

# THE ART OF ENGAGEMENT

A Handbook for Using the Arts in Pupil Referral Units

written by Bob Adams

with contributions by Shirley Brice Heath & Bianca Nunes

edited by Janet Wood



darts Doncaster Community Arts  
commissioned by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation  
& supported by Doncaster Drug Strategy Unit

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with contributions by Shirley Brice Heath & Bianca Nunes  
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Photography - all the photographs in this handbook show activity from darts' Otherwise Creative projects in Doncaster and are used with the participants' consent.

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With thanks to the Pupils, Artists & Staff  
of the Otherwise Creative Consortium

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= Real World Examples

= Academics' Perspective

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# INTRODUCTION

“ Marky and Billy, two young men with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties and a record of disruptive and criminal behaviours, are causing a stir in the town centre shopping arcade. They are attracting interest, not by fighting or shoplifting, but by break-dancing, demonstrating moves they have been taught in a dance session. ”

“ Carl is an elective mute: he has the ability to speak but chooses not to, and the staff from the unit for young people with mental health issues have never heard him utter a word. At break, in the middle of a songwriting session, one of the artists invites me in to hear what the group has produced. Carl is at the microphone, recording his contribution to the song - in Italian. He goes on to teach the group some Italian phrases. ”

“ *“Girls can't use power tools!”* Zara exclaims indignantly. She is a young parent whose strong opinions are a big influence on the group. The artist working with them privately expresses some anxiety but resolves to carry on with the plan. The following week Zara is enthusiastically using a drill, a jigsaw and an electric sander to create a totem pole incorporating musical instruments and images of the girls' children. ”

## Managing arts projects with

young people from Pupil Referral Units over the years has thrown up a wealth of stories such as these. The arts unlock potential like nothing else can. Negative behaviours can give way to positive ones. Young people with chronically low self-esteem can take the first steps towards feeling better about themselves. Severely damaged young men and women closed off from society can find ways of working together on joint projects.

But such miracles are hard won and cannot be sustained without effort, organisation and sensitivity. This handbook aims to outline the structures and approaches we have found effective in running successful arts projects with young people from Pupil Referral Units. Hopefully it will encourage those who already have experience in such work, and offer support and advice to those who have yet to dip a toe in the water.

Most of all the aim of this book is to inspire. Through the arts you can reach those kids. You can be a positive force in the lives of damaged young people, enabling and empowering them, touching their lives. You can give them positive experiences that they will remember and treasure forever.

Bob Adams & Janet Wood  
darts 2007



## About darts

darts is a community arts company working all over Doncaster with people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Working closely in partnership with a wide range of statutory agencies and local organisations, our ambition is to increase the ability of every single person we work with.

Through active participation in creative activity, darts enables local people, groups and organisations to build their ability, confidence and skills, assisting them to play a crucial role in the cultural, social and economic regeneration of their communities.

darts has received national recognition for its innovative approach to community arts and is one of the largest deliverers of participatory arts work in the country. In 1998 we opened The Point, our home and Doncaster's arts building from where we deliver a wide programme of arts work to complement our outreach programme.

## Otherwise Creative

darts has almost ten years' experience working with Pupil Referral Units, growing from a short residency at a PRU for 15-16 year-olds with emotional and behavioural difficulties, through longer-term once-a-week sessions, to the creation of Otherwise Creative, a developmental scheme funded by the Local Authority and the Primary Care Trust Drug Action Team. Working with a consortium of Heads of PRUs, the Arts Development Manager, Pod Leaders (who function as project managers and behaviour support - a full explanation appears later) and carefully chosen artists, we run arts projects with:

- permanently excluded Year 10/11 pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- young mums or mums-to-be
- young people with mental health issues
- young people involved, or at risk of involvement, in prostitution.

## The Road to The Art of Engagement

Our earlier publication, *Breaking The Cycle of Failure* (2003), examined the journey that a young person might travel during an arts project, from total disengagement, through curiosity, to participating fully in an activity. It explored the use of The Engagement Matrix (see pp 54-55) as a tool for monitoring tiny observations of each participant in a session, which over a period of time could be used to evidence changes in behaviour and demonstrate that the person was becoming positively engaged with the artist, the project and the rest of the group. Feedback from *Breaking The Cycle* highlighted the need for a practical guide for those embarking on using the arts in Pupil Referral and Learning Support Units.

During 2004/5 we enlisted the help of a linguistic anthropologist and a research assistant to deepen our understanding of this work, revising the Matrix and working closely with our artists to refine the data collection and interpretation. Their input gave weight to what we instinctively knew - that the arts can effect profound and lasting change in even the hardest to reach young people.

Working with professional researchers had a dramatic impact on our practice and increased our understanding of just *how* work in the arts helps young people raise their self-esteem, undertake new learning processes, and maintain regular habits of self-control and group co-operation. We focused not only on what the young people did, but also on *how* they were learning as they worked with artists. With some guiding ideas from linguistic anthropologist, Shirley Brice Heath, we became more aware of the language used in arts sessions, brought young people directly into the ongoing evaluation of each project, and engaged them in new roles. Most importantly, we learned to talk with the young people about what they were doing and how their work was going, leaving behind any temptation to tell them what they were *not* doing or what was *not* happening. Together with the young people, we kept records of positive actions in each session, we talked about the process of each project, and allowed lessons learned from one project to inform the design of the next.

Throughout this handbook you will hear two principal voices - that of the practitioner, giving nuts and bolts advice on how to put together and run a successful arts project, and the voice of the academic, offering views from a theoretical perspective rooted in close observation of the work. We also draw on the views and experiences of PRU staff, Pod Leaders, artists, and, most importantly, the young people.

## About the Authors

### Bob Adams

Bob Adams has been working with young people for more than 25 years. His experiences include face-to-face street work with young people involved in substance misuse, club based youth work and ten years working in a Y11 Pupil Referral Unit delivering health education and the arts. He has a background as a Drugs Educator and is currently in post as an Arts Development Manager with darts and has managed Otherwise Creative since its conception. Bob is also a qualified Performance Coach and is an artist in his own right.

### Shirley Brice Heath

Shirley Brice Heath is Professor at Large, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, Margery Bailey Professor of English and Dramatic Literature, Emerita, Stanford University, and Visiting Professor of Research, Kings College, University of London. Her research has centred on the learning of young people living in under-resourced environments. She has published over 100 articles, a dozen books, and directed several documentary films portraying the vital role that young people play in their communities through creative approaches to critical issues - their environment, school failures, intergenerational conflict, and the need for viable employment. In England in the past five years she has carried out extensive research on the sustaining effects of Creative Partnerships, a government initiative linking schools in regeneration areas with creative learning opportunities, and has written further books and articles concerning this work.

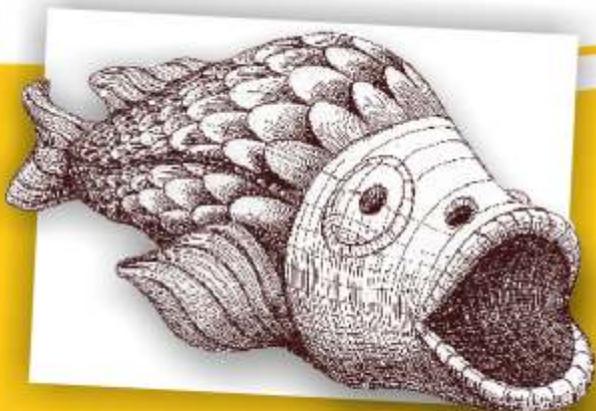
### Bianca Nunes

Bianca Nunes graduated from Brown University with a BA in Cultural Anthropology. At Brown, she assisted Shirley Brice Heath in her research on linguistic and cognitive learning that takes place through observing, listening, and modelling. Currently, Bianca is working with researchers at Tufts - New England Medical Centre in Boston, USA, on a project that examines how doctor-patient communication mediates the relationship between patient characteristics and clinical outcomes, and how the communication process contributes to disparities in health care.

## Why the Arts?

Through the arts we can help to turn potentially violent, disruptive, abused, abusing, abusive, car stealing, drug using, low achieving, non-attending, self-harming, racist teenagers who "can't be arsed" into young people who:

- accept personal responsibility
- communicate appropriately with their peers and adults
- respect themselves and others
- feel proud of their successes and can handle their "failures"
- want to learn and understand creative processes
- are confident and have increased self-esteem
- are appropriately curious about people, society and the world.
- The arts can deliver lessons for life in new and engaging ways, for example:
  - seeing first-hand that it takes time and effort to achieve the result that you want - the sketched ideas, the learning of dance steps, the practising of juggling moves
  - being invited to witness actors being put through their paces again and again before a play about youth and drug misuse goes on tour
  - finally understanding that only by breaking things down into small parts and working on them can the final picture be called a masterpiece
  - seeing a sculptor working 12 hours a day on a 4 ton block of stone until, after many days (and the stone now a mere 2 tons) the limestone gives birth to an amazing fish. Awesome, especially if they know that they have been allowed to have a go



## Shirley Reflects:

What is it about participation in creating art that makes the process especially valuable in the learning lives of pupils within PRUs?

Working in the arts depends on imagination, involvement, energy, and risk - natural bundles of potential within young people.

Working in the arts does not come with "*right*" or "*wrong*" judgemental labels attached, therefore any constructive effort pays off. Being creatively different is positive.

Working in the arts gives everyone responsible roles in meaningful projects.

The arts offer a supportive and productive environment in which the hierarchies typical of traditional school lessons are broken down. Young people's ideas and input are as valued as those of adults, and their role changes from pupil to active participant. They take on new identities as artists, sculptors, designers, builders, painters, dancers, actors... Mutual respect encourages a general atmosphere of learning together. An environment of individuals working towards a common goal builds self-esteem, faith in oneself as a learner, and high expectations of collaborative projects.

Working in the arts brings visual focus, builds attention spans, and shows what it means to work from beginning to completion on projects.

The arts involve both body and mind. Focus is essential. Learners have to slow down, pay attention, and let their energies flow into a plan, a set of tasks, and a sense of future outcome. Arts projects enable young people to experience what it is like to take a project from its tiny beginnings all the way to final production or performance.

Skills gained through working in the arts have strong transfer value into other kinds of work.

The commitment, focus, imagination, communication skills, physical energy, spirit of enquiry, and willingness to explore materials the arts demand, are relevant to many other human endeavours. The arts can provide a context for the improvement of skills in literacy and numeracy, for example, which will feel far more relevant to the young people than the more usual English and Maths lessons.

Working in the arts pulls in many different learning styles.

Diverse learning styles are easily accommodated through creating art. The liberating effects of imagination mean that young artists discover talents they may have never known they had.

Working in the arts expands vocabulary and ways of communicating. Young people enjoy being appreciated. When their work is public, they can talk as artists with adults about the process, evaluation of the project, and expectations for how the current work will move to the next stage. They quickly learn the joy of appreciation from others. Soon they remind their peers that praise and pride engender harmony.

*"I was very proud and you should be too."*

*Otherwise Creative participant*

Working in the arts can shift the emphasis away from the individual and onto benefiting communities and families.

Within the arts, in products, performances, and projects, young people work with an eye toward benefiting others. When they create dramatic performances or puppet shows or cartoon exhibitions, younger siblings and their friends get to show off the achievements of older brothers or sisters. Life-sized wooden models invariably generate questions from passers by. The challenge of shaping artwork to please audiences and raise their curiosity requires young people to consider the perspective of others.

Working in the arts can engender positive behaviour.

Participation as woodworker, mask maker, lyric writer, sculptor, musician, or dancer depends on extensive practice moving toward public performance and evaluation. This requires self-discipline and the capacity for constructive self-criticism. Through regular participation in the arts, learners can develop both self-regulation and the positive monitoring of the behaviour of others.

Working in the arts stimulates young people to think about leisure time in new ways.

The sense of achievement that comes from being part of a successful collaborative effort towards a high-quality end product gives young people a sense of self-efficacy. PRUs working with the arts will give their pupils these opportunities, and will build habits and interests that will be positive influences on the use of leisure time.

In summary...

Arts participation calls for young people to become fully involved in a collaborative effort to produce a high quality product. The arts give young people the opportunity to work with adults and their peers, building supportive relationships. The multiple-phase planning that arts projects demand enables young people to develop essential personal skills and to get used to looking forward, changing their focus from a negative past to a positive future.



## Sample Project: The Winter Drummer

Two Otherwise Creative groups worked collaboratively on the same piece - a life-sized wooden working automaton of a drummer. The creative process was very intense with measuring, acquiring materials, short and long term planning and consultation having to take place with both groups. It was an ideal vehicle for reflecting on previous achievements - the young people had been inspired by sessions in drumming - and future plans - the movements of the drummer became the inspiration for sessions in African dance.

The finished sculpture, as a result of suggestions from the young artists, was displayed in darts' building, The Point, and became the centrepiece of a sharing of work created by all projects within Otherwise Creative over two terms. Friends, family, PRU staff and the local press attended. The young people were comfortable in the role of artists as they proudly discussed their work with interested members of the public who were also present.



## Why use an Artist?

It is, of course, perfectly possible to initiate an arts project yourself, particularly if you or another member of staff have specific skills in an artform. However, there are many advantages to bringing in a professional artist to work with your young people.

Professional artists:

- can provide a different role model for the young people: many are by their very nature unconventional adults with a fresh take on life

- can offer a different focus to the group and come with no preconceptions about the young people, what they are capable of or what they got up to that morning in the Maths lesson

- can form a new relationship with the young people and although in the role of a professional are not seen as authority figures

- are professionals in their own right - they may have exhibited work in galleries, recorded CDs, performed in professional theatres or in high-profile music venues, giving them enhanced credibility with the young people

- have made a successful career in the arts and as such are role models who negate the belief that the arts is "just" a leisure activity

- can inspire you and other staff with new approaches that you may well want to adopt in your own sessions - they could even deliver a training session for staff.



## Why do you want to use the Arts?

What are the specific outcomes you want to achieve with your young people? Do you want to improve their communication skills? Is working together as a group something they find a challenge?

It's important to be absolutely clear about this before embarking on your first project, so that you can give the artists or the arts organisation with whom you want to work, a clear brief.

Take some time to discuss this carefully with your colleagues and draw up a list of what you would like to achieve. But be realistic and avoid being too ambitious: the benefits of using the arts are manifold and real but you're not going to change the world for your young people in one six-week project! Discuss your needs thoroughly with the artist or arts organisation and approach the project as a partnership.





# SETTING UP

The practicalities involved in setting up and running arts projects with young people

## Funding

If it is not possible to fund your project directly from your own budget or from special education initiatives, you will need to apply to external bodies. It is worthwhile investigating local community funds, trusts and foundations for start-up money. Use this as a springboard for partnership work.

If you have a local community arts organisation or a particular artist in mind, it's important that you consult them before applying for funding. They should have experience in developing funding bids as well as being able to advise you on costs and the optimum number of sessions in order to achieve your goals. Your project will stand a greater chance of success in every way if the PRU and the arts organisation work together from the outset. You may even decide to send in a joint application as a partnership which may make for a stronger bid.

One source of help could be your regional office of Arts Council England. A trawl on the Internet should provide you with trusts and foundations whose remit is specifically to fund projects with young people. More potential sources of funding are to be found in the Online Resources section of this handbook (p124).

Different funders require different forms of monitoring, documentation and feedback and it's important to take all this into consideration at the outset. Some bodies require match funding from another source; others will accept "in kind" elements such as administration or staff support to be your match.

Otherwise Creative, working with some of the most hard to reach, marginalised, disengaged young people in the borough, is now regularly funded so we can plan ahead and develop long-term work. It is money well spent - every £ spent now potentially saves many more £s in the future. We don't know how many of the young people we work with are likely to get involved with the Criminal Justice System, but we do know that it costs a minimum of £300+ per day to keep a young person in one of Her Majesty's institutions. The cost to society - who knows? The value of the work - priceless.

## Developing a Champion

Having someone on your side to pursue funding, to drive forward the project, to facilitate the first steps is very desirable. They should know who the purse holders are (or be purse holders themselves) and have sufficient clout to get them to listen. The Otherwise Creative Project was fortunate in having the Head of a PRU as the driving force behind the project. She became our "white knight" who, after seeing the positive effects the arts had upon her pupils, was determined that other young people should benefit.

Ensure that your champion is kept up to speed on what your young people have been doing, and what the future plans are. Are there opportunities for your champion to visit some sessions? Can s/he be accompanied by possible funders? Sharings, performances and open workshops are all useful awareness-raising vehicles that should be used to their best advantage to raise the profile of the work and attract further funding.

Photographs of workshops can be used as part of a powerful presentation to gain the support of potential partners. Publications such as *Breaking The Cycle of Failure* (see p122) can be sourced for further evidence. Liaising with other PRUs and organisations who are involved in the arts, attending conferences and networking are also vital tools.



## Budgeting

Whether you're applying for funding from another organisation or finding the money from your own budget, it's important to get an accurate estimate of the full costs of the project at the earliest stage so you can tailor your plans to match the funds you have.

The cost of the artists themselves (whether individuals or an arts organisation) will almost certainly be the lion's share of your budget so you need to think carefully about how much time they will need. It is very useful to consult with experienced artists and arts organisations at this stage to understand what may be involved.

It's important to consider the time artists will need outside the workshop sessions themselves and factor in the costs involved. Artists or organisations will need preparation time before the project starts so that they can meet the staff and the young people and plan with you so that everyone knows what they are doing, what the aims are, what support is in place and so on. It is also advisable to plan an evaluation meeting for the end of the project.

If you're employing individual artists directly, it's likely to be on a freelance basis.\* Rates of pay vary depending on the skills and experience of the artists involved. If the daily rate is higher than you expected remember that artists need to cover the full cost of running their business, developing new work and developing their own skills all within their daily rate. If the work will be over a substantial period of time you may need to contract the artist as an employee.

Other costs to consider might include transport and/or venue hire if your project is happening off site; equipment hire; materials; documentation costs; and refreshments.

Finally, if your staff will be attending sessions or meetings over and above the norm then that needs to be budgeted for too.

\* Though aimed primarily at the visual arts, *Good Practice in Paying Artists* - available from AN The Artists Information Company ([www.a-n.co.uk](http://www.a-n.co.uk)) - is a useful guide for employing artists. For advice about local conditions, contact your Arts Council regional office ([www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)).

### EXAMPLE PROJECT BUDGET

#### Artist Time

Planning, 3 artists, 3 sessions	£ _____
Delivery, 3 artists, 10 sessions	£ _____
Evaluation, 3 artists, 1 session	£ _____

#### PRU Staff Time

Planning, 2 staff, 3 sessions	£ _____
Delivery, 2 staff, 10 sessions	£ _____
Evaluation, 2 staff, 1 session	£ _____

#### Other Costs

Room Hire, 2 rooms, 10 sessions	£ _____
Equipment Hire, 10 sessions	£ _____
Materials (based on 8 pupils), 10 sessions	£ _____
Refreshments (based on 8 pupils), 10 sessions	£ _____
Travel	£ _____
Administration & Overheads	£ _____

**Total Cost** £ \_\_\_\_\_

## Models

How much money there is in the purse influences how much freedom there is to develop a project, how many sessions can be run and over what sort of time period. However, let's look at what models you might aim for.

### one-off arts days

These are not the best way forward. Although they give the pupils the chance to experience something new, something exciting, something that makes them think, something that increases their self esteem and self-confidence, something creative and something that expands their horizons, at the end of the day it's taken away from them. They've had a small taste of the cake, and then it's locked away.

### Shirley Comments:

Introductions to an art form or type of activity do not really introduce anything: they just are here and now for the moment. Thus work in the arts becomes a series of starts and stops, different kinds of experiences at low levels of creativity, and with minimal requirements for developing any expertise. Learners therefore learn and gain reinforcement for having short-attention spans and for not thinking about any future for what they do or learn.

### short project

Even if funds are limited, look at providing either an intensive block of work e.g. 3 full days or regular sessions over a set period of time, e.g. 6 sessions over 6 weeks. Use these sessions as a testing ground to see how your pupils respond, how the artists work, how comfortable members of staff are working in a different way, maybe in a different venue. Use the time to inspire and become inspired.

### longer term work

Sustainability is the key to capitalising on the progress your young people will make, and evaluation of our Engagement Matrix has shown that the more frequently and consistently a pupil attends arts activities the more progress they make.

In longer-term work, there is far more opportunity for development and for allowing work in one artform to be developed through another. It also allows the artists to push the young people into riskier territory.

### Shirley Adds:

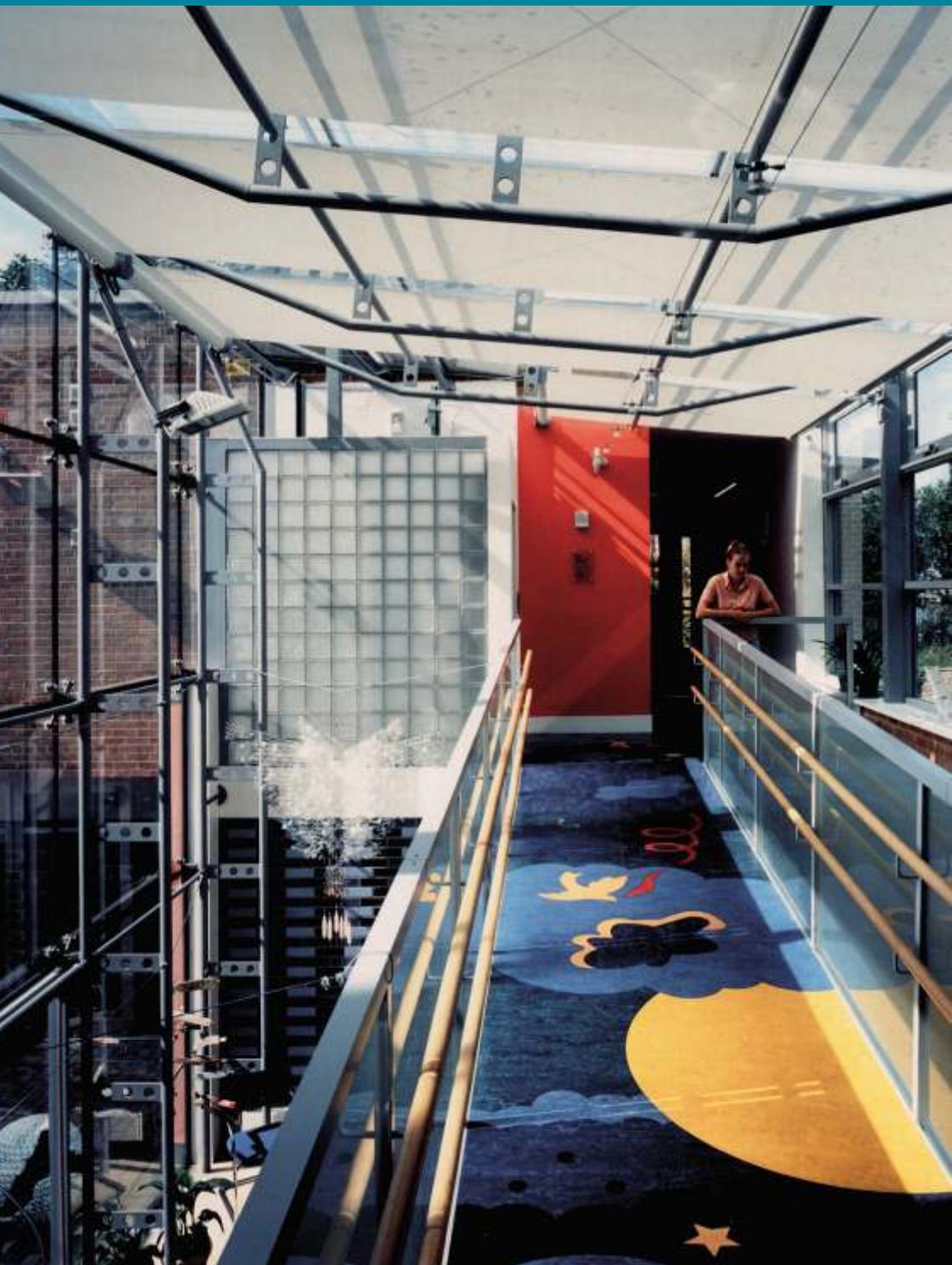
This finding from our research is hard to grasp, for the tendency of arts programmes is to put young people into comfort zones. However, only when doing something that has real meaning, is it in their view "worth something," and thereby carries some risk: in only "getting it good enough" will it attract and keep young people engaged.

darts found that simply having a short series of classes in one art form with each person having a final piece did not give a sufficient sense of risk to engage some learners. When, however, work over a period of time on one art form was developed into a longer more complex project with a deadline further into the year, the work became more risky. Folding one art form into another (mask-making into drama, for example, or drumming into sculpture with wood and on into African dance) also helped carry over learning from one set of workshops to the next.

The risk of moving forward and doing something bigger that depended on the merits and indeed on the successful completion of the young people's own work also accelerated motivation.

### Some pointers on cost

Tip: start small. Plant the seeds and allow things to grow. Having set your goals, nurture the project and allow it to develop. Artist fees vary, but it is possible to have an impact with just a few hundred pounds for a four-session block. This could be seen to be seed money, with the project developing and creating its very own "arts forest." Otherwise Creative started off as a £1,000 intensive week's project, and has now developed into a modular scheme which spans many hard to reach groups. The Pupil Referral Pods now account for approximately £120,000 a year, with other strands developing even as this handbook is being written. One of the Otherwise Creative modules includes the provision of a 14-18 years issue-based arts drop-in called *Art in the House*. This is an excellent way for current and previous OC attendees and other PRU pupils to continue their involvement in the arts.



## Venue

The venue for the work is very important. Yes, excellent work can, and does, take place in surroundings far from ideal, and yes, we do have to work with what we've got. However, the response of the young people to their surroundings can be quite dramatic. It is important to value the young people, and this can be reflected in the quality of the environment in which we choose to work.

You might not have the luxury of being able to choose whether to work on or off-site, but it is useful to keep in mind the advantages, and possible drawbacks, involved in each.

Even if the rest of the project takes place in a different venue, it *may* be advantageous to have at least the first session on home territory, in a safe, familiar environment. Some groups may need several sessions here before moving to a new venue. This can be a safe way to slowly build up the confidence of the group, but there are potential disadvantages. The group may be locked into particular negative patterns of behaviour at the PRU, which restricts their engagement with activities. By starting off-site, that pattern is broken.

### OFF-SITE

#### Advantages

- Quality of building may be better
- New, stimulating environment
- New ways of working
- Personal history not carried forward
- Possible exposure to other artists/art forms
- New expectations
- Artist may be familiar with environment

### OFF-SITE

#### Disadvantages

- Cost
- Transport
- Unfamiliar territory
- Less PRU staff
- Pre-session visit required

### ON-SITE @ PRU

#### Advantages

- Known environment for pupils and staff
- Control over environment
- High level of staff on premises
- Safe environment for pupils
- No transport issues
- Rules already in place

### ON-SITE @ PRU

#### Disadvantages

- Quality of building
- Psychological restrictions to creativity
- Physical restrictions regarding certain art forms
- Perceived pressures from staff/peers in building
- Viewed as school

## Equipment & Materials

These should be the best you can afford. Sadly it is often the case that the unruly, disruptive pupils get the worst environment and the oldest equipment - after all, "How can they be trusted? They don't deserve anything better."

*"It's good here. At the comp we were always given that crap, cheap paper."* Otherwise Creative participant 03/04

Equipment and materials should be sourced well in advance of the session, so that on the day they can be collected and positioned accordingly. It's important to keep the equipment out of the way and under control until required. This rules out the possibility of things being distracting or used/misused before they are needed. Ensure that the artist is aware of this, particularly if they are new to working with potentially disruptive groups.

Step by step instructions should be given as required, with a demonstration as appropriate. The young people will probably be straining at the leash and will not want long explanations. Be aware of how the group responds, and if some don't appear to have fully grasped the instructions ask the artist to explain again for *your* benefit.

Some years ago a TV documentary profiled a man who was serving a life sentence for murder. The turning point for him was when he was involved in an arts project and was allowed to use scissors. Previously he was judged to be too dangerous to be allowed to use such potentially lethal weapons. It was of course about *trust* and *expectations*.

A few years ago we were fortunate enough to have access to an £850 digital camera. The pupils were told the price and were then given free access to it, the only stipulation being that they put the strap around their neck in case they dropped it. Why tell them the price? Not in order to impress them or to show off but to show that we valued and trusted them. In all the years we used the camera no one ever mistreated it.



## Room Set-up

As well as the practicalities of ensuring there is sufficient room for the activity to take place, that it's OK for paint or clay to be used in that particular environment for example, it is also vital to have a mental plan as to where staff and pupils will work within the room.

Do certain pupils need to be kept apart?

Do certain pupils work well together?

Avoid the "teenage dance" scenario of pupils on one side of the room and staff on the other. Staff should be alongside the pupils.

Key staff should also ensure that they have a clear view of the room including the door but this does *not* mean sitting in a lookout tower.

All of this requires dialogue between PRU staff and arts staff before the first session. Everyone needs to have an understanding of the whys and wherefores of decisions taken with regard to room management.



## Documentation

It's important to record what takes place in order to reinforce the sense of achievement for the young people, to use in evaluations for funders, and to help pursue further funding.

A digital camera is a great resource, and the young people can record each other's progress themselves. What better way to capture the joy, the pleasure, the "light bulb moments" than with images? Then you could transform them into posters, involve a Words Worker to draw out some lines from the group (maybe in the form of a rap) to further energise the pictures and you've got some pretty powerful tools to work with.

The posters can be displayed as positive reminders (anchoring tools) of



## Ratios & Group Size

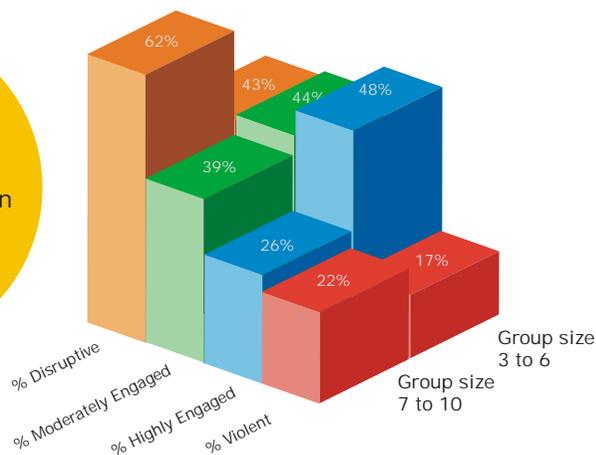
Working within the PRU environment you will be aware of the importance of appropriate staff: pupil ratios. If clear ratios are already set within your PRU regarding the maximum number of pupils per member of staff then do not exceed these for arts projects.

It is beneficial to have a comparatively low number of pupils depending upon the challenges faced within the group. We aim to have a maximum of 10 pupils, and have had major success working very intensely with groups of 4-6.

Shirley says: This intensity of interaction ensures that during any single occasion or block of time, the young people often work one-to-one with the professional artist.

If the group is comparatively large, the advantage of having plenty of staff on hand means that a small group environment can be replicated. The pupils can work in twos or threes, with a member of staff with each group. The lead artist can then continually "visit" each group in order to offer support in a more intimate way. Smaller groups can help stop the "domino effect". If one pupil, for whatever reason, is not engaging, his/her negative comments and/or actions can be stopped from spreading to the rest of the group. There may even be the opportunity for one-to-one work if staff levels are high, and pupil numbers are low (court/exams/illness etc). This can be extremely beneficial, but care must be taken that the pupils aren't uncomfortable with too many adults.

Our earlier research, *Breaking the Cycle of Failure*, demonstrated a convincing link between group size, behaviour and engagement.



## Planning

When planning arts programmes it is easy to have off-the-shelf projects, tried and tested activities that we know to work. However, over time, this approach can stifle creativity. Risks are not taken: we don't grow; our pupils don't grow. A good community artist is one who does take risks in a safe, supportive environment.

Whether the project is comparatively safe or not, planning is essential. Even with thorough planning and preparation things may not turn out as expected, particularly when working in the field of behavioural issues. A contingency plan is always useful. The artist should always have a back-up plan, some alternative activity in case someone really does not engage, or they work so well that the planned task is completed in half the time.

*The project plan* should be drawn up by the artist in consultation with PRU staff. It should detail the overall aim of the project and also have a breakdown of the aims of each session. This is a framework which need not be rigidly adhered to, but which should guide the artist. This can be referred to as *flexibility within a structure*. Each completed session should also impact upon the planning of future sessions.

*The session plan* might include:

- greeting everyone by name
- introducing the aim of the session and setting it in the context of the whole project
- a warm-up activity related to the main activity
- the main activity, with demonstrations if necessary, broken down into easily understood stages
- a clear indication of when the session is going to close, with clearing up time if appropriate
- a closing activity that includes feedback from the artist, other staff and the young people.
- The plan should also provide details of any requirements regarding room set up, materials etc.

## Risk Assessment

This is obviously very important whether on or off-site. The risk assessment, in addition to the usual “slips & trips”, should also include references to specific risks associated with each particular art form e.g. ensure participants stretch and warm up before dance. Access to a first aider, whether in the workshop or in the building, is very important and, if not compulsory, should be seen as best practice.

### Risk Assessment darts, Doncaster Community Arts

Project: Otherwise Creative – JASP  
Activity: Fabric

Location: VA2 & VA1 at the Point

Lead Artist: Susan Forbes  
Pod Leader / Behaviour Support: Jamie Rossar

22/02/2006 – 29/03/2006

Type of risk	Who is at risk	Likelihood of risk (1= low to 5= high)	Action required to minimise risk
Slips/falls	Staff and pupils	1	Make sure space is clear of obstacles, ample room for working and manoeuvring
Fire Evacuation	Staff and pupils	1	Ensure all are made aware of what to do in case of an emergency Evacuation.
Misuse of equipment – eg scissors, needles & laminator	Staff and pupils	1	Explain ALL safety procedures before and during the session. Keep work area TIDY. Supervise pupils.
Toxic Materials – eg glue, paint & marker pens	Staff and pupils	1	Explain ALL safety procedures before and during the session. Keep work area TIDY. Supervise pupils.

Other information



## Choosing Your Staff

Your funding is in place and you have worked out an appropriate model for your project. You have decided where your arts activities will take place, and you have an idea of the type of project you would like for your young people. This section deals with the key people needed to allow the young people to have the best possible experience, and how to set up channels of communication so that the project runs successfully.

## The Pod Leader

Otherwise Creative has several PRU groups or 'pods', each of which has a 'Pod Leader'. Hopefully by understanding their role, you will be able to develop a model appropriate for your own projects.

A Pod Leader is a constant strand through every session for each PRU. Artists may change but the young people should always know that there'll be a familiar face at each session. Our young people have a need for norms. They need consistency at home, at school and within the arts sessions. We may not be able to influence all of these areas, but *"two out of three ain't bad"* and the Pod Leader is ideally placed to facilitate consistency within the sessions.

S/he attends every session and is charged with both supporting the artist and being responsible for behaviour (in conjunction with any PRU staff present). The Pod Leader discusses possible roles and methods of communication.

The Pod Leader plans all the sessions in conjunction with the Project Manager and PRU Head (or designated contact) as appropriate.

The Pod Leader is responsible for monitoring, evaluation, de-brief etc.

If the project is off site then the Pod Leader should feed back to the PRU as soon as possible after the session. Feedback should include any issues that have arisen, and also positive moments that have occurred. This enables the PRU staff to re-enforce the positive behaviours that have taken place and congratulate the young people at the first opportunity, or pick up on any concerns. This should take place even if PRU staff attend the session. This ensures that feedback travels swiftly to the nominated point of contact.

The Pod Leader is also an artist in his/her own right, and should,

when appropriate, deliver at some stage during the project.

The Pod Leader is the point of contact for any issues arising, but has access to the Project Manager as required.

It is up to each project to decide whether or not to have the equivalent of our Pod Leader. An experienced member of staff from the PRU could fulfil some of the roles e.g. behaviour and communication, but may not be as skilled in other areas and PRU commitments may impinge on consistent attendance. There is also the added dimension of pupil behaviour deteriorating as a result of PRU staff being present. What we would emphasise is the importance of having an extra member of staff to free up the artist to concentrate on engaging the pupils in the arts activity.

## PRU Staff

Choosing the right staff to take part in the project with the young people is vitally important. It is crucial that they believe in the value of the activity, understand what is going on and are open to a different way of working.

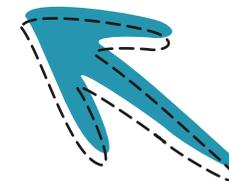
They need to be confident and comfortable with their relationship with the young people and be able to act quickly and sensitively if there are any behavioural difficulties, while at the same time respecting the artist's role as leader of the session.

They need to be able to communicate successfully with the artist, the Pod Leader, the young people and the rest of the PRU staff. They should be valuable advocates for the work.

They are also there to act as role models. How can we expect our young people to have a go at something that they have never tried before, to risk (in their eyes) failure, to do something they are afraid of when we won't do it ourselves? Time to put the ego to one side. No matter how we might feel, we should all have a go. It's good for the pupils to know that an adult feels silly/unsure/afraid/nervous but then goes ahead and does it. The PRU staff may feel more inhibited if the sessions are delivered on site.

*"They (artists & other staff) are learners as well as us!"*

Otherwise Creative pupil 04/05



## The Artist

The artist should not only be highly experienced and skilled in her/his own art form, but also an excellent communicator, able to engage even the most challenging young person.

Having the right *kind* of artist is very important. They may not have all the experience of dealing with behavioural issues that experienced PRU staff have. These can be developed over time with experience, support and training. They must however have the ability to communicate appropriately with the group. They may be among the top exponents in their field, but without the required communication skills, the only experience the young people will have of the arts may be one that ensures they'll never be creative again.

Working with young people outside mainstream education, artists have to function in ways which they may not have foreseen.

They need to be:

- role models, modelling behaviours they expect of the group
- behaviour workers - working in conjunction with PRU staff to modify inappropriate behaviours directly and indirectly
- listeners and communicators
- inspirers and facilitators
- supporters and sharers
- teachers and trainers.

But above all, they need to be highly skilled in and passionate about their art form. They are still, first and foremost, artists.

It is good practice to work closely with an established arts organisation. Not only should the organisation have access to appropriate artists, they should also have good monitoring systems and quality assurance policies in place.

If this is not possible, cast a wide net for your artists. Your regional office of Arts Council England should be able to advise, and there is an Arts Jobs mailing list (see [www.artscouncil.org.uk/pressnews/maillinglists.php](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/pressnews/maillinglists.php)) on which you can advertise for artists. Look at CVs and portfolios, take up references, but most importantly interview potential artists to find out how they come across and to get a feel for how they might interact with your young people. Their passion and interest in the project should come across.



Ian is a visual artist concentrating on sculpture, carving and sketching.

*The most important step to my artistic identity was actually calling myself "an artist", making that definite transition from being "good at art" to being an artist. It made me look at myself in a more serious light and brought more understanding to my life. I became more self aware and my work took on new meaning and became more significant to me. I discovered that I had the ability to make art from any source available. I can make art out of anything - from dust to bones!*



Anne has skills in both drama and visual arts.

*After several years managing a day centre for adults with learning disabilities and behaviour which challenges the service, during which time the arts had become a valuable tool, I decided to go to university and study for a degree in Arts Education.*

*Although specialising in drama, I find myself drawn more to visual art. My inspiration can come from anywhere, anything that moves, textures, colours, sounds... I love to combine different materials in my work to create layers which invite the viewer to touch and explore the textures.*

## Cultural Diversity

The young people we work with often demonstrate racist tendencies through ignorance of other cultures and by modelling negative attitudes of family and peers. Working with artists from a range of cultural backgrounds can help to modify these behaviours, provide role models for pupils of different heritage and deeply enrich the lives of all the young people.

Try not to reinforce stereotypes by only employing artists from different cultural backgrounds when you want a specific culture represented, for example only employing an African artist to do African beadwork. Be creative in how you employ artists: for example two musicians from two different cultural backgrounds could spark off an exciting mix that draws on both cultures and more, but creates something new with your group.

One group we worked with continually made racist comments in and out of sessions. Once they had worked with an Indian drummer, however, the comments stopped and they were far more positive. Some time afterwards, one of the worst offenders was in a town centre café with his mother and grandmother. On seeing this artist walk by, he ran outside, shook the musician by the hand and invited him inside to meet his family.

One young man was positively boastful about the fact that he had never travelled outside Doncaster, and never wanted to. Once he had worked on a project with a Zimbabwean artist and been exposed to storytelling, drumming and dance, however, he said he would like to go to Africa.

A trainee artist, also from Zimbabwe and a Rastafarian, prompted many interested questions from the group he was working with, including an awed aside to the Pod Leader, "What's under his hat?" One young man of dual heritage became very attached to the artist and was quite upset when it came to his last session with the group.



## Managing Relationships

Artists and PRU staff should have a clear understanding of their respective roles within the session - neither party should ever feel undermined.

If working off site it is often appropriate to leave behind issues from the PRU. One of the advantages of going to a special place to do an arts activity is that the young people start afresh with a clean slate.

PRU standards with regard to language and topics that are not allowed, however, should be adhered to. This will include racist, sexist, homophobic, personal comments plus perhaps the promotion of inappropriate life styles. For example creating an image and then including a joint could be seen as promoting drug use. A young person may well not like being told that they cannot draw a joint or a cannabis leaf in their masterpiece. It is best to give a few words of general guidance at the start of the session, so they can't use "not being told" as a reason for "kicking off". Use such occasions as discussion points.

The pupils need boundaries - they respond to them, they feel safe with them, and they know where they are. Will they test them? Definitely, yes. Boundaries during art sessions may differ from those in the PRU, but the core ones remain.

There must be mutual trust and respect between the artist/arts organisation and the PRU. An understanding of the ethos behind what may at first appear to be an alien way of doing things can help engender greater levels of understanding and a good working relationship. Even if relationships have been successfully built over time, there may be occasions when parameters have to be revisited and agreement sought between all parties concerned. It can take time for everyone to become comfortable working in partnership.

Be aware of potential areas of disagreement. Areas of jurisdiction regarding what is acceptable behaviour amongst the pupils can be quite a challenge to resolve. As a result of working on modifying the use of inappropriate language by the pupils, the PRU staff may well appear to have more acceptance of the "xxxx yous!" which can often be heard before, during and after some sessions. It is important that non-PRU staff are aware of the work taking place behind the scenes.

Similarly, artists should ensure that other staff do not stifle the creative process through being too restrictive in their "control" of the pupils. Getting the right balance is vital.

Above all it is important to be *clear and consistent*. It invalidates all the work carried out before if the message changes from person to person, day to day. Consistency is the key.





## The Importance of Communication

There is no value in coming to the end of a block of work and saying, *“Well it was all right, but I was disappointed because you didn’t do... , and it would have been better if you had done... and the staff felt uncomfortable because of ...,”* or, *“I was pleased with the work, but would have preferred to have used classroom 2 and had more staff support”*.

Again, communication is the key. Concerns from either side should be aired as quickly as possible so that things can be rectified. Imagine the process as comparable to the passage of a large ocean liner - it has its route, but still needs to make constant adjustments in order to reach its final destination.

I was recently in a planning meeting where the arts team was being briefed about the young people, and they in turn briefed the other staff about the intended content of the sessions. One of the PRU workers said that his only concern was that there had to be sufficient structure.

We pointed out that the project plan that had been drawn up showed that there was a strong structure that also allowed for flexibility.

He went on to say that previously some of the young people had been allowed to “get away” with things. After some gentle probing he finally said that some of the group had not joined in all the time, and the artist had just carried on.

It was pointed out that there are many strategies used to engage, and allowing participants to not fully participate 100% of the time can be an appropriate strategy to adopt.

He said that his approach would be to go over to the young person and be very direct. “You should join in.”

Yes, this can work, but one would hope that the majority of intervention/engagement techniques would be slightly subtler and probably more successful.

The member of staff was referring back to a project that had taken place almost a year earlier, and it was only now that this was being aired. The importance of good open communication was hammered home. How can the arts team respond if they don't know what they are supposed to respond to?

## Need to Know

Only by having good open communication can the PRU feel comfortable enough to share pupil information as necessary. This does not automatically mean that artists/behaviour workers/Pod Leaders are given the full background on each and every pupil within the group. It is at the discretion of the Head of the PRU to use her/his experience to decide exactly how much information should be passed on to the staff on the arts side.

It may be directly related to the work: *"Mary cannot cope with loud music."* *"Simon does not like to touch paper."* *"John has difficulty reading"*.

It may be health related: *"Louise refuses to wear her hearing aid. She cannot hear with her left ear."* *"Lewis has asthma."* *"Tony takes medication for ADHD"*.

It may be behavioural: *"Alan and George wind each other up."* *"Malcolm responds well to praise."* *"Tina likes to set fire to things."* *"Derick self harms. He cuts himself on his arms"*.

It may be related to past experiences: *"Anthony was sexually abused by his father, uncle and grandfather. He has difficulty trusting male authority figures."* *"Geraldine loves dancing, she used to go to lessons"*.

It may or may not be appropriate to share this information with arts staff. Do they need to know all the facts about Anthony's sexual abuse? It may be sufficient for them to know that *"Anthony does not respond well to men,"* or that *"Anthony had a very poor relationship with his father and other male members of his family."* Arts staff do need to be aware of such issues - imagine how Anthony might feel if he was asked to describe his dad!

In addition, key staff must be able to cope with such knowledge and they need to know to whom, if anyone, they should pass on relevant information. In our case Otherwise Creative Pod Leaders are briefed by PRU staff, and they in turn pass information to the artists on a need to know basis, e.g:

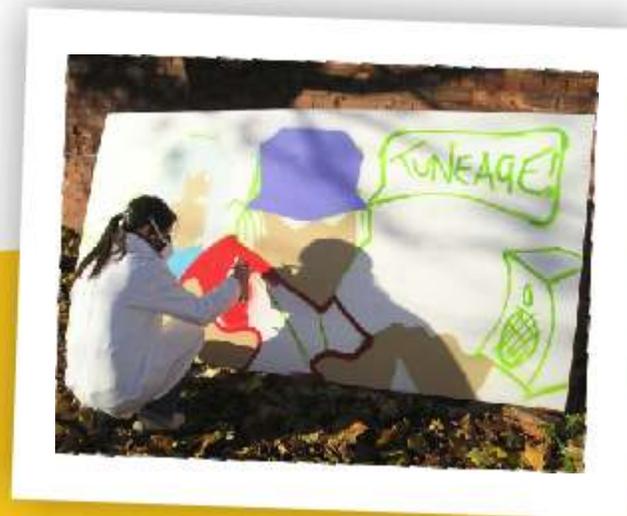
*Pod Leader briefed by Head of PRU that Tony has sexually abused other young people and must not be left in the presence of other young people without adult supervision. Pod Leader briefs artist that Tony must not be left with young people unless supervised by an adult.*

It is vital that any information received does not result in limiting assumptions being placed on the young people by the artists. It is about trust and expectations. PRU staff may well find this quite a challenge, and

make such assertions as *"Lance always opts out of putting pen to paper",* *"Jennifer just will not be able to speak in front of a group."* We must have positive expectations - expect them to succeed and we must show trust. This does not mean that we become Pollyannas. Remember the old saying, *"Trust in God, but don't forget to tie up your camels."*

On a day-to-day basis, a brief telephone call from the PRU an hour or two before the start of a session, raising awareness of any particular behaviours/ incidents, can make all the difference between running a calm session and a chaotic one.

Working in partnership with the PRU, the artist must be aware of the aims of the PRU, and also be aware of any possible links between academic work within the PRU and with the planned sessions.



## Respecting Differences

Artists have to realise that PRUs are part of the educational system, and as such they work within certain constraints. PRU staff need to be aware that artists may well be used to working with no constraints. Once again, by having a basic understanding of how each party operates, and by communicating, a successful arts experience can be had by all.

The artist needs to be aware that PRUs are hierarchical structures, and there may well be formal procedures in place that they need to follow. When talking with the pupils, for example, should they refer to the PRU staff by their first names or as Mrs. Smith?

The PRU needs to be aware that the artist is not a teacher, and may well not be dressed in accordance with the PRU dress code. However, he or she should be clean and not wearing anything that countermands the ethos of the PRU. It should be very refreshing, both for staff and pupils, to be involved with a different style of person. Many artists have interesting stories to tell of their lives and their involvement in the arts.

Artists should be aware that there have to be clear boundaries between themselves and the pupils. They should be *friendly*, but they are not *friends*. They are professionals working with young people, many of whom have major challenges in their lives. Attachments may develop, particularly as the artist may well be the first positive adult role model (outside of PRU staff) that the pupils have had. This makes modelling appropriate behaviour all the more important.

There may be occasions when a young person discloses personal information to the artist. The artist should pass this information on to the appropriate person. It may mean that they first seek advice from their Project Manager, or speak immediately with PRU staff. In some cases the artist should write a brief report of what took place, and what action was taken. *If in doubt pass it on!* This is where working with an established organisation with a clear Code of Practice comes into its own. Also bear in mind the Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People.

A nominated point of contact at the PRU can be a great help, as the Head may not always be accessible.

To further develop relationships and to gain a greater understanding of how PRUs operate, it may be possible to have an artist/Pod Leader on placement within the PRU prior to or running parallel with a project. This is not the same as having an artist in residence, but is akin to having a volunteer support worker for a few days. The artist should be well briefed beforehand, as they will be working in what may seem to them to be an alien environment.

## Pre-Project Briefing

In the initial planning/briefing meeting, it may be useful to follow this structure.

Brief the artist about any particular needs of participants e.g. if pupils find reading a challenge, the Words Worker would need to be aware in order to have alternative ways of generating words other than through reading and writing.

Are there any particular dynamics within the group that the artist needs to be aware of?

Ask the artist to brief the PRU staff as to what to expect regarding the activity. They need to clarify if the pupils should be told in advance, and how staff should respond if asked about the specific activity. Pupils may well fear "dance" or "drama", and will probably have preconceived ideas about what they will have to do.

*Due to previous bad experiences of art in mainstream school, it was agreed at a consortium meeting that instead of programming "art" in the timetable, it was to be given the name KRE8. Branding is so important.*

Ensure that artists and staff are clear on their respective roles regarding handling behaviour.



## The Importance of the Debrief

Debriefing for staff and artists at the end of each session is very important. Not only does it help to clarify misconceptions and misinterpretations, but the debrief also helps to alleviate artist burnout.

Over the years teaching staff may at times have questioned their own *raison d'être*, and hopefully come to the conclusion that their role in the education world is an important and valued one. Hopefully they recognise their own talents, skills and areas of expertise. Working in a PRU can be particularly challenging.

Bring in an enthusiastic, highly skilled, highly committed artist who perhaps feels that the pupils have not engaged, and they may well ask themselves many soul-searching questions. They may decide that working with young people is not for them. They may well feel wounded. To the artist their art form/ skill is precious. To have it rejected can be quite devastating, and can lead the artist into a quagmire of doubts and negative self-talk hence the importance of finding "*diamonds in the dust*" - tiny positive changes that only staff who know the pupils well are aware of - through the debrief.

Artists may also discover aspects of the pupils' private lives that may surprise or even disturb them. They may want to share this through the debrief.

Remember, as experienced PRU staff you have probably heard lots of things which less experienced staff may well find disturbing. All staff should have access to professional and impartial support. This may include access to a counselling service.

A professional filmmaker joined us for the making of a short drama piece. Whilst engaging the pupils with some talking heads interviews she was told about how a dog had been tortured. At the end of session de-brief, obviously upset, she said, "I don't know if I should tell you this?" She was made to understand that if she wasn't sure then she should share whatever was bothering her. The whole story was unpicked, and yes, even if the young man had not carried out the act himself, his friends probably had. Simply by talking about it, the artist had unburdened herself, and had avoided a sleepless night as she wrestled with what she had heard, whether it was true and if she should share it with someone.

Staff: *"Phew! The end of the first session, and the pupils enjoyed it...well, they sort of err... I'm not sure if they all enjoyed it but they probably did. Anyway, I did. I'm amazed at what I've managed to produce in such a short space of time, and the artist should be well pleased with the response she got. John never usually concentrates for more than 5 minutes, and as for Susan well, she's normally very withdrawn, and hardly says a word to anyone!"*

Artist: *"Phew! The end of the first session. I don't think the staff member was very pleased. He didn't seem to really get in to it, and that girl...Susan... she did some work, but spent most of the time talking to me about holidays and her dog! I think that some of the pupils enjoyed it though."*

Same session, two very different interpretations. Solution - talk. A quick verbal de-brief (away from the pupils) at the end of the session can put it all into perspective. And why not ask the pupils what they liked most about the session, and what they would like to do more of?

PRU staff - ensure that you don't get so absorbed in your own artwork that you lose track of what is going on around you - it's easily done!

## Measuring the Impact The Engagement Matrix

arts has been working since 2002 to refine a tool for monitoring the behaviours of our young people in each session in order to measure the impact of ongoing involvement in arts activity. The Engagement Matrix (right) plots each participant's journey from disengagement, through curiosity and involvement to acceptance and success. We have found it invaluable in evidencing progress and it has become a reflective planning tool for artists and staff. A full description of the early development of the Matrix can be found in our earlier publication *Breaking The Cycle Of Failure*.

Working with our researchers had a profound impact both on artists' practice and on the evolution of the Matrix. We took on board their insights into language, pupil involvement and roles, and learned to focus much more on positive behaviours. Staff pull out two or three behaviours per section and record the evidence to substantiate the claims.

There is also an additional section with four elements:

Artists: Is there anything that surprised you?

PRU Staff: Is there anything that happened that wouldn't normally happen?

Participants' feedback on the workshop (comments picked up throughout the session).

External factors that need to be taken into consideration.

These are all ways to collate additional information that helps to give a more complete overview of the session. If done as intended, an outside observer should be able to understand and evaluate the sessions. In order to reduce paperwork we have linked the collection of diversity monitoring information into the Matrix plus the means to collect such standard information as: date & time; location; artform; artists; volunteers; support staff; and participants.

Because staff found that not all groups consistently exhibited the same behaviours, each Pod has its own specifically designed Matrix. This takes time, and it is important to ensure that the wording is accurate and unambiguous. Staff have been trained so that it is used in a consistent manner and to its maximum effect. If you wish to use a tool like the Matrix yourself it is vital that you develop it to reflect the behaviours of the groups you work with and be clear why you want to use it.

group & term				
Pupil Name				
session date				
<b>success</b>				
demonstrate ideas about improvement				
make positive statements about own work				
show work to others privately				
celebrate one's own work publicly				
articulate pride and self belief				
offer praise for the work of others				
cross-reference on aspects of the task				
reflect on past aspects of activity				
share aspirations				
<b>involvement</b>				
respond to instruction				
refer to/find ideas in the work of others				
become physically involved with the task in hand				
talk with others about process and outcomes				
share resources/knowledge with others				
show restraint in difficult circumstances				
share experiences related to the activity				
experiment				
<b>acceptance</b>				
suggest ideas				
bring resources/examples to sessions				
accept the suggestions of others				
complete tasks				
communicate with artists beyond the tasks				
<b>curiosity</b>				
watch & listen to artist/work of the group				
ask questions				
inconsistently engaged				
ask for instruction or demonstration				
comment on the work of others				
have a go but destroy outcome				
<b>disengagement/dissaffection</b>				
make negative comments				
disrupt & distract others				
exhibit violent behaviour				
withdraw & refuse attention				
state assumptions of failure				
destroy work of another				
become involved in others' disputes				
walk out of session				
deny responsibility for own actions				

## Measuring the Impact: Pupil feedback sheets

These are very simple tick-box type questionnaires which ask the pupils to rate themselves with regard to their own levels of engagement, e.g. how hard they tried, how well they worked with each other, how much they learned, how much they enjoyed the session etc. There is also a section where, if they want to, they can write a few words or do a little drawing about what they have been doing. This can give a great insight into how they think and feel.

Contrary to what many expect, the pupils do tend to give a lot of thought to their answers. Sometimes there is a mismatch between what the pupils have recorded and what staff have observed. This should be picked up at the next session. The feedback sheets are completed following a simple verbal round-up between the staff and the pupils. This gives the opportunity to reinforce positives and to look forward to future sessions.

## Self-esteem tests

These are completed at the start and end of each academic year (or when a pupil joins Otherwise Creative). Whilst accepting that any changes are not just a result of involvement in the arts, it does enable staff to measure change. We suggest that you research your own and ensure that it is accessible to your group. It should be delivered in an identical way for each pupil, without any indication as to what answer they should give. A useful web site is [www.queendom.com](http://www.queendom.com) which has a wide array of possible tests which can be either paid for or accessed free of charge, plus a wealth of other information which has proved useful for staff training.

Impact is also witnessed in ways that may or may not be measured, but are apparent: an increase in attendance, a reduction in exclusions, increased acceptance of praise, a willingness to take part etc. Whilst many of these are covered by the Matrix, others will be picked up through general observation outside the workshop environment.

# Otherwise Creative

Name: Amy

Date: 15/03 /2006

1. What was the activity? Taking Photos resembling 'help.'

2. Was it... BUZZIN'... INTERESTING... ALRIGHT... BORING...

3. How much effort did you make? TRIED MY BEST

TRIED A LOT

TRIED A BIT

COULDN'T BE BOTHERED

4. How much did you learn... A LOT... A BIT... NOTHING...

5. How well did you work with other people? VERY WELL

QUITE WELL

NOT AT ALL

6. How much did you join in... 100%... QUITE A LOT... A BIT... I DIDN'T...

7. How much did you enjoy the activity? 100%

75%

50%

25%

0%

8. You can write about what you did, or do a little drawing

We took photos of signs, words or images resembling help.

I really enjoyed it!



# CONTENT

You have all your structures in place, everyone knows what their role is and what the channels of communication are, and you're all set to embark upon your project. Let's have a closer look at what might actually happen in the sessions.

## Choosing the Artform

At a recent conference celebrating the publication of a research document evaluating arts activities in PRUs and Learning Support Units, there was a question from the floor.

*"Which art form did the pupils respond best to?"*

The questioner was obviously hoping to find a neat, simple solution. I wasn't surprised at the reply.

*"There wasn't one. It varied."*

It certainly does vary. I recently received a 'phone call from one of my Pod Leaders reporting back on the latest session in a project involving the creation of a 3-dimensional insect. The previous week the whole group, except one, had focussed and worked very well. This week the pupils were very unsettled - an incident had taken place: the fire alarm had been set off, everyone had to evacuate the building and three pupils walked off (including one who *always* worked well). The remaining pupils worked exceedingly well - including the pupil who had not engaged the previous week!

### Shirley comments:

This highlights the fact that there is no "silver bullet". Different art forms can, and do, engage at different times - but we have to be conscious of the fact that working with our particular client group means that there may well be an undercurrent of hostility, aggression, suspicion, reluctance and antagonism. These feelings, resulting from occurrences elsewhere other than school, may at times surface even when the sessions are going well.

In choosing artists to work with your pupils, it helps to be aware that no artform exists in isolation from others - filmmaking may include storyboarding which may include drawing and creative writing. As Shirley says, "The arts creep...start with one artform and before you know it, artists have hooked up other forms without even seeming to think this is anything but natural."

So here are some suggestions for artforms and sample projects, many of which are not only enjoyable but also give young people the opportunity to make a positive impact on others.



### T-shirt Design

FCUK proved to be a challenge when it first hit the streets. Should it be allowed to be incorporated in to a t-shirt decorated as part of a PRU project? All the staff need to be clear as to what is acceptable or not. A good way to enhance group identity through a common logo.

For many young people this screams, "Street cred!". Combine it with a local DJ known to the group and it's a winner. However, you do need a DJ who is skilled in behaviour management and who can pass on their knowledge in an easily accessible form. Only a couple of people can be working on the decks at one time, so other activities may be required.

### DJ

### Circus Skills

Many young people we have worked with over the years have developed their co-ordination through juggling, diabolo etc. Skilled artists ensure that all participants experience success and know that they have achieved something. It is an excellent vehicle for showing that in order to improve we all have to practise, and an ideal artform to be used in conjunction with another. We have worked towards performances that incorporated the fusing of circus with both DJing and dance. The artist should be skilled in group dynamics, and be very supportive.

Generally done as a group, this is great for a whole team piece, and offers an opportunity to work big! The artists should be well prepared (i.e. the graffiti board already primed) and should be able to ensure that the young people's ideas end up on the canvas, hardboard or wall. Protective clothing and masks are required when spraying. The finished product is very dramatic. Make sure beforehand that there is somewhere to display it.

### Street Art

## Sculpture

Carving turnips into faces requires a steady hand and trust in the artist. After carving, the heads are left to shrivel and gain their own character. This process takes place over several weeks, and allows for further discussion and critique by the young sculptors.

This kind of work offers ample opportunity for discussion around the table, and so is invaluable for staff helping to build relationships with group members. The artist needs to be relaxed and able to converse in a non-threatening manner, drawing upon his/her own life experiences without being judgemental of others.

Think Break Dance - think Capoeira - think Street Dance. Definitely one where all staff should participate. Step by step learning means that even the slower learners get the moves. There is the chance for small group discussion, but it is more about movement. The artist must be able to break things down and allow for a wide range of competence and confidence.

## Dance

## Drama

Excellent chance to explore issues, explore self and to have fun! The artist should be able to call upon a wide variety of drama games in order to keep enthusiasm and interest high. Good opportunity for young people to express their own ideas and to lead the group. Easily linked to many other art forms.

Literacy is not required. The artist should be briefed regarding any reading/writing challenges and adapt the workshop accordingly. There is a song in everyone and it is a great feeling to have it put onto CD and for it to sound good. Can be done as whole group, or in small groups all feeding back.

## Song Writing

## Music Tech

Lay down a backing track and record those words on top. It can be a time consuming exercise to get the lyrics recorded just right, but it's an excellent learning opportunity and also requires the group to follow instructions - "Recording - quiet!" Aspects of the process can be more suited to small numbers. For those into music this is a real hands-on experience.

Amazing things can be achieved with modern computer programmes under the watchful eye of the artist. Adequate numbers of computers must be available and the artist must have the ability to be in six places at once - or ensure there are enough adults to support each small group. Excellent way to develop other work such as...

## Graphic Design

## Photography

Digital images can easily be downloaded and manipulated to enhance the work. The photographic experience can mean going out and about, and looking at things from a new perspective. Whilst digital cameras have lots of advantages, cheap disposable cameras also have a lot to offer. Developing colour film as black and white can produce some wonderful effects.

Combine digital imaging with graphic design and produce the cover for your recently created CD. Enlarge it into a poster. The links go on.

## Different Artforms Together

How and why do we link different artforms together? We link them so that there is a strand, a thread, that stops work being created in isolation. It's more than just a block of work on, for example, mask making. It's a block of work that has meaning within the context of other work that has been, is being and will be done. It helps to develop the young people's skill to reflect back and to project forward. It facilitates the ability to understand that what we do now is a result of previous actions and has future consequences. In an arts context this means that if masks weren't completed in the earlier sessions, and if words aren't developed in the current sessions then the future drama sessions (which were to incorporate these two products) will be in jeopardy.

### Attack & React

Attack & React was inspired by a dance, interpreted in 3D and subsequently reinterpreted as a new dance which was then performed both to an audience of professionals and dignitaries and to an audience of peers. The pieces were then displayed outside Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery for 18 months (receiving excellent press coverage), and found their final resting place at a local visitor attraction.

This particular project engaged on many levels and demanded a lot both from pupils and staff. Health and Safety was a priority as both hand and power tools were used. Staff numbers were increased and two artists employed which enabled the pupils to receive very close supervision.

Why did this work?

It was very hands on - measuring, scaling up, sawing, cutting, grinding, chiselling, drilling, assembling etc.

The artists were consistent in their approach to using the tools.

Excellent finished product that engendered much pride. How often do you get the chance to work this big?

Excellent reinforcement from members of the public, staff + local newspapers.

The pupils had a definite understanding of past, present and future in relation to their work on this piece.

A fine example of this process is the project Back to Square One - a compact disc produced as the culmination of various blocks of work which consisted of:

masks - created over several weeks which captured the essence of different moods and feelings which each of us experience.

music tech and song writing - creating tracks for the CD Back to Square One. The tracks include personal accounts of life experiences.

digital imaging and graphic design - manipulating digital images of the masks and then adding words. The words were both taken from the CD and inspired by the masks and the CD.

The images were then transformed into posters and used for the CD cover. The works were then used as part of a sharing.



## The Showcase

We've found that a good way of breaking down barriers, altering perceptions of what the arts are and convincing both PRU staff and pupils of the value of arts activities is to put on an event we call The Showcase. If you have a relationship with an arts organisation or group of artists, you may be able to arrange something similar.

The kind of Showcase Event we held may be too large for some projects/budgets. However it is a very useful tool, which can be adapted to suit individual needs, for example when inducting a new intake of young people. It's also a great way for staff to get enthused about future arts projects. It may be possible to pool resources with another project to stage such an event.

Careful planning is required, and care must be taken to ensure that:

- the artists involved are sufficiently skilled in behaviour management so that the pupils are responded to at an appropriate level.

- the artforms used are appropriate. There is no point in showing flashy projections with tremendous soundtracks (even if young people have created them) if the groups are going to be working with re-cycled wood and metal.



### OTHERWISE CREATIVE SHOWCASE SCRIPT

Official welcome

<<Chamber music playing>>

Pod Leader steps up.

"Yes, that's music but we also do this!"

Pulls off a cover to reveal two decks. Local DJ then steps in and does some mixing and scratching. Pupils and staff have a brief hands-on experience.

"We even do dance."

Project Manager and Pod Leaders start improvising very bad ballet moves. After some time the real dance worker steps in.

"Hey guys, that's not dance...this is!"

With the DJ on the decks, the dancer whirls, high kicks and spins as he struts his stuff.

With jaws almost on the floor, the young people watch... respect and understanding growing all the time.

We then progress through a variety of other artforms - drama, drumming etc., each time counterpointing a weird and wonderful interpretation with the real thing. Examples of street art and other visual arts products are unveiled around the room.

Feedback is very positive indeed, with everyone getting a greater understanding of what we are about with regard to the arts. The ice is broken, relationships are made. The arts are no longer "over there"- they are real, relevant and have street cred.

## The First Session

The first session should strive to be a safe introduction to the world of the arts. If it is the first time the pupils have been to the off-site venue, consider a tour of the building, meeting the artist/s over a cup of tea and a short hands-on arts experience.

Explore how the pupils feel, how they respond. Do they share any experiences or express any interest in particular art forms? Do they fully understand what is available? Do they have any limiting beliefs regarding their own abilities? What are their preconceptions regarding art?

If the session is on home territory, allow for the same kind of safe introduction. Allow the artist to get to know the group, and allow the young people to feel comfortable with the artist.

Choose an artform that allows for conversation - visual art can work well, particularly if there is a finished product at the end.

Consider the session to be a low-key consultation exercise. Keep in mind that the pupils may well only express an interest in doing something that they have done before and/or something in which they know they will be able to succeed. The aim is to push, stretch and expand their abilities - both in a practical way, but also mentally. This has to take place in a safe environment at a pace appropriate for the group.

As the session draws to a close, ensure that there is time for the group to be involved in clearing up, with the emphasis on everyone working as a group. It should not be a case of, *"I've done mine, that's her mess!"* By clearing up alongside the pupils, and enlisting their assistance, we enable the pupils to help without it becoming a big deal. It's simply what we do.



## The Second Session

Session two should already have been planned, and the artform fixed - if not, the artist/s required may already be booked elsewhere. It does, however, create the small dilemma of the pupils saying, *"You said we could do..." "Why can't we do ...?"* It goes without saying that during the consultation phase of the first session no promises should have been made regarding artform. The pupils must be made aware that their ideas regarding artform content will be programmed in if possible but, if they can, it may not be for some time. Then explain, briefly, about the process of booking artists and equipment in advance.

You have probably experienced the honeymoon period - that time when new pupils arrive and their behaviour is good. Then, once they have settled in, they start exhibiting the kinds of behaviours that have led them to being where they are now. Through careful observation and monitoring of sessions within Otherwise Creative, we have realised that the first session of a block is crucial for setting up the response of the pupils to the subsequent sessions *but that even after a successful first session the second session is often characterised by disruption and less engagement!* Weather the storm and things improve.

There should be a link, a constant strand, running through all the artwork.



### Shirley writes:

The analysis of the matrices of one of the Otherwise Creative groups brought to attention a pattern of difficulty with the second session of each artform. Even when the first session had been especially positive, the participant feedback, the comments from the artists, and the matrix evaluations of the behaviour of the participants revealed that the second session had been particularly trying. By the third session, all forms of artist and participant feedback were positive again. This led to an examination of why there were so many setbacks during the second session of each art form. What made the second session so different from the rest?

When asked why he thought nearly all the second sessions were so difficult for the group, one of the staff members commented that the second session is when the artists and staff really push the young people to move beyond basic skills and to take their work to the next level. Another artist commented that the young people expect immediate results. When they don't get instant success one person will make a negative comment, and then it's like dominos. The attitude of the entire group quickly shifts from positive to negative.

When the group attempted to take their work to the next level, they had ideas of what they wanted and just jumped in. Yet they didn't have an idea how to make it work. Although they had the idea of the end result, without any idea of the steps to take they had no way of progressing towards a finished product. They got cross because it didn't work out the way they wanted it to.

When we analysed the Engagement Matrices for the second sessions of four different projects, we found one instance where the participant feedback and artist evaluations of the participants who remained for the entire session were extremely positive. Although there had been an interruption in this session when three of the original five participants were asked to leave the building for disruptive behaviour, the participants who remained became fully engaged in the project. This led to the conclusion that when pushing young people to take their artwork to the next step it helps to have a small group. This can be accomplished by breaking a larger group into several pairs where each pair works with a staff member or an artist. Adults then have the ability to focus on the needs of only a couple of young people. They can be especially attentive to any setbacks or challenges they have with the work. Also, small groups make it easier for adults to offer praise, positive critique, and positive attention.

## Product vs. Process

The pupils must have an understanding of where the ideas have originated, what has driven the choice of artform and where the process is taking them. This brings us to an eternal question - Product or Process? This question has been a source of much discussion within many arts organisations for decades. In our particular realm the answer is quite straightforward - both Product *and* Process.

We do want a high quality product, but how we achieve it is just as important. Having witnessed young people bringing in examples of high quality work "they had done", only to discover that the work was in fact done by a teacher, highlights both the need for staff involved within the arts to witness a quality piece of work, and the need for the young people involved to feel that what they have created is of a high standard. The emphasis must be on what *they* have created.

It is the role of the artist to facilitate the participants in such a manner that they are freed from the normal restrictions that limit their everyday thinking. There is virtually no "wrong" in the arts although there may be better ways of doing things.

Freedom can be engendered within the group by:

- allowing the young people (and staff) the freedom to experiment
- hearing the artist, and other staff, talking through their thought processes out loud
- being allowed to make mistakes
- being praised for taking risks
- instilling a sense of inquisitiveness and curiosity
- making the unfamiliar familiar
- making the familiar unfamiliar.

Through all of these, and more, the group can start to appreciate the quality of their own work.

It is very important that sufficient thought be given to the planning of an end product, the reasons why it is necessary, how it is celebrated and who the audience will be. If the product is to be part of a public sharing it is important that the audience understands the context in which it has been created.

## The Final Session

An exit strategy or a new beginning? The final session of any block of work is where everything is brought together, and must be seen as a progression. Even if no further sessions are planned the participants must be left with the feeling of continuous growth.

By reflecting back and celebrating:

- what has taken place
- what they have achieved - individually and as a group
- by looking forward to how lessons learned can be applied
- by exploring each person's unique experiences.

The last session can be seen as a starting point as opposed to an ending - a starting point that hopefully will lead to further involvement in the arts. It is important for staff as well as the pupils to reflect upon their journey - a journey that should hopefully have proved inspirational.

How can staff use the skills that they have uncovered?

How can their practice be influenced by the arts?

Can their inspiration be the catalyst for seeking further funds both for the existing group and for future cohorts?

In addition, the Engagement Matrix, should you choose to use it, will enable you to plot the progression of your group through the programme of work. Staff and the young people can be reminded of notable transformations that have taken place through reviewing earlier matrices and any certificates that have been awarded during the project (see p.83).

Be aware that if it is the last session the group has with a particular artist there may be problems. John, a young man of dual heritage, had become very close to an African trainee artist. When he realised that there were no immediate plans for the artist to return, John's behaviour in the final session deteriorated significantly. Some of these young people have had a lifetime of feeling let down by adults who have left them - it is important to handle goodbyes sensitively and honestly.

## The Arts & the National Curriculum

Far from being an exotic “add-on” to the work of the PRU, the arts can be placed at the heart of the curriculum and can be used to enhance all areas of learning. We know that there are many styles of learning and that conventional teaching methods are rarely appropriate for young people excluded from mainstream schools. The arts can provide an alternative way into other subjects as they offer different ways of learning. Artists will be able to make imaginative links, for example between dance and science, music and maths, drama and citizenship. Working in partnership with teachers who have clear objectives and open minds, artists can offer innovative approaches which will engage your pupils. Teachers should also constantly be alert to what is being achieved through artist-led projects without an overt National Curriculum agenda, in order to track skills their charges are “incidentally” acquiring through the activities and thus make links with the rest of their work.

The Rocket Science project proved to be an excellent way of engaging the pupils in science through the arts. It's a fun way for young people to engage on many different levels:

the science of how the rocket is propelled

what the rocket fuel is composed of - “*highly combustible H2O!*”

the causes of drag

space

other cultures

design and the group discussion around possible features

communication - images & the written word - messages on the rockets in order for aliens to gain an understanding of Earth.

Once built the rockets are launched (outdoors, in a suitable area). The young people are generally amazed that *they* have created something which can fly higher than a tree! Following discussion further tweaking of the spacecrafts can create different outcomes.

## Every Child Matters

The five outcomes of Government consultation with children and young people on what really matters to them - Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution, and Economic Well-Being - are likely to inform services targeting young people for some time, and will hopefully already be the foundation of the holistic provision of your PRU.

These underlying themes should also be borne in mind when programmes of arts activity are being planned. The approach in arts work tends, in any case, to put young people at the centre, starting from where they are, gently pushing boundaries when appropriate.

An added bonus is that, through participation in arts projects, the pupils step out of their old roles and accompanying negative associations and become actors, designers, photographers and so on. They also become planners, influencing what will take place in future sessions and thinking beyond the project - for Otherwise Creative this included trips to Tate Modern and York, a local environmental centre and the coast.

If you want to initiate work which links more overtly with the five themes, artists will be able to generate lots of engaging ideas which will tap into the skills which your young people have, and will also help to stimulate staff to look at things in new and exciting ways. They are experts at making the unfamiliar familiar, and the familiar unfamiliar. They are creative ideas people. Some artists seem to almost sweat ideas!

How about:

a drama piece which looks at safety issues

street art supporting healthy lifestyle choices

a magazine, to which various groups have contributed, which looks at issues affecting young people housing, work & training, crime, substance misuse etc?

Remember, all the above outcomes can be developed in new and exciting ways - ways which you may not have thought possible.

The arts can help young people to realise that they have a voice, and that they are responsible both for their own actions, and also for how society is shaped. The themes can be excellent vehicles for “*cycling through*” - looking back at previous work, looking ahead to the future and looking at the here and now. Linking activities together is a most valuable exercise.



## ATTITUDES & APPROACH

The arts do not work in a vacuum - thought needs to be given to how to create the best possible atmosphere for forging positive relationships and fuelling change. This section sets out what we have found to be best practice when running successful arts projects with our young people.

## Managing Behaviour: ground rules

It is good practice for PRU staff and artists to greet each other with a handshake at the start of a session, modelling appropriate forms of greeting. We have found that when the artist and support staff also greet the pupils in a warm, relaxed, non-threatening manner, making good eye contact and saying the young person's name, the pupils generally respond in a similar way. It can become almost a ritual that signifies the changeover of roles from pupil into artist.

Shaking hands may appear rather formal, but it helps the pupils to understand that they are acknowledged as important, and helps set the tone for a session in which all are respected and have an equal chance of participating and learning. Clearly it is up to the adult to assess the situation and to avoid forcing the issue if a young person does not feel able to shake hands that day.

As mature adults we can agree ground rules, and can generally follow them. Our young people can often agree ground rules, but may well find it a challenge to abide by them. By involving the young people in setting the rules ("agreement" or "expectations" may be better words) they are more likely to accept ownership of them.

One of the Pod Leaders commented that she felt the group had developed a positive relationship with her as a person. Individual young learners acknowledged her strict consistent expectations of them and their work. As they did so, they grew less hostile, showed respect for her and sought her out for conversation beyond the tasks of the art work. She saw these changes as resulting in part from the stance that she took with the group. While she expected to be tested because she is a woman, she refused to be threatened. She firmly set ground rules that applied to all, and she was clearly firm in her conviction that everyone would and could adhere to these rules.

However, the answer rests not only in setting rules, but also in enforcing them. The young people challenged the matter of consistent enforcement so that the Pod Leader faced the dilemma of deciding whether poor behaviour should be reprimanded from the start and how much could be ignored. She also noticed that, despite giving the group positive attention, they still craved negative attention before believing that positive behaviours bring far more affirmation.

### Shirley suggests:

Start the rule negotiations by making the following points:

The group will work as a team.

Everyone can suggest one rule to start with.

One of the adults should propose a "first rule" as an example.

Make this "first rule" one that would never be heard in a school or rehabilitative setting - the young people are more likely to engage with the process if it feels fresh and different.

A good "first rule" is: never say what we are NOT doing; always say what we ARE doing.

For every rule, lay out a reason why it can work for the group (e.g., "if we always say what we ARE doing, we will never hear anyone say you are NOT listening, NOT following rules, NOT doing the work, NOT settling down, etc.)".

Remember that every rule has the potential to generate the working atmosphere for the group.

It is important that the process is not tokenistic or routine. Ensure all guidelines are recorded in the positive i.e. what we *want* to happen, not what we *don't* want to happen. By keeping it short and simple we avoid creating confusion. These guidelines can be recorded and displayed in creative ways - colourful flags for example, or set out as a poem.

Any other issues can be picked up along the way, generally in a low-key, non-threatening manner. The phrase, "*It's not appropriate*", is an excellent reinforcement tool. As ever, consistency is the key, as is modelling and rewarding the positive behaviours we want to promote.

This manual is not a behaviour management handbook, but it hopefully contains useful insights regarding behaviour management - gained from our experience - and we are all still learning.

## Managing Behaviour: Moving Pupils

In the workshop it might be prudent to move pupils around, for example to separate potential *"frictional friends"* so they cannot *"rub each other up the wrong way"*. Be aware of who needs to be kept apart, and have a rough seating plan in mind.

But suppose Michaela ends up sitting next to Jason, and this is a *very bad* combination? How do you casually separate them? Depending on the size of the group and the number of pupils it might be possible to simply declare that you want pupils and staff to sit alternately and move every one around. More likely it will have to be something like, *"Can you just move up a bit whilst I work with Jason/have a look to see how you're getting on?"* thereby moving a pupil onto a different table. Ideally another member of staff should then move around and engage with the pupil who has just moved.

## Asking the Right Questions

Asking the pupil how they did something is always good practice. There are many layers within the question. It allows you to move in and it allows them to:

- share their thought process
- reflect on the process they have been through
- look towards the future with regard to their work
- comment on their own work and the work of others

It also allows the pupil to feel that they are regarded as an artist, a painter, a sculptor, a dancer etc. By simply asking, *"Will you show me how to do that?"* you can engage the pupil who is refusing to engage. Because they are showing/instructing/helping, they often do not realise that they are actually doing the activity themselves. Judge when you can safely move on and they will probably continue working.



*"I place myself in a situation where I have eye contact with everyone. I know at all times I have to engage everybody. I have to know where everyone is and what everybody is doing. This means if I'm in a pair in a corner and there are other people working at the far end of the room I can't turn my back to the group, I have to have an open posture to the group and an eye on the clock. It does help to have an extra pair of eyes in the session, but if you're working on your own you just have to keep those things in tune. It's self-awareness."*

*Otherwise Creative artist 2005*



## Rewards

Why should we reward the pupils? After all, they are only doing what is expected of them. Before we talk about rewards, let's examine *trust* and *expectations*.

We have to have knowledge and an understanding of our particular young people. We have to know what makes them tick and what makes them explode. BUT... we must not let this knowledge lead us into not expecting great things from them. Time and time again arts organisations have witnessed young people achieving tremendous success in ways which others had deemed impossible. How about performing in the Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London, as one of our groups did?

The pupils may talk themselves down; they might call themselves stupid or thick; they might say they can't do it; they may destroy their work. We have got to have faith in them and in the creative process. By supporting them, by positively reinforcing behaviours we wish to see developed, by staff responding appropriately when things go wrong, we can help the young people in our care achieve and develop skills that they wouldn't even have dreamed of. These can have surprising knock-on effects.

## Let's Party

At the end of a block of work we like to celebrate with a piece of cake and a drink. This allows us to reward our groups for the effort they have put in, and to reinforce the behaviours we want. They are being acknowledged, and can see themselves as artists, as sculptors, as musicians. Focus on the positives that have taken place, and use the time to discuss how they feel, what they enjoyed the most, and what they would like to do next. It is also an excellent opportunity for social education. We might be able to sit and have a coffee and a chat, but for a lot of our young people it is more of a challenge. They may well be more prone to throwing sugar about, swearing and having a fag. Over time, and with careful modelling, the changes in social ability can be quite dramatic.

If you don't have access to a café then why not have fruit juice and cake in the workshop room? Again, this can be used as a way of introducing organic food and organic cake into the picture. This in turn can lead to discussions about sustainability and the environment. The group can then gain an understanding that they are part of a bigger world, and that their actions can have an effect greater than they thought. This can then link nicely into a block of environmental art work. Remember, we want our young people to gain an understanding of the world *outside* of their current one.

## Let's Celebrate

Ok, so they've had their cake and eaten it, what else is there? Rewards can be as simple as a pat on the back (if appropriate), a word of encouragement, displaying their work or the presentation of a certificate. A lot of people shake their heads in disbelief when advised to reward positive behaviours with a certificate. After all, what strapping 16 year-old male would want one? Answer - they all do. Some might not know it, some might not show it, but our experiences over the years have consistently highlighted the importance of positive reinforcement through certificates. Printed on parchment paper they can look very impressive, and are a good way of tracking development in their Progress Files.

They should be awarded *as soon as possible* after the particular behaviour the pupil is being rewarded for: helping clear up, being creative, working hard, concentrating. We suggest one copy for the Progress File and one for the pupil to take home - both should be in colour on good quality paper.

Certificates can be a reward for anything we want to reinforce within the session. If issued for the high quality of the work, be aware of the wording used; we do not want others in the group to feel defeatist because they perceive their work as being inferior.



## Sanctions

As previously stated, *"consistency is the key."* This may well mean that sanctions have to be applied. Sanctions should be discussed and agreed well before the project starts so that all staff involved know what they are and when and how they should be implemented. Whatever sanctions are decided must have the support of your PRU staff and be applied according to your guidelines.

The ultimate sanction may be to withdraw a pupil from the session. This should be the last in a progressive hierarchy of opportunities the pupil is given to choose more appropriate behaviour. Removal may occur because the pupils are putting themselves or others at risk, misusing equipment, or disrupting the rest of the group on a frequent basis and to such an extent that the group cannot function.

The above is not a definitive list, and there are many other factors to consider. If it looks likely that it will be necessary to withdraw someone, then they should be given the opportunity to modify their behaviour first and thus *not* be removed. The pupil should be asked twice to stop the inappropriate behaviour before removal occurs.

With each instruction to stop, the pupil should be confronted with the consequences of not following the instruction. If there is a Behaviour Support Worker in session (e.g. Pod Leader) then s/he is well placed to give the instructions, as are PRU staff. This should all be agreed in advance. The artist should not be expected to implement the removal instructions. Their role is predominantly to deliver the arts.

If, despite being instructed twice to cease certain behaviours in full knowledge of the consequences, the pupil chooses not to respond appropriately, they should be asked to leave the session, following normal PRU guidelines. This does not mean they are off the project, but that they have just been removed for the rest of the session. When they return for the next session it's a clean slate.

Example instructions:

- *"I need you to stop... if you continue to... you are choosing to be removed from the session."*
- *"If you continue to... you will be removed from the session. I would prefer you to stay by following my instruction."*
- *"You have now chosen to leave the session."*

Note the emphasis on CHOICE here, underlining the fact that the young person must take responsibility for his/her actions.

Continually telling someone not to do something, and then allowing them to continue to do it, simply undermines the consistent, fair behaviour ethos within the group. The other members of the group should realise that there are consequences to inappropriate behaviour.

If PRU staff are present when a pupil is asked to leave then they will obviously be aware of what has taken place - or will they? They may not have witnessed what took place, or their interpretation of events may differ from that of other staff. It is useful for all staff to include the events in the end of session debrief or to discuss the incident earlier if appropriate. If no PRU staff are present then the arts staff must ensure that the PRU is informed *as soon as possible* that the pupil is no longer on the premises and no longer in their care. A more detailed update can be given at the end of the session. Sessional sheets should reflect what took place. It might be appropriate for a member of the arts organisation to meet with the Head of the PRU and discuss how best to handle things in the future. Whenever possible, include the pupil in the discussions, both to reinforce expectations within the session and to gain a deeper understanding of the pupil's actions.

As has been said, the next session is a clean slate, but ensure that whatever strategies have been decided upon, *all* staff implement them.



## Diamonds in the Dust

Working with the kind of young people we do, it is highly likely that the kind of breakthroughs that hit you in the face are few and far between. Most of the impact is low-key, and demands an understanding of the individuals within the group.

Being aware of such low-level changes can be described as finding *“diamonds in the dust”*. We need to focus on positive behaviours that took place during the session. The importance of a debrief cannot be stressed enough.

Diamonds in the dust are best illustrated by a recent session in which the group exhibited inappropriate behaviours. This included intermittent flare-ups between pairs of pupils, loud inappropriate use of language, sudden withdrawal from participation and inappropriate use of equipment. By the end of the session the staff were feeling a bit down. The artist was feeling very disappointed at the way in which the group had responded.

It was only by working through the Matrix that we discovered the diamonds. All the pupils had engaged with all of the activities - drumming, storytelling, dance and drama, and each had performed a drama piece in front of the whole group. All had arrived on time, none had walked out and all had responded to staff instructions. Within the group we had one young man who had not attended school for four years, one who had an exceptionally low level of self-esteem, one who had Tourette's Syndrome and two who were from rival travellers' families. All had emotional and behavioural difficulties and had been permanently excluded from mainstream education on more than one occasion. The artist and support staff realised that they had, in fact, achieved a great deal.

Your diamonds may include:

- the boy who removes his “protective” coat
- the girl who takes off her cap for the first time
- the boy who does not destroy his work
- the girl who makes positive comments about her own work
- the boy who makes positive comments about the work of others.

Only by having a long-term relationship with the group, as well as good communication between the PRU and arts organisation, and the discipline of a system like the Matrix, can staff within the session really pick up on what might appear to be small, insignificant changes. The more artists learn from the group they are working with the more the group benefits.



## Pupil Roles & Responsibilities

We've already established that pupils respond well to being seen as artists in our projects. Shirley and Bianca took that a stage further and encouraged us to give the participants specific responsibilities within the sessions.

Simply having the young people come to darts and once again be pupils, a role in which they already felt unsuccessful, was not what was needed. We wanted to find real roles they could play on a consistent basis.

Consequently, we looked at roles that the artists had been playing that really had nothing to do with being an artist. These roles included:

- checking attendance
- arranging breakfast or break time drinks
- deciding on the fairest way to take turns with special equipment
- thinking about ways to get families and friends to know about exhibitions or shows.

We began asking certain individuals in the group to undertake these roles and to follow them through for several weeks. As the year went on, we began to see more roles that the young people could and should handle. We found that through the allocation of specific roles within the group, the pupils developed a sense of responsibility, pride and self-belief. As relationships developed within the group, certain tasks (e.g. compiling a list of who would like juice) could be given to willing participants.

It is advisable that the pupils are spoken to in private, to avoid pressurising or embarrassing them. If they accept the role then the rest of the group should be informed and it should be explained why that person has been given the responsibility. *"Morgan has been given the role of Drinks Co-ordinator because he always volunteers to fetch the drinks/he has been here the longest."* What we found was:

All young people responded positively to undertaking additional roles.

Responsibility taking in one role carried over into more responsibility within group activities and individual work.

Some young people developed their roles independently once they were comfortable with them.

The pupils were able to transfer their roles into different settings.

The young people began to contribute ideas to the group as a whole about future plans and ideas, thereby increasing the sense of the group as a whole having important roles to play for darts.



## Adults Modelling Behaviour

The PRU staff and artists are role models in general behaviour: the way we interact, the way we respond to situations, the way we ask for equipment, the way we pass equipment, the comments we make both to other adults and to the participants. Sarcasm and put-downs can appear to be easy ways to have a laugh at the other person's expense and be one of the gang, and the staff are usually far more adept at linguistic games than the young people with whom we work. It can be very tempting to "get one over" on a particularly troublesome teenager without them even knowing.

But just step back for a minute: we are role models, demonstrating the behaviours we want to see in our young people. The last thing we want to give them is the signal that it is acceptable to name call, tease and make fun of their peers. This is bullying, a practice that our young people may be well used to as victims and/or perpetrators. Put-downs may not appear to hurt, but scratch beneath the surface and we find the sad, upset adult who may mistakenly believe that the remark was appropriate and that they deserve it. Scratch beneath the surface of the tough, arrogant, cocky, couldn't give a \*\*\*\* young person and the picture may be even worse. Living with a lifetime of put-downs and negative self-talk covered by a veneer of aggression might lead to self-harm, alcohol misuse, violence, substance misuse or criminality.

## Listen to Yourself

As an exercise, monitor yourself as to how many put-downs you use in your daily activities, and how much negative self-talk you use. You'll probably be surprised at how much you say and/or think.

Someone may compliment you on your clothes. You may respond with, "Oh, I've had it years. I bought it from Oxfam. It's past its best." Instead, why not just accept the compliment?

In the art sessions, instead of saying, "I'm rubbish. I can't do this. I've never been able to draw," try modelling with, "I'm finding this quite a challenge, but I know that I will improve." Or ask the group for advice - "What do you think will happen if I put blue here?" "How did you get that effect?"

Make the session an open exploration of the creative process. Show the others, through modelling, that being unsure, being nervous etc is fine but that fear doesn't stop you from taking part.

If you feel afraid, how do you think your young people might feel?

## Positive Reinforcement

We've touched on negative self-talk. How did you find monitoring yourself? Any surprises?

It's time to start ensuring that both you and the artists give out praise - genuine praise. Look for things which you can comment on in a positive way. It may be such things as clothing, hairstyle, time keeping, concentration (does it really have to be 100% for 100% of the time?), ideas, suggestions, questions, interesting use of colour, novel ways of doing something.

This is where PRU staff may well have the upper hand over the artist unless the artist is closely involved with an arts organisation that has ongoing professional development which includes behaviour management. Definitely avoid "You've done that wrong!" Let's not stifle creativity. How about:

"You could always try..."

"Interesting, have you thought of...?"

Be aware of how you phrase things, the manner in which the artist puts him/herself across and how the young people respond. Do they obviously enjoy receiving positive comments? Are they embarrassed or self-conscious? Are they openly hostile?

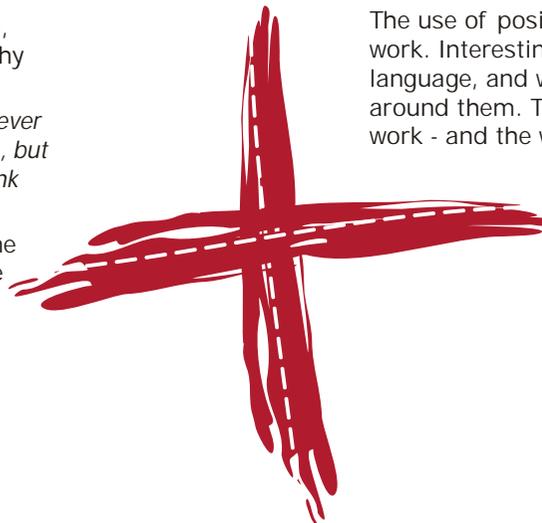
Do not respond to negative responses by withdrawing praise. Simply experiment by:

giving praise quietly away from others

using other words

maybe liaising with other staff so *they* can give the comment.

The use of positive language should be the background of all the arts work. Interestingly, over time, the young people will start to alter their language, and will start using the positive phrases they have been hearing around them. They will start making positive observations about their own work - and the work of others.



## Clarifying the Task

On some occasions it may be apparent that the pupils have not understood the instructions: maybe it's a new concept; maybe the artist covered several points at once and they got left behind; maybe the learning style of the pupil is such that they find understanding a real challenge. Model asking for clarification by:

- asking the artist to explain again
- asking the artist to slow down
- saying that you didn't understand
- stating that you find it a challenge to learn new things
- asking for feedback (from artist/pupils) on your work
- asking the artist to demonstrate again how to do it.

*NB do the above even if you do know how to do things.*

It can also be useful for the artist or other member of staff to refer to a time when something didn't go according to plan.

*"I remember when I first tried T-shirt design. I spent ages painting a detailed Celtic design on the front of the T-shirt, then realised I hadn't put any protective paper inside. The ink had all bled through to the back! I had to start all over again on a new T-shirt this time with paper inside."*

*Otherwise Creative artist 2005*

The message the pupils get is that it's OK not to understand, it's ok to make mistakes and that it's OK to ask for help. The artist also develops skills in breaking information down into bite-size chunks and imparting it in alternative ways. It also hones their understanding of the client group.

*"One of the key components of engagement is mutual respect. The artist must respect the group and expect their respect in return. There are boundaries to respect and these limits must be recognised. Respect does not mean that the artist must respond to every request that the group makes, but that s/he should acknowledge their suggestions. The artist should also feel comfortable expressing expectations of participation, but must also be au fait with different levels of participation. It is very important that the artist is also a participant and that s/he respects the input of the group by incorporating their suggestions into the activity where appropriate. There's never really a difficult group. It's just how you take them, how you approach them."*

*Otherwise Creative artist 2005*



For a large proportion of the academic year one of the group, Ralph, arrived an hour before the start of the session - keen as mustard. However, as soon as the session started he withdrew. He wasn't withdrawn, he just withdrew from the activity. He would assist with lighting, putting music on, getting equipment, giving feedback on what we were doing etc, but he wouldn't join in the planned activity. He wasn't disruptive: in fact he was very supportive. He just wouldn't join in. The breakthrough came when the activity was DJing. Once again, after arriving an hour early, Ralph just stood back against a wall whilst his peers, and staff, learned the mystic art of DJing. Over time relationships between staff and pupil had developed (major advantage of having a constant face in all the sessions) and Ralph was talking with a member of staff. He finally explained that he wanted to do DJing, but wouldn't have a go because he couldn't already do it! Fear of looking daft, fear of looking incompetent, fear of failure were causing him to not participate in something he desperately wanted to do. After explaining that all the group were here to learn, the member of staff managed to get Ralph on to the decks by explaining that he needed help. Ralph agreed to support the staff member who constantly sought advice from Ralph. Ralph then donned the headphones and gradually took over the DJing!

## Modelling Language

Adults involved with creative arts projects should also model appropriate language. We have already mentioned the importance of saying what is happening rather than what is not happening. In this section we explore this concept further. Working with Shirley, we learned to look more closely at language used in sessions by adults and young people.

Shirley showed us that changes in words and their arrangements mark significant differences in actual levels of engagement, attention, or resistance to distractions. Over the next few pages, she explains her findings and makes practical suggestions.

Once the rule of saying only the positive or what IS taking place (rather than what the young person is NOT doing) is in operation, adults have an opening to model more and more positive language.

Some people in the group were looking through books on mask designs. One of the young people, meanwhile, was wandering around the room, fiddling with the paints, picking up papers left behind from an earlier class, and distracting others.

With the rule of IS in place, the artist noted this behaviour and immediately turned what could have been distracting behaviour into a role: *"Riley, since you're up, could you help us out by checking to see how many boxes of paint we have now? That would be a real help."*

Adult language sets the pace and models talk that signals learning. As often as possible artists and other adults in the session should:

Refer to specific positive behaviours of named individuals from today as well as past weeks.

Keep up a conversational tone.

Include in group conversation short summaries of positive events within the group from past weeks.

Use first-person plural pronouns (WE) in talking about past actions of the group.

Use first-person singular pronoun (I) when setting out the tasks for the day.

Demonstrate tasks simultaneously with narration (e.g. *"I'm laying out this blank mask and then I'm going to look at different patterns before I start to think about colours I will use to paint..."*).

Always:

Comment on what IS happening, never on what IS NOT happening eg. *"Lance is experimenting with that mushy paint. How's it going Lance? What do you think?"*

Refer to young learners as *thinkers, experimenters, designers, architects, builders, critics, strategists, planners*, etc.; never refer to them as *students or pupils*.

Remember that young people benefit from hearing stories of how adults came to be who and what they are: never hesitate to talk about what IS important in your life as a teacher, artist, family member, parent, etc.

Ask questions that are open-ended: avoid asking questions to which you already know the answer.

Find entertaining ways to talk about reasons for a process or accidental discoveries.

Strive to find positive ways to comment on what may appear to be a distraction or lack of engagement - eg. if others are checking books of patterns before they get started while one person is looking out the window, a comment such as, *"Randall, you were drawing in your head last week, when the rest of us were checking patterns. Do you ever sketch out the outlines of what you dream up as an image?"*



Modelling this kind of talk moves young people far away from the ways of talking that are characteristic of school or other institutional settings: direct commands, group commands, reminders of what they are NOT doing, reminders that they are students or children or “immature”, admonishments to complete an assigned specific task in a set period of time.

Ideally, young people not only hear adults use the kinds of talk summarised above, but they also have plenty of time in the small-group conversational atmosphere to practise this kind of language.

Adults working with one of the PRU groups at darts have used the guidelines described. A conversational tone is kept by referring to adults and young people by their first names and encouraging informal discussions where all can choose to talk and listen.

The group took a trip to London in March 2005 that is often referred to in the group’s artwork and conversations. References to the trip include recall of certain sites as well as specific behaviours of individuals and the group.

The change in the language of the young people shows how they take up the ways of talking they hear adults use. In talking about their trip to London, the young people have said, *“It was a really positive experience for us all. We all had our challenges and obstacles, but we all got through it together and were really proud.”*

Talking about the past actions of the group with the first-person plural pronoun illustrates the young people’s view of themselves as a unit of friends who support and encourage one another. One artist remarked about this group of young people, *“This group really supports all the members. They’re really friends.”*

Referring to the past behaviours of individuals and stating what members of the group ARE doing has been passed on to the young people. The young people’s references to their individual past behaviours show pride and increased self-esteem.

One young person pointed to a giant three-dimensional figure of a dragonfly that the group had created and said to an adult who had worked on the project and also to a visitor, *“I really like the texture on those wings. Who came up with that idea?”* The idea was his, and he pointed out his accomplishment in a comical self-assured and yet “modest” way.

Within the course of any one session the effects of modelling language can be seen.

At the beginning of the session, the lead artist said, *“I’m carving the eyes so that they pop out of the turnip rather than go into the turnip.”* This language was later modelled by one of the young people when she said, *“I’m going to break the toothpicks in half. Could you stick them in the turnip? I’m going to put toothpicks in for hair too.”*

If the young people state what is not happening, the adults quickly respond by stating what someone is doing.

For example, towards the beginning of the session a young person said, *“John isn’t carving his own!”* An adult responded, *“we’re both working together.”* Later in this session, the same young person stated positively what was going on by saying, *“I really like the ears John has carved on his turnip. I want to carve ears too.”* Declarations have changed from *“I can’t do this,”* to *“what would you like to me to do?”* to *“I would like to change mine by doing this.”*

During a visual arts session a support worker modelled talking about the process.

*“I think I’ll experiment by putting on some white, and then, before it’s dry, I’ll put blue on top. I wonder how it will look? I’ll also mix in some glitter what do you think will happen?”*

## The Language of Planning

When talking about their plans for a piece of artwork, young people are dealing with a range of options, the sequence of tasks, working out the time it will take, what tools they will need, and speculating about outcomes.

The benefits that come from promoting the language of planning are all about acceptance and self-esteem. When these language uses are in place, young people find themselves:

- exploring options to move the group forward toward the next step
- engaging at length in conversation about a single topic
- listening to others primarily when what they say advances the work of the group
- relishing the fact that work in the arts is almost never about undertaking a routine or predictable course of action
- thinking positively and exploring alternative solutions when obstacles occur
- considering how to adapt a successful method to fit a new situation
- understanding that a collaborative effort is the most successful way to move the work of the group forward.

Here are some examples of the kinds of language that creative activities facilitate:

- narratives by familiar experts about their experiences of learning - eg. *an artist talking about how she learned a particular technique*
- layout of sequential plans under different kinds of conditions - *breaking the creative process into small steps and discussing options*
- critique of ideas, projects, plans by "critical friend" - *Robbie asking a friend's advice as to what he could do to the chin of his turnip that would result in the most pleasing appearance*
- stream of consciousness conversations - *open discussion around the table about possible future projects.*

In addition to modelling talk that signals learning and looking for the imitation of this language in the statements of young people, adults must also be aware of uses of language that DO NOT promote learning. Things to AVOID are:

- absolutes such as *never, always*, except in cases of safety
- judgemental adverbs such as *sadly, predictably*
- monologues

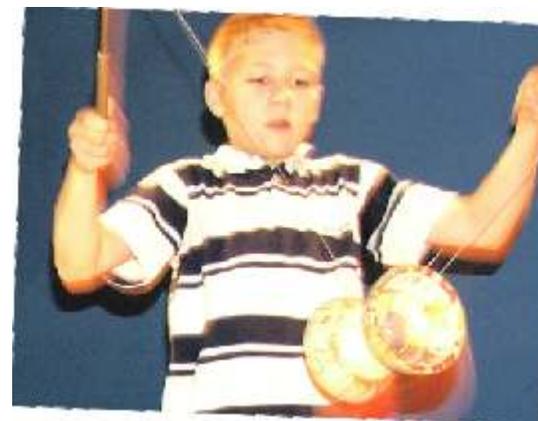
negative mental state verbs eg. *"I don't think", "I can't see"*  
 direct questions with prescribed answers: right or wrong.

Recognising the need for improvement is a vital part of understanding how the smaller steps build toward the finished product. Keep in mind that there is no such thing as *"That's wrong."* Rather than start with, *"That was brilliant,"* which leaves little room for progress, say, *"Nice one. Try this to improve it."*

Do not give young people the opportunity to make negative self-judgements - for example never ask them to speak about occasions when they did something that was *stupid, bad*, or seen as *"cool"* but was inappropriate. Never ask young people to make broad general evaluations of themselves in public or in front of the group.

*"As long as the young people are aware of what they are working towards, they should know that what they did was good. This will help to increase their self-esteem because they've been complimented by an artist. Care must be taken if this is done in front of peers or adults as public praise can at times have detrimental effects."*

*Otherwise Creative artist 2005*



## Making Links: with young people's lives

Clearly young people will engage more quickly with projects that they feel have direct relevance to their lives. Artists and other adults working with them must look for positive connections and make the young people aware of these links.

Music Technology is often highly successful in engaging our groups. Because they see the connection between the activity and their personal lives, enjoying music downloaded from the internet for example, they find the sessions relevant, demonstrate a lot of positive behaviours and are highly engaged with the activity.

Sometimes the young people make the links themselves, taking ideas from an arts project into their home environment. One young person enjoyed the graffiti art so much that she was inspired to paint her bedroom this way. She often tells the group about the progress she's made on her project.

It is tempting to think that young people will be engaged if you ask them to talk about their past. However, for PRU learners, the goal of work in the arts is to move them forward, to help them leave behind negative self-images that may linger from past labels or conflicts.

If an arts activity does seem to lend itself to building from past experiences, always work with positive references that have specific and direct relationship to the art work at hand.

Similarly, because PRU learners have often had multiple experiences with violence and have also watched horror movies, artists may be tempted to draw on these experiences for current activities. Do not let your artists fall into this temptation. Remember that research shows that though high-energy activities that mimic violence or aggression may sustain young learners' interest, actions that *"get aggression out"* only escalate aggressive behaviour further.

## Making Links: with art history

To introduce a project to one of the PRU groups coming to darts, an artist told the young people, *"Today we will be doing the ancient art of carving. This has been a long tradition in my family. They've been doing this for thousands of years."* The young people looked puzzled, then got the joke, and giggled as the artist let a wide grin spread across his face.

When young people work in a particular art medium, they need to know that they align themselves not only with individual artists and their

creative pursuits, but also with artists reaching back across centuries and across the broad expanse of many different cultures.

On this particular day, the artist talked a bit about the ancient arts related to carving, and the young people then were handed turnips. Again, a quizzical look, but the artist quickly explained the principles of carving faces in small and large, soft and hard media.

*"Has anyone heard of Michelangelo?"* he asked. *"Yeah, he's the one who painted the Sistine Chapel,"* one of the young people answered. *"Yes he did, but he was not just a painter. He also did carvings. He would start with huge blocks of marble. He saw faces in the marble and would carve away the excess to reveal the face. That is what you will be doing today. Look at the turnip and imagine the face you want to reveal."*

By starting with an explanation of the long history of carving, the artist gave the young people not only context but association with the past and well-known individuals of the past. They could then see the art form as more than a mere short-term activity for the current day.

The artist linked what they were doing today to the past, but also to the past and future of their own work. The group had produced masks earlier in the year that had been included in an exhibition, and they would be doing more masks in connection with an environmental project later in the year. Faces - their depth, texture, features, and differences - mattered in the past and would continue to matter in their future work.

Moreover, the artist's linkage of today's carving with its past history led the young people to express their own view of other connections. *"It looks like part of a totem pole,"* one of the young people remarked of her turnip carving once it had taken the form of a face.

Referring to Michelangelo provided the opportunity for the young people to relate information they already knew to their current project, and also to see how all basic art forms show up in vastly different cultures. In addition, they learned that Michelangelo was not just a painter, reinforcing the idea that an artist has many roles. Also, by referring to Michelangelo, the artist was able to give the young people instructions that tied bits and pieces of technique into a larger and more distant work.

Here, the artist is working as guide, facilitator, commentator, and model who joins in with other carvers of the past and present. The group had to grapple with the abstract notion that to create a face in a piece of marble, tree, or turnip means to look for a face in the medium. Therefore, they needed to carve away the excess to reveal the face rather than carve the face in an image they arbitrarily concocted.



## Easing into Activity

In the year that Shirley spent with Otherwise Creative she pointed out to us examples that showed the importance of the way an artform is introduced to the young people. First impressions count, and the way an artist introduces an activity can have an impact on whether or not the young people participate. When planning sessions with your artists it may be useful for you to be alert to the best practice and potential challenges. The artist may be experienced in working in schools and other settings where they have been able to launch straight into activity, but in the context of young people from a PRU a different approach is called for.

The first session of writing the words to a rap song about the London trip was a really great session. In later sessions one young person asked, *"Can we write more?"*

The artist was very aware of the young people's reaction to using a pen and paper. They eased into the writing by telling the story of their trip and making verbal contributions first. When they seemed ready for pen and paper, they were encouraged to write as much or as little as they wanted.

When one group had difficulty with the first session of a Pinball 3-Dimensional sculpture they never really got fully engaged with the project or reacted positively to it. They did not know enough about process and outcomes and how to make their ideas work. This is why it's important to explain the multiple steps that are required to produce the final product.

At the start of a drumming session, it was very difficult to engage the young people and convince them to participate. The artist had started the session by showing them his very complicated and advanced drumming skills. This intimidated the young people, caused them to assume they could never play like that, and discouraged them from participating.

It is important to ease into the activity. It helps to raise the energy of the group, introduce them to the art form with beginner level skills, and tell them a bit about the background of the art form. This gives them the confidence, energy, and interest in the activity that they need to be successful.



## ABOVE & BEYOND

As you and the young people become more confident with your artistic endeavours and with your relationships with the artists, you may begin to think beyond a programme of workshops to sharing your work with others or going out to see professional exhibitions or performances.

## Sharing

We touched on the idea of product earlier - young people like to see an end product to their efforts. This section gives some advice on how best to display or share that product.

Telling the pupils on day one that they will be performing in front of an audience may well be too much for some to cope with. How would you feel? However, as the project progresses a sharing may well be something to consider. It can be an excellent way of reinforcing the successes the group has experienced.

What is a sharing? It could be:

- a small live performance of a song they have written, or, if they have recorded it, the playing of their CD
- the premiere of their film
- a short drama piece
- visual art work displayed on the walls.

A carefully chosen audience could be invited to view, admire and mingle whilst having a glass of juice and a few snacks. It is about the young people sharing their work and their experiences.

A pupil or a member of staff may introduce the event with a few words - important in order to put things in context, particularly if the audience isn't fully aware of what they have been involved in. It can be an excellent way of raising awareness of your project with potential partners. Who could not be convinced when confronted with faces glowing with pride?

It's also an excellent way to involve parents/carers, many of whom are only used to receiving letters and telephone calls from the school because of problems. How might they respond to being invited in to see and hear how well their child has been doing? It may also be worth considering whether the press and/or radio should be invited. What a buzz to be featured in the local paper - for doing something positive.

Involve the artist and the young people in deciding what is the best way to share the work. Only you can fully understand the complex dynamics within the lives of your young people. Do not just rush ahead into planning an extravaganza just because you are justifiably proud. Reflect first upon what might be achieved, and what the consequences may be for the individuals within the group. How might they respond? How might they feel? Explore these things with them and the artist/s. Plan carefully.

### Shirley writes:

Singing or performing in front of an audience of strangers or a group of one's peers can seem frightening and overwhelming at first. The thought of taking such a big risk can be less intimidating when young people know they have the support of their friends. Many young people are hesitant to sing by themselves in front of an audience because they fear that if they make a mistake it will be obvious and they will be embarrassed. Performing with a group takes a bit of pressure off the individual because it shifts the focus from the individual to the group as a whole.

Yet performing with a partner or a group still requires young people to prepare, rehearse, and make an effort to produce quality performance. Moreover, young people will be less likely to skip a rehearsal or to not contribute fully when they know that their friends are counting on them. When they have the security of working with a partner, young people will take on new challenges and prove to themselves and others that they are capable of accomplishing things they never thought possible. The way working in groups helps young people to successfully complete new challenges can be seen in the example on the following page.



During the first day of an intensive Otherwise Creative four day project in July 2005, the group wrote lyrics and composed a melody to create a song about the dangers of drug misuse. Recognising the link between the message of the song and the group of former dependent drug users she was scheduled to work with that afternoon, one of the artists suggested that the young people perform for the afternoon group. Although they had only composed the song that morning, the artist was confident that the group had the ability to deliver a brilliant performance.

The young people glanced at each other and quickly nodded their heads in agreement. *"We'll do it!"* they exclaimed. To confirm their proclamation, the artist said enthusiastically, *"Let's have a vote. All those in favour of performing this afternoon raise your hand!"* The entire group waved their arms in the air. They were told that the afternoon group consisted of former drug users, which made the young people's lyrics particularly relevant and meaningful to them.

As he thought about the impact their lyrics might have on the afternoon group, one of the young people considerably asked, *"Would it be appropriate to sing all of our lyrics, or will there be anything in our song that will offend them?"* The artist assured him that the group was very open about their experiences and there would be no problem with the lyrics.

Later that afternoon the young people stood outside the studio as one of the staff members introduced them to the group. As they waited to enter the room, one of the young people said, *"I'm really nervous!"* The other young people and the artist quickly chimed in, *"I'm nervous too!"* One of the staff members assured them that their performance would be great and that being nervous can even help improve the performance.

Shortly after they entered the room they began to sing their song. The afternoon group looked at the lyrics on the wall and at the young performers with expressions of awe. The young people had decided to conclude their performance with a series of tableaux, touching back to an activity they had done at the Tate Modern during their trip to London in March. The tableaux were improvisational, without a clear ending. Two of the girls agreed to take on the challenge of starting the tableaux first if they could go together. Once the words ended and the group began to fade their voices, the girls excitedly ran to the centre of the room and

struck a dramatic pose. The rest of the young people followed, completing the tableau and then tapering off into a new one. The performance finally came to an end when one of the staff members exited the tableau and ran over to the wall to take a bow. The young people followed suit and proudly bowed for the audience.

As they left the room a darts staff member from the audience eagerly went up to the young people to tell them how fantastic their performance was and how impressed the group was. She emphasised that they were under the impression that the young people had been rehearsing for weeks. The young people beamed and said to each other, *"I can't believe we did that well"*, *"I'm really glad we did that even though we were nervous"*, *"I still can't believe we performed that well without much time for rehearsing"*, and *"That was really brilliant!"*



## The Benefits of Performance

A quality performance requires self-discipline and planning. Through the constant rehearsal required for a successful outcome, young people can develop extremely useful personal skills such as:

- the ability to understand the consequences of one's actions
- the ability to work towards a desired goal
- self-discipline and self-regulation.

Taking part in a successful performance can lead to an increase in self-esteem and sense of achievement.

Often, a lot of preparation and effort has to be poured into a project before it is time to perform. For those who love to have an audience and the positive attention they get, it can be frustrating to wait and slowly work towards the performance. This can result in negative behaviour that is an attempt to gain the positive attention that is so desired. If adults have noticed that a young person loves to receive positive attention they should remind him/her of the quality performance that lies ahead. This is especially helpful during moments when a young person may struggle to understand why the group has to spend so much time writing the lyrics to a song.

It is also helpful to incorporate the idea of audience into projects that may not always demand a performance in the traditional sense. For example, offering young people the opportunity to explain their sculpture to the group gives them an audience who will listen and give them positive feedback.



One of the young people was sometimes excessively loud and disruptive, and had trouble concentrating on one activity for a long period of time. At times however he became fully involved in a project, channelling all of his energy into the artwork. Staff members noticed that the common thread in all of these appealing projects was the element of performance.

In one session the young people worked in pairs to come up with a rap beat and then presented their beats to the group. He was first to volunteer to perform. After he had finished he beamed with pride and then sat down and attentively watched his peers perform. He enthusiastically complimented their work.

Staff members realised that this young person loved both having an audience and being part of one. He enjoyed receiving positive feedback and willingly gave it to others. They concluded that performance was his preferred way of giving and receiving positive attention.

*"A key aspect of starting with the basics is building to some sort of finished project. This allows young people to master skills and progress to advanced stages with a balance of challenge and comfort. Young people should be aware of the distinction between the big picture (what they're working towards) and the smaller steps that are necessary in getting there. Continuity is vital with groups so that they know their efforts are building to something. The satisfaction that comes from producing a high quality performance or exhibition, as well as the dedication and planning skills necessary to see a project from start to completion, will make the young people likely to keep writing, painting or performing."*

Otherwise Creative artist 2005

## Not Giving Up

Returning to an activity you have previously found too much of a challenge and giving it another go can seem daunting. It takes great courage and perseverance to keep trying until there is success. However, the rewards of giving it another go and successfully completing a difficult task are well worth taking the risk.

When young people struggle to complete a task, they may doubt they are capable of finishing what they have set out to do. They can decide either to stop trying or to persevere until they succeed. In order to choose the latter, they must have a high sense of self-efficacy. The more times they decide to get up and try again, the more likely they will be to believe that they are capable of accomplishing anything they set their minds to. As they continue to take the risk of giving it another go they build their confidence even more. Moreover, it often helps to have the support of a group of friends when returning to a previous challenge. The rewards of finding the courage to give it another go, supported by a group of friends, can be great.

The first day of the Otherwise Creative "four day special", an intensive block of activity, was scheduled to be a busy one. The young people were expected to complete several activities. Raising the young people's energy and getting them engaged from the start were of the utmost importance at the start of the early morning session.

To raise the energy of the group and ease them into the day's activities, the lead artist started the session with a game where each person had to come up with an adjective that both described himself and started with the same letter as his first name. Each person then had to repeat the new creative names (names and adjectives) of each person who had introduced himself to the group.

This task was particularly difficult for members of the group who were the last to go because they had to remember multiple adjectives to describe their friends. The young person who was the last to have a go struggled at first to remember each person's new creative name. She was encouraged by the group to try again from the start. When she failed again she became very embarrassed and said, *"I'm not doing it."* She then withdrew from the group. She decided to watch the group rather than participate in the activities for the rest of the morning.

During the short break the group took that morning this young person became more animated as she talked with the young people and staff. She was in high spirits when another member of the group showed up whilst the group was taking a break.

When the group returned from their break they began to explain the activities they had been doing that morning to the friend who had just joined them. During one activity, each person worked with another member of the group. Everyone chose a particular mask to wear. The pair decided what emotion each mask was conveying and how to act out this emotion without using words. Then, each pair performed for the group. One person sat with the mask on his/her face while the other gestured behind until the group had guessed the emotion.

On hearing the details of the activity, the young man who had just arrived was very excited and wanted to have a go. The young person who had withdrawn after her minor setback volunteered to be his partner. Although she had worked with a partner earlier that morning, she had not performed in front of the group. She was now ready to have another go. The entire group cheered her on as she prepared to perform.

Whilst she danced around behind her partner she waved her fingers around her head and stuck out her tongue to express the silliness that was painted on the mask of her partner. The young people laughed with her and shouted, *"I know, you're being silly!"* She beamed and said, *"I'm not afraid to be silly anymore."*

A bit later in the session the artist asked for two volunteers to sing part of the chorus he had just written on the flipchart. The same young person who had struggled with performing in front of the group earlier that morning volunteered once again. She performed without the slightest bit of hesitation, confidently smiling up in front of the group with her friend.

As the group applauded she sat down next to one of the staff members and said, *"You know I struggled a bit at first this morning."* The staff member smiled at her and said, *"Yes, but you just performed in front of everyone. You must have been nervous but you did it. Sometimes it just seems worse before you actually do it. But was it so bad once you were up there?"*

The young person then replied, *"I was nervous but it wasn't bad at all."* The staff member congratulated her on her great performance and told her she should be really proud of the change in her confidence. Her face lit up as she exclaimed, *"Thanks!"*

## Taking a Trip

Making links between the work you and the young people are doing in your projects, and the wider realm of the arts, can be extremely beneficial. Visiting museums, art galleries, theatres and cinemas, or even playing pre-recorded radio or television programmes featuring key arts practitioners, can help put your work into a wider context.

The right play, performed well, can be a magical experience which the young people will remember for a lifetime. A few years ago we took a group to see a John Godber play about disruptive pupils who were engaged through the use of the arts. Staff are still approached by young people who refer back to how much they enjoyed the play.

However, even with meticulous planning, things can go wrong. The following accounts demonstrate the benefits of field trips as well as how a potentially problematic situation can be turned around.



We had arranged to travel to York to see a Red Ladder theatre production looking at issues affecting the youth of today. Due to problems outside our control the group arrived five minutes late. We were not allowed in - and there was no interval. What should we do?

We gathered everyone together (the staff being alert to any of the group feeling upset, angry etc) and discussed the situation, stressing that no one was to blame. The options were:

- a) to see a different play (unfortunately not as appropriate and too late)
- b) to go home, the evening having been a disaster
- c) to ensure we made the most of the evening and enjoy York

We chose c. We toured the city walls, marvelling at the views, discussing what life might have been like in days gone by, intrigued with the cultural diversity of the visiting tourists and amazed by the architecture. We talked about holidays we'd had and holidays we'd like, places we had visited and would like to visit. We reflected on the art work the group had been involved in over the previous year and discussed future work. We wandered; we explored; we enjoyed.

It became apparent that in order to pre-empt potential problems we would have to find somewhere to eat. At first sight the establishment we entered seemed to be an exhibition gallery cum art shop. In fact it was an exhibition gallery cum art shop cum restaurant. The food was organic vegetarian wholefood (which linked in with a planned environmental arts project at an organic farm). Everyone agreed to try the food. There was one small hurdle, the restaurant looked very busy, and we were a party of ten. Sure enough it was full, but they could open up a private room for us.

We ended up eating tapas from around the world whilst seated on floor cushions around a low level table. The room was illuminated by wall sconces, and the window shutters opened to the streets below. Conversation flowed - topics included the food, countries, cultures, the world, the trip, the Tate Modern trip, the arts. *"It's good that we missed the play" "I'd rather be here, it's fantastic."*

It doesn't end there. Following a suggestion by one of the group, we performed some dramatic tableaux on the steps of the Minster. As we finally headed back to the bus, one of the group pointed out the Red Ladder Theatre Company van passing us just as we crossed the road. She made the comment, *"We've seen the theatre company. It was meant to be."*

Bianca also went on the trip. Here are her observations.

The York trip highlights how the adults set an example of positive behaviour. This was modelled by some of the “leaders” in the group and then by their peers as well. One of the best things adults can offer young people is a model of how to react positively when accidents, the unexpected, or setbacks occur. Dealing with the unexpected catches us offguard, which can cause stress and panic. For PRU pupils who may not have role models in their lives who positively and effectively cope with stress, it is especially important that artists and staff members set an example of how to react when things don't go according to plan.

It is important that young people learn to see the unexpected as a wonderful opportunity to face the unknown and discover what surprises are in store for them. The key to getting the best possible outcome when accidents happen is to know how to be flexible. Because arts projects don't always have a pre-determined course and because sometimes the outcome does not match what was originally planned, artists must be flexible. They have to be quick to recover and think of alternative solutions. This makes them excellent role models. The York trip shows how working in the arts offers a great opportunity to face the unexpected with the guidance of experienced artists to lead:

Disappointed looks spread across the faces of the young people. One had been having a particularly tough day and said, *“Well it figures with the kind of day I've been having that this is how it would end.”* Another said, *“If we had just left a few minutes earlier.”* The two quickly decided that going to the pub was the best way to deal with the setback.

The adults responded immediately to the comments. They gathered the group together, smiled and then said, *“You can't blame yourselves. It's no one's fault that we missed the play. We made it here and it's a wonderful place with many exciting things to do. We're here now so we should make the most of the opportunity.”* Although there had been confusion and debate at first over exactly what the group was about to do for the rest of the evening, it was now clear that they weren't about to turn around and call it a night. They had expected a wonderful evening and they would still have one.

When one of the young people mentioned again that they should have left earlier, another responded, *“We're here already though and we should have fun.”* He followed the example of the staff member who had drawn the focus away from regrets over missing the play and brought attention to the fact that there was still an entire night of adventures ahead of them.

The staff member's language and attitude communicated to the group that they should look at the change of plans as a positive surprise.

One young person anxiously said to a staff member, *“Stress!”* which was her way of communicating that she needed to deal with the sudden change without panicking. The reply was calm, *“Yes we missed the play, but York is a beautiful city with lots to do besides the theatre.”* Someone else quickly caught on, *“We could walk around the old walls or go for a ghost walk!”* The young person relaxed and became excited to begin exploring.

As the group set out on their adventure a staff member exclaimed, *“Now we don't have to worry that we won't have the chance to eat dinner!”* During the drive to York, the group had expressed concern that there would be no time to eat. They were now all beginning to see the luck of this happy accident.

The staff geared the young people for a night of exploration, starting with a walk along the walls surrounding the city. The night continued as the staff led the young people into town to look for a restaurant. Continuing the theme of adventure and openness to new experiences, the group ventured into a vegetarian restaurant that had artwork displayed inside. The young people didn't recognise much on the menu but were happy to give it a try. As they entered the room that had been prepared for them, one cheerfully announced, *“See, if we hadn't missed the play we would have never found this place.”*

Travelling home there were no regrets at missing the play. The group were pleased with the way the trip had turned out. Missing the play was no longer a setback but a happy accident that gave them a wonderful night.

This reflection highlights the tremendous support generated within the group as a result of their journey within the arts. With staff who modelled responses which many of the group would not have previously experienced, the group was able to move from despair, despondency and failure to hope, success and ultimately to creating their own positive experiences.

Committing to an off-site trip is a big undertaking and one that you may want to delay until the group has had a substantial amount of exposure to the arts and different ways of working. But hopefully we have shown how beneficial such adventures can be and you may want to bear such possibilities in mind when planning long-term projects.



LAST WORDS &  
MORE ADVICE

## Last Words

We've travelled a long way to get here. It might be the last chapter, but it is also a new beginning. Within the pages of this handbook we hope you have discovered some exciting new gems. Perhaps you have become aware of examples of good practice that you already carry out but you hadn't realised why you did them or why they were successful. Hopefully you are inspired to get more involved with the arts, to use the arts to engage with your hard-to-reach groups, to push your own boundaries and to support your young people as they develop as sculptors, dancers, designers, musicians, etc...

The Art of Engagement did not set out to be the ultimate guide to setting up and running successful arts-based projects. There will be further developments, new ideas, ways of using the arts, behaviour modification techniques that will create new answers and lots of new questions.

You will be the ones trialling new ways of working. The information in this book can be your guide, but the onus is on you to adapt the techniques, strategies and styles of working to suit the needs of your groups. This may mean that some of your longstanding working practices need to be challenged. This can feel threatening and some of your colleagues may be resistant. But with the help of this handbook, along with access to other sources of information (see overleaf), you could be at the forefront of change and lead by example.

*"The only thing that is constant is change."* Otherwise Creative artist 2005

There are a couple of blank pages at the end for you to make notes, jot down contact details and write down any inspirational quotes you come across.

Remember the maxim:

*"The arts can have a magical effect - but they are not a magic wand".*

We have covered many aspects associated with running successful arts projects. We have also included a wide selection of images which illustrate points made, raise awareness of different artforms and which can be used to generate ideas and enthuse staff. Record your own projects and use these as positive examples of the work you are involved in.

Re-read the manual, mark up sections which are currently of particular relevance to you, pass it on to other staff and get their feedback.

Then set your goals. Decide how you are going to embark on your journey. How many sessions for how many people? What are the specific aims of your project? How will you know if the aims have been achieved? Develop a timeline with specific dates for each element of your project. This could

include deadlines for funding applications, dates for meeting arts organisations, project start and finish dates, review dates, etc... Be bold, be ambitious, make haste slowly but take action now!

Enjoy the process and relish witnessing how positive behaviours in young people trigger other positive behaviours. Focus on being aware of these moments of change. You are the catalyst for your group's emotional growth through involvement in the arts.

Be inspired.

Be inspirational.

We welcome feedback on the handbook and news of your own projects. Please email us at [darts@thepoint.org.uk](mailto:darts@thepoint.org.uk)

Thank you, and good luck.



## Further Reading

### Arts in Their View: A Study of Youth Participation in the Arts

*John Hartland, Kay Kinder, and Kate Hartley*

*National Foundation for Educational Research, 1995, ISBN 0 7005 1397 3*

Using interviews from 700 people aged between 14- 24, this book investigates young people's attitudes and experiences of the arts. It summarises the results of empirical research of youth art participation from five areas across the UK, demonstrating trends and offering pointers for policy makers and youth arts facilitators on art provision both within and outside the school curriculum.

### ArtShow: Youth & Community Development

*Shirley Brice Heath & Laura Smyth*

*Partners for Livable Communities, 1999, ISBN 978-0941182522*

Based on ten years of research on high-quality after school activities, ArtShow demonstrates how community based youth programs can provide meaningful experiences for young people during the high risk time when they are neither at school or at home. Arts activities in particular provide an environment that forms identity, provides a safe place for young people to be vulnerable and express emotion, requires discipline and exposes youth to risk and criticism.

### Breaking The Cycle Of Failure

*Elaine Hirst & Duncan Robertshaw.*

*darts (Doncaster Community Arts), 2003, darts@thepoint.org.uk*

darts' first major piece of research unpicking our approaches to work with Doncaster's Pupil Referral Units, mixing anecdotal and statistical observations to examine the impact of the work.

### Creating Chances: Arts interventions in Pupil Referral Units and Learning Support Units

*Richard Ings. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2004, ISBN 1 903080 010*

Explores the impact of creative projects on the work of PRUs and LSUs around England. Creating Chances examines the role of the artist as a catalyst for creativity and personal development and will be of vital interest to professionals working towards social inclusion.

### Keeping Arts Safe

*Arts Council & NSPCC, 2003, ISBN 0-7287-1146-X, www.artscouncil.org.uk*

Guidance for organisations to implement policies to safeguard children and young people involved in arts activity.

Critical Response Process: A Method for getting useful feedback on anything you make, from dance to dessert

*Liz Lerman & John Borstel. Dance Exchange, 2003, www.danceexchange.org*

Explores the importance of feedback to the artistic process and outlines the 'Critical Response Process'. A four-step method, central to which are three roles - the artist showing work, a facilitator, and a group of respondents. This process helps stimulate new ways of creative working and will enable you to develop your own projects.

### Partnerships for Learning: A Guide to Evaluating Arts Education Projects

*Felicity Woolf. Arts Council England, 1999, www.artscouncil.org.uk*

Useful to anyone who organises, funds, delivers or takes part in participatory arts projects. Partnerships for Learning divides evaluation into five stages: planning, collecting evidence, assembling and interpreting, reflecting and moving forward, and reporting and sharing. Each section includes focus questions, a discussion of key issues, examples illustrating key concepts and a summary checklist.

### Serious Play

*Anne Wilkin, Caroline Gulliver & Kay Kinder, National Foundation for Educational Research. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2005, ISBN 1 903080 045*

An in-depth comparative study of arts projects in Pupil Referral Units and Learning Support Units in England. Evidence from pupils, teachers and artists testifies to the capacity of the arts to engage disaffected young people and to contribute significantly to their educational, social and personal development.

### Using the Arts to work with young people at risk

*Virginia Haworth-Galt, Artsworld: Artsplan, 2003, www.artsworld.org.uk*

This set of guidelines aim to provide all those who want to use the arts in their work with a comprehensive framework for planning arts projects with young people at risk.

### The Art of Inclusion: JRF Youth Arts Project - Wakefield

*Judi Alston, One to One Productions, 2003, www.onetooneproductions.com*

Report of a three year Joseph Rowntree Foundation research project into the impact of the arts on social exclusion in children and young people in the Wakefield area.

## Online Resources

The internet is a valuable but fast changing resource. As we go to press these are some currently useful links:

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

National development agency for the arts in England, distributing public money from Government and the National Lottery. Useful sources for research, funding news and publications. Includes targeted information affecting your region.

[www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)

Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Government organisation to increase access to the arts. Sources of the latest creative news, research, legislation and potential funding sources.

[www.youthmusic.org.uk](http://www.youthmusic.org.uk)

Young persons' music charity promoting music-making opportunities and providing advice to those with least access specifically prioritising young people at risk.

[www.firstlightmovies.com](http://www.firstlightmovies.com)

Two strands of funding for young film-makers, supported by the UK Film Council.

[www.a-n.co.uk](http://www.a-n.co.uk)

The artists information company: advice, information and job opportunities for artists and organisations.

[www.artsculturemediajobs.com](http://www.artsculturemediajobs.com)

Advertise posts & view artist CVs

[www.axisartists.org.uk](http://www.axisartists.org.uk)

Information about visual artists online database available

[www.communitydance.org.uk](http://www.communitydance.org.uk)

Development agency for access and participation in dance. Online resources, job opportunities and event information

[www.danceuk.org](http://www.danceuk.org)

Events and training in the UK, including a database of freelance dancers

[www.geese.co.uk](http://www.geese.co.uk)

Internationally renowned team of theatre practitioners specialising in working with offenders and those at risk of offending

[www.joiningthedots.co.uk](http://www.joiningthedots.co.uk)

Online resource dedicated to artists and arts organisations working creatively in offending prevention. Includes case studies, artists contact database and training information

[www.soundsense.org](http://www.soundsense.org)

UK development agency for community music. Opportunity to find out more about community music, source music workers and find out about training and conferences

[www.voluntaryarts.org](http://www.voluntaryarts.org)

Voluntary Arts Network. Source of job opportunities for employers, training, workshops and arts events in the voluntary sector

[www.prus.org.uk](http://www.prus.org.uk)

National organisation for Pupil Referral Units.

[www.accessart.org.uk](http://www.accessart.org.uk)

Visual arts online. Resource bank and learning tool for teachers, gallery educators, artists and pupils across all key stages.

[www.engage.org.uk](http://www.engage.org.uk)

Resources for teachers and educators working with galleries and collections.

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

Cross Government working with local partners to achieve better outcomes for children and young people. Sources of research and publications into multi agency working.

[www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk)

National Youth Agency for policy and information about youth work nationally, publications and resources.

[www.bbc.co.uk/blast](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blast)

Young people's website. Opportunity to showcase work, be inspired and find out about activities in your area.

[www.creative-partnerships.com](http://www.creative-partnerships.com)

Arts Council and Department for Culture Media and Sport. Flagship arts programme in schools across the UK.

[www.ypnmagazine.com](http://www.ypnmagazine.com)

Young People Now, weekly National Youth Agency magazine for organisations working with young people.



