teachers or other adults. On the other hand, children involved in the programme aimed at the younger age group, reported impacts on their relationship with their family – spending more time with members of their family, going out to places and doing more things together. This was also noted by some of their parents.

Across four of the projects (Project A, Project C, Project B and Project D) staff emphasised that the young people had gained social confidence – coming out of their shells and confidence in meeting new people.

## Transferable skills

A number of arenas in which the young people seemed to have gained skills, were cited as ‘transferable skills’ by staff – or recognised as ‘new skills’, ‘life skills’ or ‘job skills’ by the young people. These included:

- **Communication skills** – staff from two of the projects noted particular gains in the young people’s linguistic skills, listening skills, their ability to question and listen, and to be inquisitive (Project D and Project C).
- **Ability and confidence to express your own ideas** (particularly in Project C):  
*... there’s always some sort of inhibition about what you’re going to say, is going to sound silly, but in the group through the different workshops and the*

*ideas we gave out, it's given, at least me, I can't speak for everybody else, the ability to speak out and not be afraid and not feel like an idiot. I've noticed that X spoke out a lot more, so has Y, so it's almost as though we feel more comfortable with each other and therefore can express our ideas more freely.*

Young person, female, Project C

- **Teamwork skills** – although the young people themselves noted that they had got on well with other young people on their projects, they did not really give testimony to having gained teamwork or group-work skills. On the other hand, staff from two of the projects (Project D and Project C) noted impacts in terms of the particular team roles that the young people had learnt to take – e.g. leadership roles.
- **Self-presentation skills** – noted by project staff on one project (Project D, interactive design) in terms of how the young people presented themselves.

### **Enjoy learning and desire to pursue creative activity**

The final category noted here was the young people's renewed enjoyment of learning, particularly for some of the older participants; and for all of them, the desire to pursue some sort of creative activity.

*It's the first time I've wanted to learn ... the last time I felt that was on the project, but I never felt that at school.*

Young person, female, Project B

Interviewer: *Do you think it makes any difference to how they view education and learning?*

*I would hope so. Quite a few of them are in education at the moment. It probably gives them more of a positive idea about further education, because I sort of see this as an adult learning course of some form, and I think it probably gives them the confidence to go on and do other courses if they feel they need to, and apply for other courses ... And also they are all enjoying it, so they see that it is fun to learn when you're enthusiastic about what you're doing.*

Project staff, Project A

This renewed or new enthusiasm for creative pursuits led many of the young people to think about their futures – both in the immediate term and longer-term career ideas. For example, taking part in the projects had helped some of the young people decide to go to college, or to undertake a particular course; and for

others it had given them the desire to ‘do something in multimedia or interactive installations’, or to have the confidence and know-how to continue with their creative pursuit.

For the most part, these young people’s enthusiasms seemed a result of excitement in the moment (particularly for the younger age groups involved in the research), or a drip-feed or slower realisation of their abilities (e.g. minority art forms, Project A). However, for some individuals, the sense of ‘new light’ was palpable in the way they compared their achievements on the project with previous experiences and patterns of behaviour: ‘Before I came here, I didn’t have a clue what I wanted to do’; ‘if I hadn’t done the project, I wouldn’t know what I would be doing now’.

**7.2.2 Realms of social inclusion**

As shown in Figure 7.1, there were four arenas in which the above ‘social inclusion impacts’ seemed to manifest themselves:

- educational inclusion
- employment inclusion
- creative and cultural inclusion
- peer inclusion.

These realms of social inclusion were evident to varying degrees across the projects and for individuals. Four examples are illustrated below.

Project E	Realms of inclusion for the group (creativity workshops)
Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• enthusiastic about learning</li></ul>	For the young people involved in Project E (creativity workshops), their inclusion seemed to be impacted chiefly in creative and cultural realms. They talked about new ideas for hobbies and creative activities they would like to pursue.  They also seemed energetic and enthusiastic about learning at school, and some attested to a greater acceptance amongst their peers of their talents.  Whilst employment was a long way off for these younger children, they were keen to share ideas for jobs that they would like to do.
Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ideas for jobs</li></ul>	
Creative and cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ideas for hobbies</li><li>• things to do with family</li><li>• pursue creative activity</li></ul>	
Peer <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• things to talk about with friends at school</li></ul>	

### Project C (digital media)

Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning different to school</li> <li>• teamwork, express ideas</li> </ul>
Employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ideas for jobs</li> <li>• want to give something back</li> </ul>
Creative and cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• things to pursue as hobby, study or career</li> </ul>
Peer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social confidence through sharing their expressive skills</li> </ul>

### Realms of inclusion for the group

Enhanced social inclusion for the girls involved in Project C (digital media) was equally evident across the four realms. They felt a new sense of enthusiasm for learning, were treated as adults, and enjoyed the informal learning situation. They talked about their ideas for jobs and study, and wanting to give something back to the community (e.g. go into youth work). Their creative and cultural inclusion seemed equally enhanced, due to new expressive skills and being able to share these with friends facilitated their peer inclusion.

### Project B (individual creative projects)

Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new enjoyment of and maturity about learning</li> <li>• gained entry to college course in sound engineering</li> </ul>
Employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• want to give something back, become a mentor</li> </ul>
Creative and cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• realisation of her talents</li> <li>• enjoying pursuing talents in cultural scene</li> </ul>

### Realms of inclusion – individual journey

One young person's individual journey revealed greater inclusion in the educational realm than she had previously experienced or thought possible.

As a result of the creative programme, she had taken the decision to go to FE college, and had started a sound engineering course.

She had also become more confident in her own creative abilities, and was beginning to *shine* in the cultural scene in the locality, of which she had not previously felt a part.

**Project A  
(comic drawing workshops)**

**Realms of inclusion – overall group journey**

Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning can be fun</li> </ul>
Employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the know-how to get a job in the field</li> <li>• specific artistic skills for a job in the field</li> <li>• transferable skills</li> </ul>
Creative and cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confidence in their creative abilities</li> </ul>
Peer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting people of like minds and interests</li> </ul>

At Project A (comic drawing workshops), the young people's inclusion seemed to be most improved (or have the potential to be most improved) in the area of employment. A number of young people from a previous programme had gained voluntary posts. The programme was described by staff as 'vocational', and the young people themselves felt they were much more aware of how to get jobs in this field and the specific skills they would need to develop. Staff were also aware that they had developed transferable skills – social and artistic, which could help with jobs in many fields, although the young people were less aware of this aspect of their development.

Creative and cultural inclusion was also apparent, through the young people having a greater confidence in their abilities. Finally, having met others with like minds and interests the young people experienced a sense of peer inclusion.

### 7.2.3 Does enhanced creativity make an impact on participants' levels of social exclusion?

Whilst the impacts shown in Figure 7.1 and discussed in 7.2.1 were generated by the creative programmes in which the young people took part, it is difficult to say to what extent these were related to creative outcomes or enhanced creativity. Direct correlations between creative impacts and effects on social exclusion were difficult to tease out from the data.

Indeed, in general, pathways to social inclusion appeared to be related to having undertaken creative pursuits, a creative process, or having worked in a particular way, rather than creative outcomes *per se*. Examples of how these impacts on social inclusion might have come about, and mentioned by interviewees, included:

- enjoying and engaging with the creative activity and learning
- seeing 'learning' in a new light
- feeling valued



- ownership of the process and the product, a sense of autonomy and control
- using your own ideas
- mentoring, one-to-one learning
- being treated as adults.

## 7.3 Summary

In this chapter, the relationship between creativity and social exclusion/inclusion in the NESTA projects has been explored.

Adult interviewees felt that young people's 'chaotic lives' represented a barrier to their creativity in terms of their access to creative opportunities. That said, many of the young people were described by project staff as 'incredibly talented' and 'creative' – although this in itself might contribute towards their exclusion, particularly where the young people's creative interest was seen as alternative to traditional arenas, or was in a specialist employment area.

A range of impacts were identified as having the potential to contribute to improving social inclusion. These were: raised aspirations; improved self-esteem and self-worth; understanding yourself better and confidence in your abilities; greater maturity; improved social skills and better relationships; transferable skills such as communication and teamwork skills; and enjoying learning and a desire to pursue creative activity.

These outcomes contributed to young people's social inclusion in four arenas: educational inclusion, employment inclusion, peer inclusion and creative and cultural inclusion – evident to varying degrees across the projects and for individuals. To what extent 'creativity' contributed to these arenas, however, was difficult to tease out from the data. Certainly these impacts were generated through participation in the creative programmes under investigation. But to what extent creative *outcomes* or creative *processes* were the pathway to social inclusion was hard to pinpoint.

What was evident, however, was the combination of effective features across all the projects which seemed to suit the needs of the intended target group. For example, participants responded well to the autonomy afforded by the projects – young people were given ownership over the process and products, were encouraged to use and express their own ideas, and were valued as creative individuals.

For many, these experiences represented new opportunities, and often ones which they contrasted to other educational, vocational or home-life environments. It is easy to see therefore how an emphasis on creativity, either as an outcome or a process, could in some way tackle the issues which contribute towards a young person's inclusion within society.

## 8 Conclusion

The report ends by drawing together the two strands of the evaluation to summarise key findings and to raise some implications for the development of NESTAs work.

### 8.1 Volume of relevant literature

This review suggests that amongst the existing literature, there has only been a limited exploration into what stimulates creativity amongst socially excluded young people and whether a boost to creativity can make any impression on their social exclusion.

For the first question to be answered, any research or evaluation would have to specifically set out to detect and measure creativity. Whilst there were examples of projects/programmes that employed the process of creativity to engage socially excluded young people, very few of these appeared to recognise creativity as an outcome in itself (or at least they did not set out to record and report it). Only when the time period for the review was extended did research of this nature come to light – there were a few empirical pieces of research conducted in the first half of the 1990's that directly set about to investigate the impact of training programmes on the creativity of socially excluded young people.

For the second question to be fully addressed (i.e. whether enhanced creativity can impact on social exclusion), it would be necessary for research/evaluation to monitor young people over an extended timescale to determine whether creativity can ultimately influence this aspect of their lives. Again, the literature review suggests that this has not happened. What we do find in the literature are inferences, (rather than explicit claims) with regards the outcome of creativity, factors which could contribute to its emergence, as well as its potential impact on social exclusion.

Let us now combine the insights obtained through the literature review with the findings of the case-study programme in order to respond to the two main research questions.

## 8.2 What stimulates creativity amongst socially excluded young people?

The literature review extrapolated seven factors which may be associated with the emergence of creativity. These factors were similarly identified by interviewees from the five case-study projects, although an eighth category was added to the list. The factors were:

- **Authenticity** – it appeared that themes, stimuli and creative activity worked successfully when they appeared to be relevant and meaningful to the young people. Also, where young people could respect the practitioner delivering the workshop or programme as a ‘real working artist’ it was felt that they engaged well. This factor emerged particularly strongly from the interview data.
- **Something different** – exposure to new ideas and concepts was particularly instrumental in provoking creative responses from young people. Use of new/different locations, learning styles and working with new people were also seen as helpful.
- **‘Significant other’** – someone in the role of a mentor/mediator was found to be beneficial for creativity because they could provide encouragement, support and model expertise for the young people to appropriate.
- **Exploring ideas** – the freedom to explore ideas and concepts was thought to facilitate creativity, because through this investigation, young people could begin to value their creativity and take ownership of their creative ideas. This sense of autonomy also features in the category ‘working with others’ below.
- **Challenge** – The aspect of ‘challenge’ appeared to be an important factor in developing creativity. Challenge took the form of taking risks, intellectual challenge, personal challenge and resourcefulness.
- **Working with others** – In the literature, working alongside others, including peers and adults, was felt to have assisted in the development and exploration of ideas. It was also found to have built up young people’s confidence in their creativity through the sharing of ideas. Further understanding of this factor was supplied by the case study programme. Here ‘working with others’ comprised a variety of styles (sometimes opposing) which were linked to the development of young people’s creativity. For example, there was evidence that working in small groups was particularly effective in allowing the young people to share their ideas and receive feedback, but at the same time, value

was seen in working individually and on a one-to-one basis with the artist or mentor. Similarly, allowing young people autonomy and control over their work were cited as conditions which gave them the freedom to explore their creative ideas.

- **Time** – One important factor in the development of creativity in socially excluded young people was ‘time’. This refers to time in terms of having enough time to develop creative ideas. Similarly, making time for reflection on ideas and allowing learning to embed were also found to be important for creativity.
- **Tools/skills** – Case-study interviews revealed an significant eighth factor, not covered by the literature. The importance of providing young people with the tools (technology, equipment, resources) and skills for creativity was highlighted as a stimulus for the development of creativity in all five of the projects. Indeed the tools and skills appeared to be the foundation from which creativity could be developed. Tools included new equipment such as computers, software, different media or artforms and professional materials. Whilst skills included introducing the young people to professional ways of working; encouraging the young people to develop technical skills and to seek out the possibilities and learning how to develop an idea.

### **8.3 Does increased creativity have any impact on social exclusion?**

The literature review found that there is general belief, supported by associative (but not correlative) evidence that involvement in creative activity can ameliorate social exclusion. For example, there were inferences in the literature that creativity and/or participation in creative pursuits can promote educational inclusion, improve employment prospects and heighten confidence, which in turn can lead to greater social inclusion. Very often though the literature does not attempt to directly relate creativity to social inclusion, rather these effects are merely reported alongside each other.

From the case-study interviews, a range of impacts were reported that could ultimately translate into greater social inclusion. These were:

- raised aspirations
- improved self-esteem and self-worth
- understanding yourself better and confidence in your abilities

- greater maturity
- improved social skills
- better relationships
- communication and teamwork skills
- enjoying learning
- a desire to pursue creative activity.

Whether or not increased ‘creativity’ precipitated these outcomes, however, was difficult to tease out from the data. Certainly these impacts were generated through participation in the creative programmes under investigation. But to what extent creative *outcomes* or creative *processes* were the pathway to social inclusion was not clear.

What was evident, however, was the combination of effective features across all the projects which seemed to suit the particular needs of the intended target group. For example, participants responded well to the autonomy afforded by the projects – young people were given ownership over the process and products, were encouraged to use and express their own ideas, and were valued as creative individuals. For many, these experiences represented new opportunities, and often ones which they contrasted to other educational, vocational or home-life environments. Previous research has suggested that a lack of opportunities to learn in creative ways can influence young peoples’ educational engagement. For example, ‘Disaffection talks’ (Kinder *et al.* 1999) examined the perceived factors underpinning disaffection and found that pupils with attendance problems expressed a preference for creative/artistic learning tasks, as opposed to more prescribed activities. Learning at school however, was generally described as boring with complaints about repetition and a lack of variety frequently aired by the sample. Similarly, research based on the Keele database of schools (Barber, 1994) showed that up to 70 per cent of secondary school pupils count the minutes to the end of lessons and 30–40 per cent thought that school was boring and would rather not go to school at all. The lack of opportunity to learn through creative processes may be one of the factors that fuel young peoples’ disengagement from education. It is possible to see therefore how an emphasis on developing active forms of learning, which tap into the creative energies of young people, could in some way minimise the risk of educational disaffection and in the long run, contribute towards their inclusion in society.

## 8.4 Implications for NESTA and the development/funding of future projects

Key messages to arise from the research programme are as follows:

### 8.4.1 Implications for further research and evaluation

- There was a notable absence of recent literature that attempted to research the emergence of creativity amongst socially excluded young people and to examine the factors implicated in its development. Research which simultaneously explored these two phenomena would therefore serve to redress an obvious gap in terms of existing research and our understanding of the issues.
- The review discovered that in more recent years creativity has been documented more as a process and somewhat neglected as an outcome. It would be illuminating therefore if future research and evaluation of creativity projects could examine both faces of the creativity factor – exploring its role as an engagement tool as well as the development of (and impact on) creativity.
- For a firm link to be established between creativity and social inclusion, longer term monitoring and research would be required. Unfortunately, most projects and research is time-restricted and the effects of an intervention are often only captured immediately after. Tracking the impacts over an extended period of time would expose the true relationship between creativity and social exclusion. NESTA may also wish to monitor the longer term outcomes for young people who participate in their programmes.
- The review was able to identify a small body of literature which compared the creativity of young people from different socio-economic backgrounds. Interestingly, claims were made for both higher and lower levels of creativity amongst children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Again, in order to formulate effective interventions for socially excluded young people, further research is perhaps needed to properly establish whether their creative abilities are any different from the rest of the population.

### 8.4.2 Challenges in tapping the creativity of the socially excluded

- Based on the research uncovered by the review, it is not clear whether social exclusion automatically dampens the innate creativity of young people. The greater issue is perhaps one of ensuring that they have both opportunity and

access – especially as there may be economic, educational and social barriers which prevent them from pursuing their creative interests.

- For example, access to interventions may be prohibited due to the costs of travel to locations outside their immediate locality. Or, there may be a lack of family or peer support for doing ‘something different’, whilst ‘chaotic’ home lives can make it difficult to establish a routine of regular attendance. Many young people who are described as educationally excluded may experience problems settling into learning environments that are reminiscent of mainstream education. Similarly, such children can often lack confidence in their abilities and suffer from poor self-esteem. These are the sorts of issues that interventions will need to consider and overcome if they are to successfully work with socially excluded young people.

### **8.4.3 ‘What works’ implications**

Despite a paucity of literature embracing the issues under investigation, this research has sought to pinpoint the factors that create the optimal conditions for fostering creativity. Findings from the literature were augmented further by data collected from active creativity projects. Based on the eight factors identified, here are some possible practical considerations for those working with socially excluded young people in the area of creativity:

### **8.4.4 Authenticity**

- Ensure that projects have some contemporary relevance to young people and deal with issues that young people can relate to, understand and perceive to be important.
- Identify practitioners that possess the necessary expertise and knowledge to fuel the enthusiasm of young people in creative activities.

### **8.4.5 Something different**

- Socially excluded young people can sometimes react negatively to traditional learning environments. It is perhaps useful to consider what is it about these environments that present obstacles to inclusion and may also inhibit creativity. Projects could then be set up which offer a new and alternative kind of learning experience e.g. in terms of location, approach, atmosphere, different artforms.



#### 8.4.6 ‘Significant other’

- Where young people are supported by adults, try to identify the traits and skills that these individuals will need in order to establish positive and productive working relationships. For example, the ability to relate to disadvantaged young people and have an understanding of the issues faced would clearly be advantageous. Furthermore, access to appropriate professional development for mentors/staff will help ensure that they are equipped to work with this target group.

#### 8.4.7 Exploring ideas

- Projects will benefit from factoring in the freedom for participants to explore their ideas and to set their own goals. By contrast, highly structured programmes with pre-determined aims may inhibit young people and their creative energies. At the same time, it recognised that projects working with the socially excluded may need to provide a degree of structure in order to counterbalance the often ‘chaotic’ lives of participants.

#### 8.4.8 Challenge

- A stimulus for creativity can be the challenge presented by a task. Projects would therefore need to assess how socially excluded participants can be encouraged to ‘take risks’ (especially if they have little experience of this in the past) and to set an appropriate level of a challenge for them.

#### 8.4.9 Working with others

- Young people can benefit from a variety of working styles: Group work can facilitate the exchange and exploration of ideas, whilst individual work enables young people to pursue their own priorities and interests. Which ever style is used, participants are likely to respond well to an approach which allows them autonomy and control over their activities.

#### 8.4.10 Time

- For projects of a more intensive nature, try to create space and resources for spontaneity and the development of ideas. Where timescales are more extended creativity can be allowed to develop at its own speed. In terms of

sustainability, projects may wish to formulate an exit strategy which considers how participants could gain access to support or information once the project ends.

#### **8.4.11 Tools and skills**

- Access to the basic tools and skills of creativity can play an instrumental role in creativity projects. For instance, investment in new equipment such as the latest software, media and professional materials, alongside guidance in using them, can serve as important foundations for the development of creativity.

# Appendix 1 Keywords used in literature search

The following key words and search terms were agreed for the review.

## **Terms relating to creativity**

Creativity  
Creativity research  
Creativity measurement  
Creative writing  
Creative thinking  
Divergent thinking  
Innovative/innovation  
Imaginative  
Thinking skills  
Problem solving  
Exploration  
Experimenting  
Risk-taking  
Enterprising  
Invent/inventive  
Original

## **Terms relating to social exclusion**

Social exclusion  
Disaffection  
Disaffected  
Social inclusion  
Disadvantages  
Marginalised  
At risk  
Disengaged

## **Terms relating to age group**

Young people

Secondary education  
Primary education  
Youth  
Children  
Pupils  
Students  
Teenagers  
Adolescents

### **Key words for type of literature**

Research  
Evaluation  
Programme  
Effects  
Outcomes  
Impacts  
Effectiveness

### **Areas where creativity might be researched**

Art  
Science  
Technology  
Arts education  
Biology  
Chemistry  
Physics  
Engineering  
Information technology  
Dance  
Drama  
Music  
Poetry  
Theatre  
Performing arts  
Visual art

### **Specific groups of socially excluded young people:**

- Children at Risk
- Gypsy Children
- Neglected Children
- Children as Carers
- Problem Children
- Looked After Children
- Runaways
- Children in Public Care
- Runaway Children
- Children in Need
- Street Children
- School Phobia
- Truancy
- School Phobic Children
- Dropouts
- School Absence
- Asylum Seekers
- School Refusal
- Migrants
- Children in Hospitals
- Migrant Children
- Hospitalised Children
- Migrant Youth
- Hospital Schools
- Transient Children
- Sick Children
- Travellers
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Travellers: Itinerants
- Adolescent Parents
- Itinerant Children
- Adolescent Mothers
- Minority Group Children
- Early Parenthood
- Gypsies
- Pregnant Students
- Youth Problems
- Unmarried Mothers
- Young Offenders
- Juvenile Delinquency
- Juvenile Crime
- Unemployed
- Homeless
- Low achievers

## Appendix 2 Search strategy for specific databases

The following search strategies were employed across the range of databases, by the NFER library.

### BEI

- #1 Creativity
- #2 Creativity Research
- #3 Creativity Measures
- #4 Creative Writing
- #5 Creative Thinking
- #6 Divergent Thinking
- #7 Innovation
- #8 Imaginative
- #9 Thinking Skills
- #10 Problem Solving
- #11 Originality
- #12 #1 OR #2 OR #3 ... #11
- #13 Disaffected Pupils
- #14 Children At Risk
- #15 Youth Problems
- #16 #13 OR #14 OR #15
- #17 #12 AND #16
- #18 Disaffection
- #19 Disadvantaged
- #20 Marginality
- #21 Social Integration
- #22 Social Isolation
- #23 social exclusion (ft)
- #24 social inclusion (ft)
- #25 #18 OR #19 OR #20 ... #24
- #26 Children
- #27 Teenagers
- #28 Adolescents
- #29 Youth

- #30 Young Adults
- #31 young people (ft)
- #32 Pupils
- #33 Students
- #34 Primary Education
- #35 Secondary Education
- #36 #26 OR #27 OR #28 ... #35
- #37 #12 AND #25 AND #36

## ERIC

- #1 Creativity
- #2 Creativity Research
- #3 Creative Writing
- #4 Creative Thinking
- #5 Divergent Thinking
- #6 Innovation
- #7 Imagination
- #8 Thinking Skills
- #9 Problem Solving
- #10 Exploration
- #11 Risk Taking
- #12 #1 OR #2 OR #3 ... #11
- #13 Disadvantaged Children
- #14 Disadvantaged Students
- #15 Disadvantaged Youth
- #16 At Risk Persons
- #17 At Risk Students
- #18 Student Disengagement
- #19 Marginalized Groups
- #20 #13 OR #14 OR #15 OR ... #19
- #21 #12 AND #20
- #22 Social Integration
- #23 Social Isolation
- #24 Social Exclusion
- #25 social inclusion (ft)
- #26 Disadvantaged
- #27 Disengagement

- #28 Marginalization
- #29 #22 OR #23 OR #24 ... #28
- #30 Children
- #31 Young Adolescents
- #32 Adolescents
- #33 Youth
- #34 Young Adults
- #35 Students
- #36 Primary Education
- #37 Elementary Education
- #38 Secondary Education
- #39 #31 OR #32 OR #33 ... #38
- #40 #12 AND #29 AND #39

## **AEI**

- #1 Creativity
- #2 Creativity Research
- #3 Creative Writing
- #4 Creative Thinking
- #5 Innovation
- #6 Imagination
- #7 Problem Solving
- #8 Originality
- #9 #1 OR #2 OR #3 ... #8
- #10 Disadvantaged Children
- #11 Disadvantaged Groups
- #12 Disadvantaged Youth
- #13 At Risk Persons
- #14 At Risk Students
- #15 Youth At Risk
- #16 Youth Problems
- #17 #10 OR #11 OR #12 ... #16
- #18 #9 AND #17
- #19 Social Integration
- #20 Social Isolation
- #21 Social Deprivation
- #22 social inclusion (ft)



- #23 social exclusion (ft)
- #24 Disadvantaged
- #25 Socially Disadvantaged
- #26 Marginality
- #27 #19 OR #20 OR #21 ... #26
- #28 Children
- #29 Teenagers
- #30 Adolescents
- #31 Youth
- #32 Young People
- #33 Young Adults
- #34 Students
- #35 Primary Education
- #36 Elementary Education
- #37 Secondary Education
- #38 #28 OR #29 OR #30 ... #37
- #39 #9 AND #27 AND #38

## **ASSIA**

- #1 Creativity
- #2 Creative Writing
- #3 Creative Thinking
- #4 Creative Processes
- #5 Social Creativity
- #6 Divergent Thinking
- #7 Innovation
- #8 Innovative Behaviour
- #9 Imagination
- #10 Thinking Skills
- #11 Creative Problem Solving
- #12 Problem Solving
- #13 Exploration
- #14 Risk Taking
- #15 #1 OR #2 OR #3 ... #14
- #16 Disadvantaged Young People
- #17 #15 AND #16
- #18 Social Integration

- #19 Social Exclusion
- #20 Alienation
- #21 At Risk
- #22 Disengagement
- #23 #18 OR #19 OR #20 OR #21 OR #22
- #24 Children
- #25 Teenagers
- #26 Adolescents
- #27 Youth
- #28 Young People
- #29 Pupils
- #30 Students
- #31 Primary Schools
- #32 Secondary Schools
- #33 Secondary Education
- #34 #24 OR #25 OR #26 ... #33
- #35 #15 AND #23 AND #34

## **CBCA**

- #1 Creativity
- #2 Creative Writing
- #3 Thinking Skills
- #4 Problem Solving
- #5 Risk-taking
- #6 Social Integration
- #7 Social Policy
- #8 Disadvantaged
- #9 creative (ft)
- #10 #1 OR #9
- #11 disaffect? (ft)
- #12 disadvantag? (ft)
- #13 marginali? (ft)
- #14 at risk (ft)
- #15 #11 OR #12 OR #13 OR #14
- #16 #10 AND #15
- #17 divergent (ft)
- #18 innovati? (ft)

- #19 imaginati? (ft)
- #20 thinking (ft)
- #21 solving (ft)
- #22 inventi? (ft)
- #23 origina? (ft)
- #24 #17 OR #18 OR #19 ... #23
- #25 #15 AND #24

## **PsycINFO**

- #1 Creativity
- #2 Creativity Measurement
- #3 Creative Writing
- #4 Divergent Thinking
- #5 Imagination
- #6 Problem Solving
- #7 Experimentation
- #8 Risk Taking
- #9 #1 OR #2 OR #3 ... #8
- #10 At Risk Populations
- #11 Social Acceptance
- #12 Social Integration
- #13 Social Isolation
- #14 Social Adjustment
- #15 Disadvantaged
- #16 #10 OR #11 OR #12 ... #15
- #17 Elementary School Students
- #18 Elementary Education
- #19 Secondary Education
- #20 Students
- #21 children (ft)
- #22 pupils (ft)
- #23 teenagers (ft)
- #24 adolescents (ft)
- #25 youth (ft)
- #26 young people (ft)
- #27 #17 OR #18 OR #29 ... #26
- #28 #9 AND #16 AND #27

## ChildData

#1	Creativity
#2	Creative Writing
#3	Imagination
#4	#1 OR #2 OR #3
#5	Social Exclusion
#6	Disaffection
#7	Disadvantage
#8	#5 OR #6 OR #7
#9	creative thinking (ft)
#10	divergent thinking (ft)
#11	innovati? (ft)
#12	imaginati? (ft)
#13	thinking skills (ft)
#14	problem solving (ft)
#15	exploration (ft)
#16	experimenting (ft)
#17	risk taking (ft)
#18	enterprising (ft)
#19	inventi? (ft)
#20	origina? (ft)
#22	social inclusion (ft)
#23	marginali? (ft)
#24	at risk (ft)
#25	disengage? (ft)

## SIGLE

All terms searched free text:

#1	creativity
#2	creativity research
#3	creativity measurement
#4	creative writing
#5	creative thinking
#6	divergent thinking
#7	innovati?
#8	imaginati?

- #9 thinking skills
- #10 problem solving
- #11 exploration
- #12 experimenting
- #13 risk taking
- #14 enterprising
- #15 inventive?
- #16 original?
- #17 #1 OR #2 OR #3 ... #16
- #18 social exclusion
- #19 disaffection
- #20 disaffected
- #21 social inclusion
- #22 disadvantaged
- #23 marginali?
- #24 at risk
- #25 disengaged
- #26 #18 OR #19 OR #20 ... #25
- #27 children
- #28 teenagers
- #29 adolescents
- #30 youth
- #31 young people
- #32 young adults
- #33 pupils
- #34 students
- #35 primary
- #36 secondary
- #37 #27 OR #28 OR #29 ... #36
- #38 #17 AND #26 AND #37

# Appendix 3 A description of the literature

## Introduction

This appendix examines the range and scope of the literature uncovered during the review. It presents the findings from the publications identified through literature and hand-searches covering the full publication time period of the review – 1985–2004.

First, the appendix outlines the results from the literature searches, the application of the selection criteria and reasons for rejecting literature. Then, having established the body of literature upon which this review is based, the appendix discusses the volume and range of literature included in the review, in terms of:

- date of publication
- type of literature
- foci in relation to creativity, social exclusion and young people
- country or area in which the work was undertaken
- subject area.

## A3.1 Literature search results

The literature search strategies undertaken considered sources published from 1985–2004 (initial searches from 1998–2004; and subsequent searches from 1985–1997) using a range of educational, sociological and psychological databases (as described in Part 2 of this report).

In addition, searches were also made in order to examine the volume of literature in the ‘separate’ fields of creativity and social exclusion – this was to ascertain the degree to which these two arenas might be combined in the literature, or viewed as ‘separate’ fields. Table 3.1 shows the volume of literature identified in this process.

**Table 3.1 Literature database search results: volume of literature**

Search strategy	Date range	No. of hits
Young people & Creativity & Social exclusion	1998–2004	87
Young people & Creativity & Social exclusion	1985–1997	119
Young people & Creativity	1998–2004	5377
Young people & Creativity	1985–1997	6065
Young people & Social exclusion	1998–2004	6364
Young people & Social exclusion	1985–1997	8503

Source: NFER search results file

NB: 'No. of hits' refers to the number of references/abstracts found in the database search results, prior to any further selection criteria being imposed.

Using the first step of the criteria for inclusion in the review (literature involving young people AND creativity AND social exclusion – as shown in section 2.3), this process identified 206 possible sources for consideration (as can be seen from Table 3.1, this involved 87 from the time period 1998–2004 and 119 from the publication period 1985–1997). However, using the second step of the criteria for inclusion (examining the full sources – as outlined in section 2.3) a number of these sources proved irrelevant to the review. (Reasons for rejection are discussed below in section 3.3).

As can be seen in Table 3.1, the search results for the literature in the separate fields of creativity and social exclusion, suggest that there would seem to be substantial bodies of literature in these distinct fields, but work which covers both areas would appear to be comparatively less common.

## A3.2 Selecting material for the review

The identification and selection process for the review is described in section 2.3 of this report. In practice, it was difficult to identify literature which addressed both areas pertinent to the review (i.e. both creativity *and* social exclusion). Hence, sources where researchers made *inferences* about social inclusion/exclusion from a study of a creative project, or vice versa, could also be included. In addition, in order to be able to capture a range of insights on these issues, no restrictions were placed on the type of literature considered, which could include empirically-based research, theoretical discussion, project descriptions and so on.

As well as the literature search strategies, sources were also obtained from hand-searching. Again, the two-step selection process using the criteria outlined in section 2.3 was employed.

A total of 57 sources, published between 1985 and 2004 were included in the review.

### A3.3 Reasons for rejecting literature

Reasons for rejecting literature from the review have been classified, and include:

- Did not involve elements of creativity (such sources were most likely identified by the initial searches due to related themes being raised such as resilience, democracy, mapping cultural services, ‘youth culture’, gaining basic skills, employment and training opportunities).
- Matched to the keyword ‘problem-solving’, but not in the sense of creativity (rather, the search term ‘problem-solving’ was linked to a substantial number of sources referring to solving social and behavioural problems such as family problems, drug abuse, conflict management, violence prevention and health issues).
- Did not involve socially excluded young people (this literature tended to cover general issues about working with young people, for example strategies for engaging learners in the classroom, and issues relating to their access to activities such as music making, but without reference to socially excluded groups).
- Insufficient detail (a number of potential sources provided insufficient information about the projects, programmes or concepts to which they referred, and were thus not included in the review).
- Referred to very young children (a couple of sources obtained referred to pre-school children and to babies – these sources were excluded from the review as they were felt to be less pertinent than children of school age).

It is perhaps noteworthy that several of the sources rejected because of a lack of focus on the social exclusion/inclusion agenda, referred to museum and gallery education work. One of the sources included in the review suggests an issue that might provide an explanation for this. Rider and Illingworth’s (1997) compilation of museum and gallery work taking place in 1997 in the UK and the USA



took an initial brief to look at ‘disadvantaged’ young people. However, they found that the museums they included in their audit, worked with young people from wide-ranging backgrounds, and so the scope of their report was widened to include *all* young people outside of formal education.

Work by Downing *et al.*, (2004) would also suggest that galleries and museums aim to work with a diverse range of young people. From this work, it might be possible to suggest that a social inclusion agenda of much museum and gallery education might be one which encompasses ‘non-traditional gallery goers’ and the engagement of *all* young people, rather than work with specific socially excluded target groups.

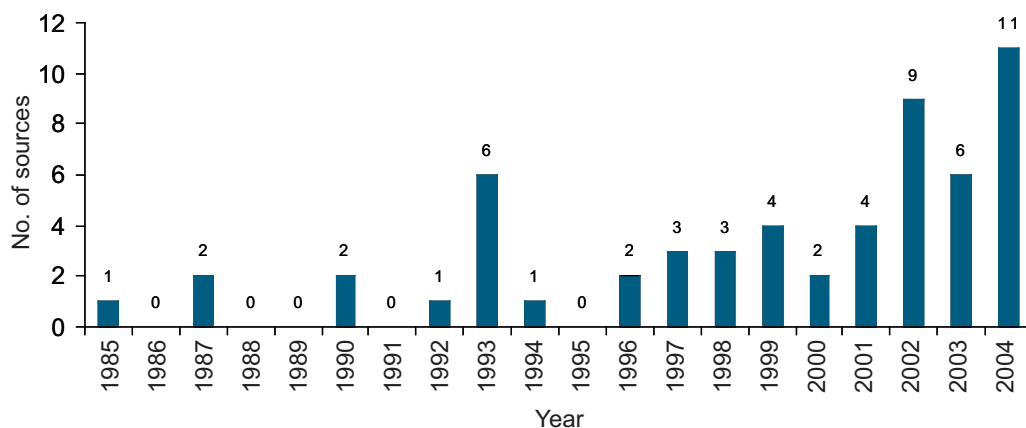
Having established the body of literature upon which this review is based – 57 items published between 1985 and 2004, the remainder of this chapter discusses this material.

### A3.4 Date of publication

The literature searches covered the publication dates 1985–2004. Figure A3.1 shows the volume of literature published in each year under investigation.

Most of the literature identified was published from the mid-1990s onwards; and a sharp increase in terms of volume from 2002 to date. However, there was also a notable amount of relevant literature published in 1993 – chiefly research stud-

**Figure A3.1 Volume of published literature per year**



Source: NFER database of sources included in the review.

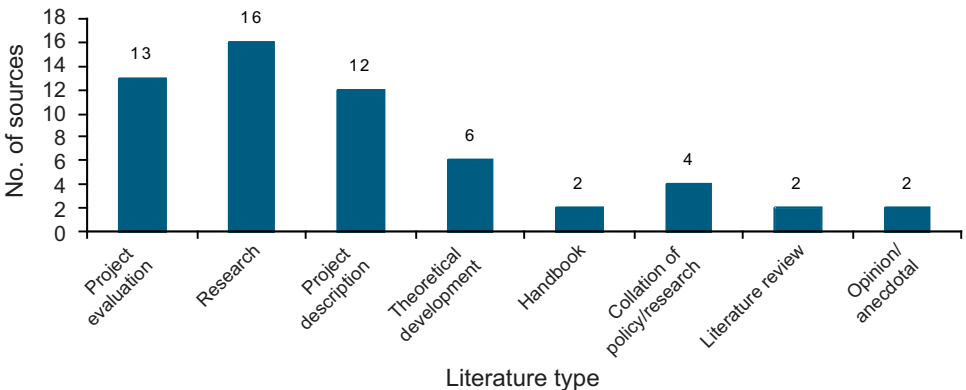
ies into creative thinking with children from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. Runco, 1993; Naval-Severino, 1993a and 1993b; Dudek *et al.*, 1993).

### A3.5 Type of literature

The sources were categorised according to the type of literature identified: for example, was it an evaluation of a particular programme or project; was it an empirical research paper, perhaps based on a survey or case study; or did the paper discuss theoretical understandings of how creativity is stimulated amongst socially excluded young people? A number of publications overlapped several of these categories, but the review has attempted to classify the sources according to their underlying purpose here. Figure A3.2 shows the chief classifications of the types of literature identified.

Whilst the most popular type of literature in this field would seem to be empirical research (according to the above classifications), it is of particular note that just over half of these research sources were published before 1996 (i.e. in the earlier part of the review's publication period). In contrast, just three of the 25 sources that were either project/programme evaluations or project/programme descriptions were published before 1996. That is to say, whilst empirical research would seem to have been slightly more common in the earlier period of the review, evaluations of programmes and initiatives aimed at enhancing creativity amongst socially excluded young people have been more common in recent years.

**Figure A3.2 Type of literature**



Source: NFER database of sources included in the review.

**Table A3.1 Examples of types of literature included in the review**

### Project evaluation

A number of evaluations at programme or initiative level were included.

- Doherty and Harland (2001) evaluated the implementation of the 'CAPE UK' Partnerships for Creativity initiative.
- Craft et al. (2004) evaluated NESTA's *Ignite! Fellowship Programme for Young People*. This programme was set up to support the development of creativity and innovation in creative young people. The qualitative evaluation explored the processes and triggers to creativity, the interactions between the individual and the adult, and the role of the expert adult in guiding the novice along the continuum to expertise.
- Downing et al. (2004) evaluated a scheme mounted by a consortium of six galleries and museums. The evaluation used a case study approach.

A couple of US initiatives fall into this category.

- Spicker et al. (1996) evaluated the SPRING (Special Populations Rural Information Network for the Gifted) Programme, the purpose of which was to find ways of identifying gifted children in grades 3-8 from rural economically disadvantaged areas; and to develop a science curriculum and teaching strategies within science appropriate for developing the talents of these young people
- Allison (1993) studied the SMARTS programme (Super Math and Reading Thinking Skills) which provided elementary school pupils students with 160 minutes of critical thinking/problem solving instruction per week. Through computer assisted instruction, the programme emphasised cooperative learning, brainstorming, teamwork and open-ended conversations, and aimed to raise self-esteem, risk-taking and problem solving skills. The programme followed a curriculum that broke each lesson into units of small and diverse activities designed to maintain interest and motivation.

Other evaluations have involved single projects only.

- Vidall-Hall (2003) evaluated a music-learning project in one school in Birmingham (the project had taken place over two years).

### Research

Research from the earlier period of the review chiefly took the form of empirical or experimental studies of comparative groups.

More recently, research has taken the form of case studies, although small-scale surveys have been undertaken as well project mapping

- Dudek et al. (1993) examined the effects of socio-economic levels on the development of divergent thinking in a sample of 1445 children aged 10-12 years. The study took place in Canada. Comparison of mean scores from the Torrance Tests of creativity indicated that creativity scores increased with socio-economic level. In contrast, in a study of 163 children from grades 1-6 in the USA, Vann (1985) had found no statistically significant difference between groups when divided by socio-economic status.
- Naval-Severino (1993b) compared two groups of children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds in the Philippines in an attempt to determine the effects of training in the development of higher level cognitive thinking and creative thinking skills. One group received the training; another group did not. On fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration (themes found in the Torrance Tests of creativity), the group which received training in creative thinking outperformed those who were not exposed to training.

- Hebert (2001) researched a single case of one child's creativity. The research considered his creativity, resilience and struggle to find a place for himself in the community and the significant factors that influenced the early formation of a self identity. The researcher acted as supportive adult throughout the process. The young person's creativity was expressed through his writing and love of language.
- NESTA (2002b) involved a telephone survey to 164 NESTA awardees in order to investigate the barriers to the realisation of creative ideas.
- Harvey et al. (2002) mapped the creative opportunities for young people in the field of moving image in the informal sector. Enquiries probed information about UK-organisations, their funding, equipment, facilities, production opportunities, networks and users. There were 334 responses. Two distinct 'aims clusters' were found in the programmes analysed: one clustered around vocational training and skills in media making; and the other around youth empowerment. The second cluster referred to projects which engaged marginalised groups in personal and social empowerment and issue-based learning. These were set within the context of creativity and expression.

### Project description

- McKeever (2002) described a range of projects from across the UK aimed at reducing child poverty. Projects included: those using arts and drama with young people identified as 'at risk' of offending or exclusion from schools; an integrated arts project for young people with disabilities and those without; and young people setting up and running their own radio station.
- Tranter and Palin (2004) described the work of a museum/gallery in Richmond upon Thames, which worked with young people in the Pupil Referral Service disengaged from the social and education opportunities available to them. It is illustrated by their general work and a case study of a particular project. The article specifically considered the sustainability of this kind of work.

### Theoretical development

- From existing literature and research, Kinder and Harland (2004) examined the overlap of the effects and effective practices in the realms of the arts with that in the field of pupil disaffection. They discuss how arts education might contribute to strategies for addressing disengagement from education.
- Klein (1999) discussed the issue of disaffection within school and education; explored who these disaffected young people might be; and offered examples from schools in the US that were tackling disaffection. Some of these examples indicated that the development of young people's creativity particularly in the realms of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as supporting their emotional intelligences, might prove fruitful in tackling disaffection.
- Willis (1990) discussed young people's 'culture'. The discussion posts their engagement in cultural and creative activity as part of the practices and processes of everyday life.
- Hickson and Skuy (1990) explored the relationship between creativity and cognitive modifiability (the ability to adapt to new

situations). The paper discussed the notion of giftedness, and charted the reporting of this amongst socially disadvantaged populations in the literature.

## Handbook

- Thousand et al. (2002) provides a handbook of theoretical papers, illustrated with practical case studies, experiential material and lesson plans. The book considered issues in 'creative and collaborative' learning (such as cooperative group learning as a form of creativity, developing thinking skills, teaching for liberation, peer support, empowering young people to take the lead, etc). The book was borne out of the inclusion agenda and focuses on the issue of access to education for all.

## Policy / research collation

- Allin (2001) considered the provision of sports and arts activities to overcome social exclusion and lead to positive outcomes in health, education, employment and crime reduction. It collated evidence from other research, drawing heavily on a report by the Policy Action team in 1999 and on two surveys of the available research which were commissioned by the PAT.
- Ings (2001) reported on a national conference on the role of the arts in pupil referral and learning support units. The conference proceedings collated evidence about the role of these organisations from existing research and practice, and aimed to inform policy and practice.
- NACCCE (1999) was an advisory report presented to the government on developing a strategy for creative and cultural education. It was based on consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The group's remit was to: '... make recommendations to the Secretaries of State on the creative and cultural development of young people through formal and informal education: to take stock of current provision and to make proposal for principles, policies and practice' (p.2).

## Literature review

- Shaw (1999) reviewed the literature on the arts and neighbourhood renewal for the Policy Action Team 10 government department. The review identified many community based arts programmes where the 'prominence of risk' was deemed important to their work.
- Loveless (2002) reviewed the theoretical and empirical literature on digital learning resources to: support the teaching and learning of creativity; to inform policy on the teaching and learning of creativity; and to provide a basis for communication between educational research and the commercial sector on the teaching and learning of creativity with ICT.

## Opinion/anecdotal

- Buckingham (2000) in which the author questions whether creativity really can remedy social exclusion. The arguments cover the broad social goals expected of the arts, and the participatory, community and informal sectors. He argues that, in order to effectively tackle social exclusion, the arts should be one part of a much broader strategy.

Section 3.6 discusses the foci of these different types of literature in more detail. Examples of the different types of literature identified are presented in the chart on the following two pages.

## **A3.6 Foci of the literature**

The foci of the literature were examined in relation to creativity, social exclusion and young people. In terms of content and the purpose of the literature, 19 pieces focused mainly on creativity, 11 pieces emphasised social inclusion, whilst 27 pieces overtly embraced both areas.

### **A3.6.1 Reference to creativity in the literature**

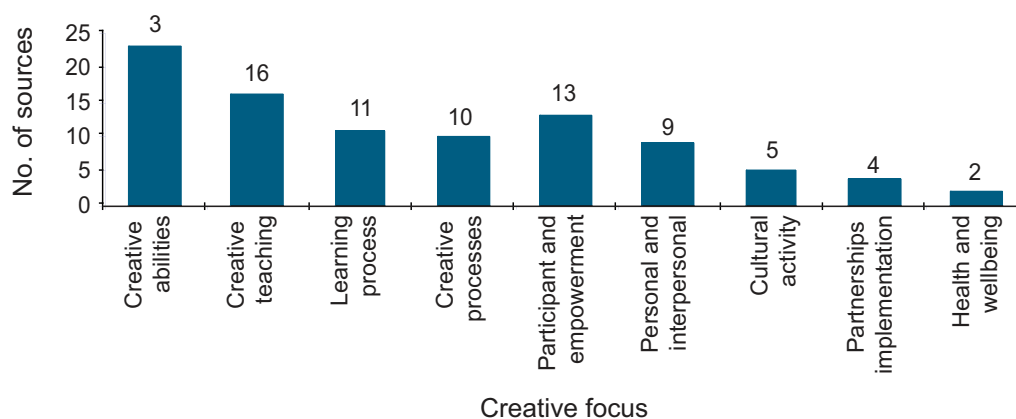
#### **Creativity foci**

As shown in Figure A3.3, where creativity featured in the literature, it was referenced in terms of:

- young people's creative abilities (23)
- creative teaching (method, pedagogy, approach) (16)
- creativity in the learning process (11)
- cognitive and neurological explorations of creativity (10)
- participation and empowerment (13)
- personal and interpersonal skills (such as self-expression, social skills, confidence) (9)
- cultural activity (5)
- the implementation of partnerships with creative professionals (4)
- health and wellbeing (2).

The exploration of young people's creative abilities, and the approaches and pedagogues by which these abilities might be developed, formed the backbone of the identified work on creativity (referring to the two most popular categories in Figure A3.3). Also related to these areas were investigations into young people's cognitive developments – specifically the development of their higher order thinking skills (e.g. pupils' metacognition, seen as 'their ability to systematically apply and articulate strategies' in Pogrow, 1996, p.34); and their abilities to adapt

**Figure A3.3 Creativity foci**



Source: NFER database of sources included in the review.

NB: Sources sum to more than 57 because creativity could be featured in more than one way in each source under investigation.

to new situations (e.g. ‘to apply learning beyond the specific context’ in Pogrow, 1996, p.34; and furthermore, to infer new principles in familiar situations, Hickson and Skuy, 1990).

Young people’s participation in creative activity was also a common focus. Literature in this category sometimes also embraced the youth ‘empowerment’ agenda (e.g. Harvey *et al.*, 2002; Thousand *et al.*, 2002), and examined the impacts of participation on the young people’s personal and social skills (e.g. Peaker, 1998; Tranter and Palin, 2004).

Elsewhere, creativity appeared to be synonymous with cultural activity (e.g. Willis, 1990; Tranter and Palin, 2004). The work of Willis (e.g. 1990) would seem to particularly fall into this category. Investigating the cultural activities of young people, Willis (1990) posited the creative activities which make up youth culture as being present in the many everyday activities that young people engage in outside of the classroom and beyond traditional forms of art. In Tranter and Palin’s (2004) gallery projects with young people with social, emotional, educational and behavioural difficulties, the work is rooted in an ethos of entitlement to access and explore ‘cultural heritage’ (rather than the realms of ‘creativity’). Encouraging young people’s involvement in cultural activity through creative programmes also seemed an important tool in the empowerment agenda (e.g. research with teenage mothers, in the USA (Nelson, 1993) and in the UK (Rider and Illingworth, 1997).

Karkou and Glasman (2004) aligned creativity with health and wellbeing, citing ‘the capacity to create something new [as] a sign of health’ (p.60). These authors explored the role of the arts with young people with emotional difficulties, and concluded that ‘preparing the ground to be creative is of vital importance’ for work with these young people (p.60).

As well as the various creative foci under investigation, two key areas were evident in the literature: creativity as a process, and creativity as an outcome. It was apparent that creativity as a process was investigated more frequently than creativity as an outcome. The box gives further clarification of this distinction.

### ***Creativity as process***

Literature in this category focuses on employing creativity as a process to engage young people. The literature is less concerned with capturing or reporting on young people’s ability to be creative or whether there has been any impact on their creativity as a result of an intervention or project.

e.g. Cooper, 2004 describes the approach taken by a theatre-education company in its work with children and the author explores ‘how do children learn?’ It is suggested that the current system promotes a transmission mode of learning, telling people what to think, rather than teaching them how to think. The article suggests that children should develop through mediated, hands-on learning. ‘Mediators’ can be knowledgeable adults, other children, etc. The author then explores ‘uses of the imagination’. He explains that the dramatic context of their work engages children and the themes and dilemmas they present resonate with the children’s lives. In their work, children ‘create themselves through the imagination’ and this leads to ownership, and social responsibility. The kinds of imagination developed are mental images, feelings, and things that cannot be expressed in another way. In this article creativity is discussed as a tool for engagement and for assisting the learning process.

### ***Creativity as outcome***

Literature in this category is concerned with measuring creativity as a skill/outcome and/or examines young people’s creativity following participation in a particular programme or intervention. Such literature is more strongly orientated towards detecting the emergence of creativity, as an outcome. At the



same time, it may also include using creativity processes to develop creative skills, as exemplified by the literature below.

e.g. Ali, 1987 reports on a comparative study of achievement, motivation, performance and creativity of destitute and non-destitute children. Similarly, Jarvis, 1992 examines the creative abilities of students from a rural, economically disadvantaged community. Both these pieces looked at the innate skills of young people rather than any impact on their creativity following involvement in a project/intervention

e.g. Verma and Verma, 1994 however, did look at the impact of an intervention programme – in this case, 16 weeks of regular problem solving and brainstorming activities. Changes in young peoples' creativity was measured through pre and post testing using a variety of measures.

### A3.6.2 Reference to social exclusion in the literature

#### **Social exclusion foci**

Different forms of social exclusion were also found in the literature, covering the spheres of:

- education (22)
- economy (12)
- culture (10)
- crime (9).

Literature which considered educational inclusion/exclusion referred to: young people's disengagement from learning or educational opportunity (e.g. Kinder and Harland, 2004; Tranter and Palin, 2004); enhancing the achievements of children with poor academic records (notable in the research from the earlier publication period of the review, e.g. Allison, 1993; Naval-Severino, 1993a; Hickson and Skuy, 1990); issues relating to special and mainstream schooling (e.g. Balshaw, 2004; Pigneguy, 2004)); discussions and exemplars of inclusive teaching practice (e.g. Cooper, 2004; Thousand *et al.*, 2002); and school exclusions (e.g. Ings, 2001; Atwood and Pearson, 2003).

The economic exclusion of young people encompassed the realms of employability and neighbourhood renewal (e.g. McMannus, 2002; Morarity and McMannau, 2003) in the literature included in the review. Attempts to improve the economic prospects of young people through ‘creative’ activity using digital media were explored through a range of programmes investigated in Lord *et al.* (2002). These programmes – established under the umbrella of an EU initiative called Connect 2000, and taking place in London, Paris and rural Spain – contrasted across the three European countries in terms of their target arena of social exclusion. All three aimed for the long-term social inclusion of the young people, but via different means: the model at the London site focused on the cultural inclusion of young people and skilling them to work in creative industries should they so wish; in Paris, the emphasis was the educational ‘insertion’ of the young people, including their language skills (many participants were recently arrived refugees) and knowledge about how to access educational services; whilst in Spain, the immediate employment prospects for young people in this area of rural isolation were paramount. It is notable that ‘poverty’ was prevalent as a theme particularly amongst the literature from the earlier publication period of the review (e.g. Ali, 1987; and Naval-Severino 1993a and 1993b; Verma, 1994).

Cultural inclusion through ‘identity’ was a prominent theme in two of the sources (Downing *et al.*, 2004; Lord *et al.*, 2002). The first of these (Downing *et al.*, 2004) was an evaluation of a scheme mounted by a consortium of six galleries and museums, and which was aimed at young people who might be classed as ‘non-traditional gallery goers’. Using the theme of ‘Image and Identity’ as a framework, the projects covered a wide range of ‘creative’ areas, including drawing, photography, graphics, three-dimensional work, digital media and other art media and aimed to stimulate young people’s creativity through their response to the theme. Increasing young people’s self-confidence to participate in cultural activities was addressed. One of the projects in the study into digital media education with marginalised young people (Lord *et al.*, 2002), involved photography and the themes of ‘identity’ and ‘community’.

Literature looking into reducing crime included work with young people at-risk of offending, and with young offenders. For example, Bennet (1998) describes the work of a music making project ‘Rockmobil’, which catered for young people living in areas targeted by the local authority as ‘high risk’ due to social problems such as drug abuse, crime and racial exclusion. Rockmobil is a music-making resource which aimed to improve the personal and social development of

young people. In another piece, Atwood and Pearson (2003) described the work of an organisation which aimed to engage with young men who were excluded from school, or in danger of being excluded, and many of whom were considered to be at risk of offending.

In Peaker's (1998) study, different approaches to creative work were examined in prisons. The research aimed to enable prison officers/staff to think more strategically about their programmes, to increase the number of black artists with appropriate skills to be able to work effectively in prisons, and to explore different ways of working through four pilot projects.

### **Target groups**

Some of the literature specified particular target groups, including: gifted disadvantaged (notable in the literature from the earlier publication period of the review, e.g. Hickson and Skuy, 1990; Naval-Severino 1993a; and Spicker *et al.*, 1996); comparisons of young people from different socio-economic backgrounds, again notable from the earlier published works (e.g. Aranha, 1997; Dhillon and Mehra, 1987; Dudek *et al.*, 1993; Vann, 1985); teenage mothers (e.g. Nelson, 1993; Rider and Illingworth, 1997); and ethnic populations and multicultural work (e.g. Spicker *et al.*, 1996; Rider and Illingworth, 1997; Downing *et al.*, 2004).

### **A3.6.3 Reference to young people in the literature**

Figure A3.4 shows the age ranges of the young people referred to in the 57 sources of literature included in the review. These have been grouped into categories according to the most natural or commonly cited areas in the literature. For example, 'high school' and 'teenagers' have been classified within secondary general; and projects covering the whole of the school curriculum including nursery and into tertiary education have been classified under 3 to 19.

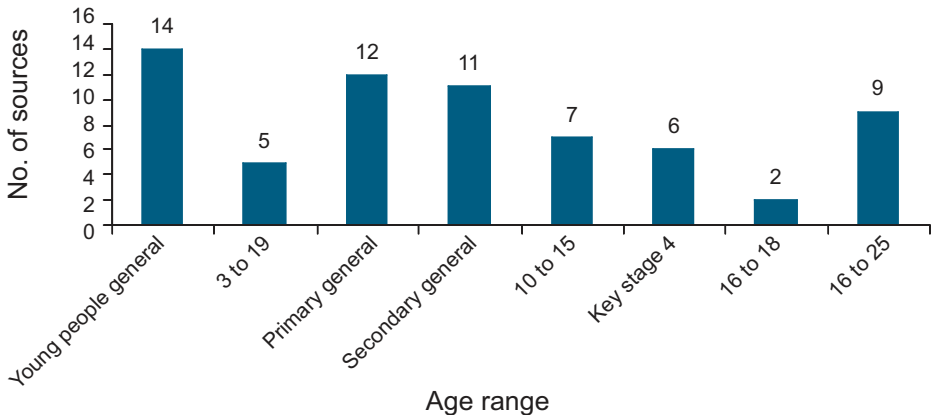
A number of sources, typically collations of and for policy and research, as well as some of the programme descriptions, were not specific about the age range of the young people to which they referred (these have been classified as 'young people general').

The age ranges 10–15 and 16–22 were referred to especially in the NESTA funded programmes that were included in the review (e.g. Baehr, 2004; Craft *et al.*,

2004; Marsh, 2003). Other work has considered this upper age range as far as 25 years of age, for example, Harvey *et al.* (2002) who audited the range of moving image projects being undertaken across the UK in the informal education sector for 16–25-year-olds; and digital media education programmes, again in the formal sector, for disadvantaged young people, set up under an EU initiative (researched by Lord *et al.*, 2002). The young unemployed fall into this age category, and this particular group of young people was targeted in an ‘Artskills’ programme in Liverpool, described by Bond (1998).

Some work has specifically targeted the key stage 4 age range, typically from the point of view of school exclusions and provision in pupil referral units. For example, one of the projects examined in research by Lord *et al.* (2002) was set up to provide educational opportunities, in an informal yet skilled professional environment, for boys excluded from a local school. Pigneguy (2004) and Tranter and Palin (2004) also describe the programmes of organisations working in this field. Other literature would suggest that young people in key stage 4 might be targeted in order to ‘tap into’ or enhance work which they might be undertaking in their GCSE and key stage 4 studies at school. For example, some of the projects evaluated in Downing *et al.* (2004) targeted a range of key stage 4 arts classes including young people studying textiles, graphic design and ‘vocational arts’. Could it be that at this stage in their educational careers and maturation, vocational and professional outlets and bents for young people might be especially important to their educational, creative and cultural engagement?

**Figure A3.4 Age range**



Source: NFER database of sources included in the review.  
 NB: Sources sum to more than 57 because a number of age ranges might be under investigation in the same source.

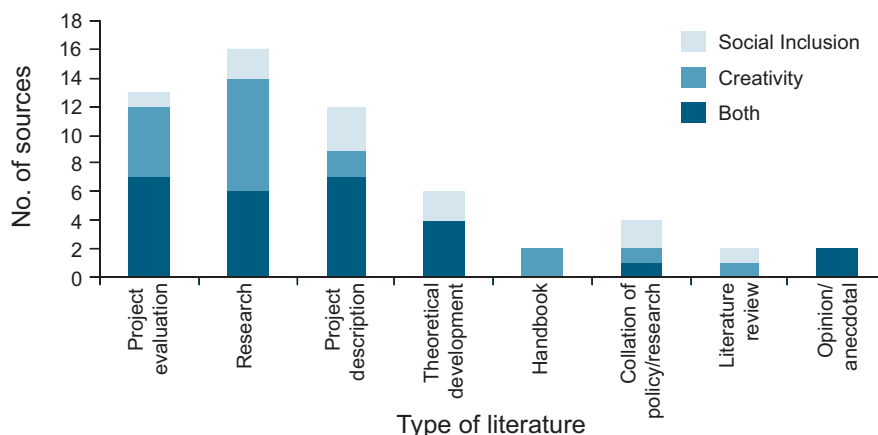
Interestingly, just two of the identified project/programme evaluations focused on the primary age range – both USA studies – Allison (1993) investigating the SMART programme, and Spicker *et al.* (1996) evaluating SPRING I and II. Other than these sources, the primary age group instead featured highly in terms of research – particularly during the earlier publication period covered by the review, with regard to measuring creativity in children (e.g. Jarvis, 1992; Vann, 1985; Naval-Severino, 1993a); and in more qualitative work in more recent years (e.g. Balshaw, 2004; Hebert, 2001). Might it be that programmes to develop creativity amongst socially excluded children in this younger age range do not commonly exist? Is there any scope for considering the implementation of such projects? Does the theoretical literature offer any understandings in this field? (Certainly, there is literature on creativity in young children, and pre-school literature on learner motivation and school readiness which might involve creative and collaborative teaching and learning process.) Craft *et al.*'s (1997) handbook on the teaching of creativity in the primary school, suggests that creativity might prove an 'essential life skill' in the 21st Century, and this in itself might be construed as part of the social inclusion agenda.

### A3.6.4 Type of literature and its focus

An examination of the focus of the literature (creativity, social inclusion or both) according to the type of study undertaken or literature published revealed the following trends.

- Project evaluations covering both areas of social inclusion and creativity were

**Figure A3.5 Type of literature and its focus**



Source: NFER database of sources included in the review.

identified, although there would seem to have been a tendency towards a focus on creativity in this kind of literature (this is interesting given that creativity would seem a complex and difficult area to measure, according to the literature).

- Research also focused more heavily on creativity than social inclusion – and it was notable that more than half of the research papers identified as focusing on the field of creativity were undertaken prior to 1996.
- A focus on both areas was also found in project descriptions, but this kind of literature also tended slightly to emphasise the social inclusion aspect of the work.
- Literature contributing to theoretical understandings covered both areas, as well as highlighting social inclusion in particular.
- On the other hand, the handbooks identified focused mainly on creativity.
- The opinion papers included in the review embraced both areas.

## **A3.7 Country in which the work has been undertaken**

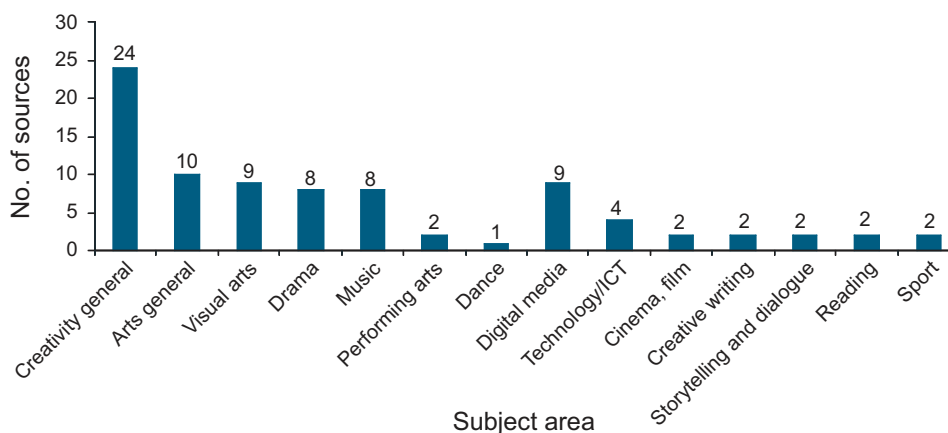
Most of the literature included in the review referred to projects that were undertaken in the UK; although 12 of the publications referred to US sources; three took place in India; two in each of Canada and the Philippines; and Germany, Spain and France were also noted. The geographical areas covered in the UK by the programmes and projects under investigation included a concentration of projects in the West Midlands (seven sources made reference to this location) and London (five sources). Also indicated by more than one source were locations in Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South West England, and Sussex.

## **A3.8 Subject area**

The chief subject areas covered by the literature on creativity and social exclusion would seem to be those of the arts – as shown in Figure A3.6. Some of the literature did not refer to any specific subject area or medium, and so has been categorised as ‘creativity general’.

Where specific art forms were reported, the visual arts, music and drama were more common than dance. Work involving the visual arts included some textile

**Figure A3.6 Subject area**



Source: NFER database of sources included in the review.

NB: Sources sum to more than 57 because a number of subject areas might be referenced in the same source.

projects (Downing *et al.*, 2004) and printmaking (Bond, 1998), as well as non-traditional art forms such as graffiti (e.g. Zero2nineteen, 2004). Music was cited in the fields of music technology and DJ-ing (e.g. Vidall-Hall, 2003; Lord *et al.*, 2002). Drama was used in interventions to mediate adult-children learning interactions (Pogrow, 1996) and in programmes focusing on empowerment through creative expression (e.g. Nelson, 1993).

A number of publications also mentioned digital media and technologies, including photography, video and animation (e.g. Loveless, 2002; Harvey *et al.*, 2002; and Lord *et al.*, 2002). The development of technical skills (alongside creativity) was a frequent aim of the projects in the field of media and the digital arts (e.g. Pigneguy, 2004).

## A3.9 Summary

A total of 57 sources, published between 1985 and 2004 were included in the review. The key characteristics of this literature were as follows:

- Most of the literature identified was published from the mid-1990s onwards; and a sharp increase in terms of volume from 2002 to date. However, there was also a notable amount of relevant literature published in 1993 – chiefly research studies into creative thinking with children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- In terms of the type of literature, empirical research would seem to have been slightly more common in the earlier period of the review, evaluations of programmes and initiatives aimed at enhancing creativity amongst socially excluded young people have been more common in recent years.
- The foci of the literature were examined in relation to creativity, social exclusion and young people. In terms of content and the purpose of the literature, 19 pieces focused mainly on creativity, 11 pieces emphasised social inclusion, whilst 27 pieces overtly embraced both areas.
- The exploration of young people's creative abilities, and the approaches and pedagogues by which these abilities might be developed, formed the backbone of the identified work on creativity. Also related to these areas were investigations into young people's cognitive developments – specifically the development of their higher order thinking skills and their abilities to adapt to new situations. Young people's participation in creative activity was also a common focus; literature in this category sometimes also embraced the youth 'empowerment' agenda.
- As well as the various creative foci under investigation, two key areas were evident in the literature: creativity as a process, and creativity as an outcome. It was apparent that creativity as process was investigated more frequently than creativity as an outcome.
- Different forms of social exclusion were also found in the literature, covering the spheres of: education, economy, culture and crime. Literature which considered educational inclusion/exclusion referred to: young people's disengagement from learning or education; enhancing the achievements of children with poor academic records; issues relating to special and mainstream schooling; discussions and exemplars of inclusive teaching practice and school exclusions. The economic exclusion of young people encompassed the realms of employability and neighbourhood renewal. Cultural inclusion through 'identity' was a prominent theme in two of the sources. Literature looking into reducing crime included work with young people at-risk of offending, and with young offenders.



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