

# July 30, 2007 - The Chèche Konnen Center at TERC Receives Ford Foundation Grant for ArtScience

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Grant will support inquiry into connections between artistic and scientific literacies.

The [Chèche Konnen Center](#) at TERC has received an \$80,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to support ArtScience: Toward A New Pedagogical Vision. This one-year exploratory study will examine connections between artistic and scientific literacies and the opportunities such connections may create for engaged and equitable learning for all children.

"There is a long tradition of philosophical and psychological thought and public school curriculum that separates the sciences from the arts as distinctive ways of knowing," says Beth Warren, the study's principal investigator. "Our Center takes a more integrated view of human sense-making and learning. In this project, we will explore in what ways deep understanding of the biology of flowering plants or the physics of river flow involves modes of imagining, noticing, narrating, questioning, and probing not unlike those involved in understanding a novel, a poem, a painting, or a musical composition."

The study asks, What kinds of rigorous and robust learning opportunities emerge when students engage with the language and symbolizing practices of the sciences in ways similar to what they do with literature, poetry and the visual arts? It focuses on what students, in particular those historically placed at risk in traditional schooling, learn about the sciences and the arts, language and its uses, and themselves as learners when they participate in these new opportunities.

ArtScience is a collaboration among educational researchers at the Chèche Konnen Center, practicing scientists and artists in the Greater Boston community, and faculty from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Open Public School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The collaboration aims to demonstrate on a small-scale ways of creating a transformed set of relationships among the arts, humanities and sciences in American public education and the learning outcomes such a transformation can produce for all children.

Chèche Konnen means "search for knowledge" in Haitian Creole. The first teachers to collaborate with the Center gave it this name in 1987. The Center conducts research on learning and teaching in urban classrooms and on teacher inquiry as a form of practice-based professional learning. A cornerstone of the Center's work is developing understanding of the wide-ranging, intellectually generative sense-making practices that children of color, children who speak a first language other than English, and children living in low-income communities acquire routinely in their families and communities, how these intersect with those characteristic of scientific and other academic literacies, and how to build on these intersections in pedagogically innovative ways to foster rigorous and engaged learning.