



Section 3

Findings

Section 3 Findings

The findings from the research and evaluation cover the following key areas:

- attitudinal shifts in young people
- development of Emotional Literacy skills
- key worker attitudes and expectations
- how using the arts can meet key objectives within PAYP
- progression routes and legacy

3.1 Attitudinal shifts in young people

Recent studies on young people and engagement in learning have highlighted the impact of positive feedback and encouragement on motivation in young people. For example, a recent Ofsted report *Improving City Schools: how the arts can help* ⁵ concludes that the arts can provide more opportunities for pupils to receive positive feedback about their contributions from both their teachers and their peers and that this has a strong motivating influence on their subsequent work. ⁶

3.1.1 Attitudinal shifts in young people toward key workers

Attitudinal shifts were recorded and measured in relation to the following key areas:

- the impact on relationships with key workers
- the impact of key worker involvement on participant progression

A significant outcome identified in this study was a marked improvement in participants' relationships with their key workers and the positive impact that this had on participant engagement and achievement. The conditions created by the design of the project, with its high worker:participant ratio of 1:3, facilitated opportunities for constant positive feedback and reinforcement of positive behaviours. Strong, positive key worker support for participants was evident throughout the project and was manifest both in relation to individual Enrichment activities and to successful engagement in group activities.

The sense of achievement felt by young people, together with positive support and encouragement, appeared to be instrumental in the development of positive bonds between young people and their key workers.

Prior to the project, most young people met with their key worker once a week, sometimes only once a fortnight. One key worker commented on the difficulty of building positive relationships when contact was limited and lacked structured activity, 'I don't really know them yet. Up to now I've only been meeting them once a week or so. I only see them for about an hour, we usually just have a cup of tea and a chat ... and it depends what they feel like. Sometimes they don't feel like talking, so it's hard to get to know them.'

The intensive nature of the project, and key worker participation, was seen by many participants to have a positive

impact on relationships. In response to a video diary interview question towards the end of week one, four young people recorded positive developments in their personal relationships with key workers.

'To be honest, I didn't really know C (the key worker), but it's been all right. I've learned that I can get along with her. I've told her things. I've learned that I can trust her.'

'It's cool being with my key worker for two weeks.'

'It's been good fun being with my key worker so much.'

'I've learned the key workers get involved in everything.'

The levels of key worker involvement affected both negative and positive attitudes of the young people. In week one, there was a marked increase in

resistance from young people to engage in the workshop tasks when one of the key workers had a migraine and did not feel able to join in the session. A mid-process interview revealed how the key worker viewed the effect her negative mood had on the rest of the group: 'Yesterday I didn't feel very well. I had a migraine and I feel like that affected the group – sort of like a kid, saying, 'Oh my head' and 'Oh I'm tired' and that was sort of like, the atmosphere.'

Conversely, during a mid-process interview, one key worker commented on the positive impact key worker participation was having on the young people: 'It has a big effect, because the staff and key workers being upbeat and confident and supportive of one another definitely rubs off on the children.'

Other instances were observed where it became difficult to motivate some participants when any one of the key

workers did not appear to be engaged with the workshop process. This incident was supported by comments made by participants that their lack of self-confidence made it difficult for them to join in unless their key workers were also taking part with them.

A second major outcome of the project was the marked improvement in levels of peer support from the young people as the project progressed. Research supports the finding that participation in a collaborative drama process can be instrumental in building peer relationships. For example, a recent study carried out by the University of Exeter (2002) found that drama processes can support the development of positive relationships and attitudes between peers, sometimes leading to self-defined friendships, where none had previously existed.⁷

During this project, two young people volunteered information about new peer friendships they had formed and

suggested that they had revised their first impressions of other young people in the group. Other developing friendships were observed in the group but were not commented on by participants.

⁵ *Improving City Schools: how the arts can help*, Ofsted, 2003

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ Bayliss, P & Dodwell, C 'Building Relationships Through Drama: the Action Track Project [1]', *Research in Drama Education*, Vol 7, No 1, 2002

3.1.2 Attitudinal shifts in young people towards writing

A key risk factor associated with offending behaviour is poor literacy and numeracy skills. It is suggested, that poor literacy may directly lead to offending behaviour as the young person fails to achieve at school, is unable to attain qualifications and is therefore unable to successfully enter the labour market.

Throughout the project, participants were set a variety of written tasks ranging from structured questionnaires

to free writing to explore specific emotional responses to the work. Participants were also questioned throughout the project about their attitudes to writing. Their responses indicate that the project had a significant impact on attitudes to writing and more generally to learning.

The first written task young people were invited to complete was pre-project questionnaires. The questionnaires required responses to a guided multiple-choice answer, with the addition of a final section inviting any other comments. Although all the young people completed the closed questionnaire, only one completed the last section, suggesting that, at this stage, participants were only comfortable or willing to respond in writing through multiple-choice answers.

Participants were also surveyed at the beginning of the project on their attitudes to writing. While the majority

of participants indicated that they liked writing, this fails to correspond with key worker observations recorded in interviews that most of the participants were resistant to writing anything and had expressed anxiety about 'getting it right' (key worker interview).

It can therefore be suggested that participants perceived an expectation from project staff and/or key workers that they liked writing at the beginning of the project, which they duly expressed through the pre-project questionnaire. However, key worker observation and pre-project knowledge suggests a problematic relationship to writing in all participants.

This was reinforced by participants' attitudes to using workbook-diaries. Typical responses included: 'It's boring', 'It's like school' and 'Am I doing it right?' Resistance was very high, with one participant throwing his diary on the floor and refusing to engage in the task

until a TiPP facilitator sat with him and made suggestions about what he might write and how it would be a useful part of the exercise.

Even with a high level of coaching and support from staff, anxiety levels rose dramatically when workbooks were introduced into sessions and most participants found it necessary to compare their work with their peers for approval. A study of attitudes to school conducted by Smith and Elley (1998), demonstrates that while young people will engage in writing which is related to spontaneous play or home activities, a change in this focus towards structured, school-identified tasks causes marked decline in enthusiasm and willingness to complete a task.⁸ This bears out the findings of this project which suggest that participants initially had difficulty in separating a writing task to support an enjoyable activity from writing as a school based task. Participants constantly cited school as a

reason for not enjoying writing, with one young person recording in their diary that they did not enjoy school because 'there is too much noise and no one helps you when you get stuck.'

As the project progressed, participants began to differentiate their writing experiences during the project from those at school and began to demonstrate less resistance to the notion of writing in a workbook, citing the relaxed atmosphere and not 'being treated like kids' as the main reasons for this.

The introduction of writing had initially unsettled the young people with some of them feeling they had somehow 'been tricked into doing schoolish things.' However, as participants became aware that there were no marking systems in place, and that they were not being judged on their writing style, they no longer appeared to be preoccupied with spelling and grammar and a more relaxed

attitude towards writing began to emerge. Even the most reluctant writer began to volunteer as scribe for the focus questions and was apparently unconcerned about errors in spelling or grammar.

At the beginning of the project, over half the young people rated education and training as very important in their lives. Questionnaire responses also suggest that the majority saw themselves as being back in education or training within the next 12 months. Post-project questionnaire responses suggest that participants' attitudes to learning altered significantly by the end of the project. Throughout the research process young people talked about learning new skills, learning about drama, learning the meaning of new words and learning about each other and themselves. This suggests that they are talking about learning in a general sense rather than showing a renewed zeal for writing. It is clear, however, that most participants

had gained a renewed confidence in their ability to write.

It is here that one element of the added value of drama to literacy work with young people can be demonstrated. The focus of young people was constantly directed towards the drama content of the programme with literacy positioned as an auxiliary skill to aid enjoyment. Writing therefore became associated with enjoyment, and this, coupled with the high levels of support and positive enforcement observed throughout the project, was effective in encouraging the young people to write.

⁸ Smith, J, Elley, W, *How Children Learn to Write*, Paul Chapman Publishing, London, 1998

3.2 Development of Emotional Literacy skills

Poor literacy skills are often accompanied by a lack of other associated skills such as the ability to communicate with peers, to work as a team and to manage emotions. This skills package represents some of the most desirable qualities that employers look for in employees.⁹ If a young person is to re-enter education, employment or training, it is therefore vital to focus not only on the development of functional literacy and numeracy but also to provide opportunities for the enhancement of these transferable skills. These skills are often also described under the wider heading of emotional literacy.

This section deals with the attainment of communication skills and group working skills within the context of Emotional Literacy.

⁹ *The Impact of the Arts*, Arts Council England, 2004

3.2.1 Emotional Literacy

Emotional Literacy has become an important issue in UK education, particularly in schools, with the emergence of the Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills curriculum (SEBS).

Emotional Literacy can be defined as ‘the ability to understand ourselves and others and to be aware of, understand and to use information about the emotional states of others with competence. It includes the ability to understand, express and manage our own emotions, and respond to the emotions of others, in ways that are helpful to ourselves and others.’¹⁰

Weare goes on to define a number of key aspects of Emotional Literacy.

Self-understanding and having:

- an accurate and positive view of ourselves
- a sense of optimism about the world and ourselves

- a coherent and continuous life story

Understanding and managing emotions:

- experiencing the whole range of emotions
- understanding the causes of our emotions
- expressing our emotions appropriately
- managing our responses to our emotions effectively: for example, managing our anger, controlling our impulses
- knowing how to feel good more often and for longer
- using information about emotions to plan and solve problems
- resilience: processing, and bouncing back from, difficult experiences

Understanding social situations and making relationships:

- forming attachments to other people
- experiencing empathy for others
- communicating with others and responding effectively
- managing our relationships effectively
- being autonomous, independent and self-reliant

A recent study conducted by the Centre for Arts and Humanities in Health and Medicine (CAHHM) highlights the role the arts can play in developing Emotional Literacy skills.¹¹ The study suggests that participatory drama projects have a natural democratic process where decisions are made through negotiation and discussion and where everyone's opinion is sought and valued. Although this is a rather simplistic interpretation of the drama workshop process, which fails to take into account complex power relationships between participants, the study does go on to suggest that drama is also able to provide opportunities for reflection, discussion and analysis, enhancing Emotional Literacy through the development of self-awareness and empathy and the establishing of 'open-ended relationships'.

Positive, open relationships are also identified by Goleman (1986) as key to Emotional Literacy. Such relationships can only be formed by people who have

a degree of self-awareness and empathy. It is these social abilities that 'allow one to shape an encounter, to mobilise and inspire others, to thrive in intimate relationships, to persuade and influence, to put others at ease.'¹²

Goleman goes on to assert that emotional literacy can be taught at any stage in one's life and this project hoped to demonstrate that a significant change could be made to Emotional Literacy levels through a short, drama based intervention.

¹⁰ Weare, K, *Developing the Emotionally Literate School*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 2004

¹¹ Everitt, A & Hamilton, R, *Arts Health and Community: A study of five arts in community health projects*, 68 CAHHM, University of Durham, 2003

¹² Goleman, G, *Emotional Intelligence Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, Bloomsbury, London, 1995

3.2.2 Communication skills

During the course of the programme the participants were actively encouraged to reflect on and evaluate their own progress. A process of personal reflection

is built into the Drama Enrichment activities. As well as daily group discussions on the process, many of the enrichment exercises offer an opportunity to write and reflect after participation in a practical activity. The majority of the young people taking part in the programme suggested that their confidence had increased and that they felt more comfortable making contributions to group discussions. As the programme progressed staff also observed a greater willingness from young people to contribute during group discussions.

This echoes the findings of *Serious Play*, an evaluation of arts activities in Pupil Referral Units and Learning Support Units. Conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the evaluation covered seven projects across a range of artforms and concluded that 'approximately half of the pupils had felt

that participating in the arts projects had improved their communication and listening skills.'¹³

As part of this study, a key worker made the following comment on a participant's progress in a video interview, 'I really enjoyed the way the group bonded. A's got much more confidence, she's better at speaking up. She's much more confident with her peers. She had been badly bullied in the past and is normally very wary of her peers. She really enjoyed the performance and would like to do it again.'

Participants in a video interview commented:

'I'm proud of myself – that I've learned different things about drama like attitude wise, different feelings. Stuff that I can express now, I understand what words mean and things.'

'It's nice to meet new people, which I enjoy doing. I find it hard to get on with

people, but I think I've enjoyed meeting new people.'

'I'm proud of myself – that I've been able to get on with people.'

'I feel like I've achieved – being with different people and enjoying the fun.'

¹³ Wilkin, A, Gulliver, C, Kinder, K, *Serious Play: an evaluation of arts activities in Pupil Referral Units and Learning Support Unit*, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2005

3.2.3 Developing group working skills

One of the key desired outcomes for the project was the development of participants' ability to work as part of a group. Most of the young people taking part in the programme had not been attending school regularly and lacked opportunities to take part in structured activities with their peer group. Some had difficulties relating to peers, particularly in group situations.

The project provided an opportunity for positive interaction with peers in a perceived 'safe' space. This space was closely monitored and controlled, while also providing opportunities for the exploration of feelings and relationships through play. Participants responded well to these opportunities and, as the sessions progressed, demonstrated a marked increase in their ability to work together through negotiation and cooperation. This was particularly apparent in week two of the project when participants were working towards a group performance.

This reinforces the findings of *Breaking the Cycle of Failure*, another key study examining the impact of the arts on pupils excluded from mainstream school, which identified and focused on the levels of engagement, disruption and violence in individual arts activity sessions. While acknowledging the reality that most sessions showed a mixture of behaviours,

of the total individual attendances, '43 per cent were wholly engaged and only five per cent involved violent or disruptive behaviour.'¹⁴

This study, conducted by Doncaster Community Arts (darts) was able to further identify the differences in pupils' abilities to engage in and, as importantly, to work in a group across different artforms. Physical artforms like dance were felt to be more engaging than more sedentary activities like clay, citing 'both circus skills and Capoeira had low levels of disruption and violence and high levels of engagement.'¹⁵

In the TiPP drama project, the first sessions were spent building trust between participants, and encouraging them to work together in small groups to complete a task. The activities were drawn from both the Drama Enrichment pack as well as the facilitators' own knowledge. As the project progressed the tasks

became more complex requiring higher levels of cooperation and negotiation.

By day four of the drama project a positive group dynamic had begun to emerge and a loss of resistance to working with other group members was observed in participants. During interview, participants responded positively to questions relating to the group work experience and acknowledged their own achievements regarding the successful formation of new relationships.

¹⁴ Hirst E & Robertshaw D, *Breaking the cycle of failure – examining the impact of arts activity on young people attending Pupil Referral Units in Doncaster, darts, 2003*

¹⁵ *ibid*

3.2.4 Application of Enrichment materials in relation to Emotional Literacy

On day five of the project the enrichment exercises gave specific focus to the development of Emotional Literacy skills.

The day's enrichment activities included:

- *Atmospheres*
- *Moods on paper*
- *Moods on paper scenes*

Through improvisation and discussion *Atmospheres* explores a variety of atmospheres that might be encountered when entering a room, for example; happiness, anger or tension. While the group have to agree on how that might be best expressed through improvisation, one member of the group has to guess correctly what atmosphere is being conveyed.

The other enrichment exercises, *Moods on paper* and *Moods on paper scenes*, expand on the theme, exploring mood through improvisation and reflective discussion. The discussion these exercises

promoted extended participants' mood vocabulary and allowed participants to consider the effects of moods and emotions on themselves and those around them.

The exercises also promoted a lively, interesting debate which participants enjoyed. Young people's comments suggest that this particular session had a positive impact on their ability to recognise, articulate and control their own emotions:

'I've learned new things – different moods – ways to play different games, (like) wink murder.'

3.2.5 Conflict and achievement

The following table, taken from post-project questionnaires, suggests that most of the young people in the group felt better equipped to deal with conflict in a group situation by the end of the programme.

Conflict

A survey of participant's ability to deal with conflict in a group situation following the programme.										
Rating										
1 = no I can't deal with conflict	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10 = yes I am more able										
Numbers of participants	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	3

One key worker suggested that the insight young people had gained had a positive impact on some participants' ability to deal with conflict and confrontations in a group situation, 'some kids have learnt to walk away (from conflict) and cool off.'

Achievement

A survey indicating young people's sense of pride in their personal achievements throughout the project

Rating 1 = nothing to be proud of 10 = extremely proud	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Numbers of participants	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2

One participant did not record an answer.

A strong theme emerging from young people's comments is the sense of achievement participants began to feel through their engagement with the project. The table above, taken from post-project questionnaires, indicates that most participants felt a high level of achievement.

One young person suggested that being able to control his mood was his greatest achievement during the project, 'my biggest achievement was coming in and not being angry or something like that.'

3.3 Key worker attitudes and expectations

A significant proportion of the PAYP budget is earmarked for recruiting and training key workers to work on a one-to-one basis with those young people who are most difficult to engage.

The role of key workers is part of the targeted approach to working with young people at risk and those not in education, training or employment (NEET). Targeting NEET groups is seen as a key contribution to the Economic Wellbeing strand of the *Every Child Matters* (ECM) agenda. ¹⁶

Key workers' views of the development of key and transferable skills, such as communication and abilities to work in a group, were an essential element in this project evaluation. The results indicate that joint participation in a creative arts project can have a significant effect on relationships between young people and

key workers, creating a strong effective bond conducive to positive engagement in follow up work.

The main findings of the key workers' attitudes and expectations are focused on:

- attitude towards young people
- development of relationships with young people

3.3.1 Attitudes towards young people

In debriefing sessions with PAYP coordinators, all of the key workers admitted that prior to the project, they had not realised how demanding it would be working so closely with the young people they were supporting. However, they all reported that it was both a positive and rewarding experience.

Key workers' comments suggested that they were surprised at the participants' level of commitment to the programme from the start. They reported that the young people were enjoying being part

of a structured process and were making an effort to get there everyday.

'I expected more drop out.'

'They have really enjoyed the first week. They are making sure they are picked up on time and brought to the venue.'

The level of commitment from participants was very encouraging and all of the key workers were surprised at the low level of drop out. Only two young people did not complete the programme and take part in the final performance: one dropped out during week one due to illness and another was not able to make the performance date due to other commitments. Young people suggested that the informal atmosphere, together with the respectful treatment they received from the adults involved, was a key factor in their commitment to the project.

Staff observed that by day three of the programme one of the younger

participants was turning up each day before any of the workers, setting up the chairs in a circle ready to start the session and beginning to set the table up for lunch. At the outset of the project, this participant sat apart from the group with his hood up covering his face and was very reluctant to engage. 'For them to stay on a two-week project has been really, really good. Fantastic feedback.'

¹⁶ www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/neet

3.3.2 Development of relationships with young people

All of the key workers reported a clear and positive improvement in their relationships with the young people they supported. As the course progressed, staff observed a marked improvement in the way the young people were responding to the adults involved with the project, particularly to the key workers.

Key workers suggested that the programme allowed them to get to know the young people they were supporting on a much more informal level, creating opportunities to find out about their likes and dislikes, enabling them to make informed choices about suitable activities for future projects and progression routes. '... it has really helped me to get to know her. Before the project, my contact with A would only be about once a week. Now I can see what activities she would enjoy being involved in. She loves singing and she's starting a course, which involves singing and making your own CDs. I'm trying to find out about a drama club locally for her.'

'I particularly liked being able to work intensively with the young people. It gave you a chance to get to know them properly.'

'J is really missing the project. We are going to be doing a national project to produce a youth film, this is with J in

mind because we know that he will really enjoy it.'

One key worker, who at the start of the project had only limited contact with the young people she supported, told researchers in a post-project interview that she had just taken part in a 10k women's marathon with one of the young women she supported during the programme. 'We've just run the 10k in Liverpool together. I felt like I really got to know the young people properly, I wasn't working as her key worker on the 10k, I just did it to support her and it gave me an opportunity to work with her on a more informal basis.'

'She says she's interested in youth work, so we're going to move her into a mentor role – giving her a bit of responsibility will be really good for her. I've also looked into the possibility of a one-week Prince's Trust course for her, it's a life skills course.'

3.4 How using the arts can meet key objectives within PAYP

This section focuses on the need to build a critical mass of evidence that is relevant to government programmes and the need to understand and support the ways in which arts organisations work in these contexts.

One of the seven key objectives of PAYP is 'to support young people back into education or training and help them stay there, by working with those at risk of exclusion.'¹⁷

PAYP and Positive Futures are two current national programmes that provide strategic support and interventions for young people and communities at risk. Both these programmes identify and support the role of the arts in engaging and retaining young people. Any further national programmes and strategies targeting children and young people at risk

are likely to focus on this key objective and its attendant stepping stones of engagement, retention and completion.

The need for evidence of the effectiveness of the arts in these large-scale national programmes is further clarified within the current *Every Child Matters* agenda, where the cost effectiveness of early intervention is recognised, citing 'Preventative services and earlier intervention are cheaper ways of providing for needs if this reduces the likelihood of escalation to the more expensive tiers three and four targeted services. This also ensures better outcomes for the child or young person.'¹⁸

¹⁷ Crime Concern, PAYP Good Practice Guide, 2005

¹⁸ *Every Child Matters*, Joint planning and commissioning framework, 2006

3.4.1 Evidence

The findings reported in this study add to a growing evidence base to support the use of the arts to engage young people at risk. This model of practice meets key PAYP objectives in the following ways:

- enhancing relationships between key workers and young people at risk requiring one to one support
- giving young people opportunities for personal development including the development of self-discipline, self-respect and self-confidence, enabling them to communicate more effectively with a range of people and work more effectively in a team
- allowing access to high quality arts activities with identifiable progression routes
- encouraging young people to contribute to their communities through volunteering and active citizenship

The first comprehensive review of research literature, practice and theory on the role of the arts in crime reduction,

Doing the Arts Justice (2005), commissioned by Arts Council England, Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, clearly indicates that participation in arts projects is successful in engaging young people at risk.

An identified key factor is the arts provide an accessible and flexible route for young people. This route is underpinned by developing and requiring key personal and social skills: 'It is suggested that arts interventions in criminal justice contexts are successful because they offer a non-traditional, non-institutional, social and emotional environment; a non-judgemental and unauthoritarian model of engagement and an opportunity to participate in a creative process that offers both structure and freedom. At the same time engagement in the participatory arts requires respect, responsibility, cooperation and collaboration'.¹⁹

Blagg is a drama based offending behaviour programme developed by TiPP. A programme evaluation carried out by Centre for Applied Theatre Research (2003), summarised the impacts of using drama identified in current literature on good practice as:

- drama generates 'emotional insight' as well as 'intellectual insight' and can therefore help young people develop victim empathy
- drama can affect a wide range of criminogenic factors, such as self-esteem, the relationship between thoughts and feelings and behaviour, testing alternative behaviours, and challenging beliefs
- drama can engage young people in exploring thoughts and feelings in involving and immediate ways
- drama is a non-traditional means of engaging young people in learning and skills development and may be more suitable to the learning styles of excluded young people ²⁰

In this study, responses from young people taking part in the programme

supported this. Their sense of achievement and enjoyment of the project was directly attributed to the relaxed informal environment and the respectful treatment from adults taking part in the programme.

¹⁹ *Every Child Matters*, Joint planning and commissioning framework, 2006

²⁰ *The Impact of Blagg on Challenging and Reducing Offending by Young People*, CATR, 2003

3.4.2 Practice

It is difficult to separate the positive outcomes of this project from the skills and experience of the drama facilitators. The facilitators' combined experience was evident throughout the process when dealing with situations that were potentially negative and disruptive to the process.

While TiPP's practice is essentially based on theatrical techniques, it is underpinned by an understanding of cognitive and behavioural psychology

and educational practice. The original focus of the organisation was within the criminal justice system, but over the last 10 years it has developed a considerable reputation for developing and delivering a wide range of participatory arts projects with a wide range of community groups, particularly with disaffected young people.

TiPP's approach is to constantly reward and praise positive engagement and not to respond to disruptive or negative behaviour. An example of this understanding of young people combined with ways of approaching the challenges of working with the arts in these contexts was on day three of the process where one group member began to complain about the nature of the games and exercises, saying she found them childish. The facilitators took some time out to allow the young people to air their concerns. The exercises were discussed in the context of the whole

programme and the stage of the process they had reached. This led to a discussion about how the young people saw the programme developing and the types of themes and issues they would like to address. Once the group's concerns had been aired and they had been assured that this was a typical drama process, they were happy to continue.

Many arts organisations who work with disaffected and hard-to-reach young people can clearly articulate their practice and the underlying principles that inform this specialist area of work.

The *Otherwise Creative* programme involved pupils from Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in the Doncaster area during 2000-2002, and was designed to use creativity to address low self-esteem and serious disengagement with the learning process. Doncaster Community Arts (darts) undertook a 12-month evaluation of the programme of arts work with

young people educated outside of mainstream education, excluded as a result of emotional, behavioural, psychological and social problems.

The Engagement Matrix, which emerged out of this work, has clearly charted the layers and stages of engagement, and identifies the journey made by participants from disengagement, to curiosity, involvement and acceptance, through to success.²¹ It is darts' understanding of this sequence, which they stress is not a linear progression, that enables them to so successfully use a range of artforms to support children and young people who are outside of mainstream educational provision.

The darts Engagement Matrix is currently being further developed and refined, with key researcher Shirley Brice Heath. The finalised matrix will form part of a national handbook for artswork in PRUs and LSUs, available from July 2006,

published in partnership with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

The Learning and Skills Development Agency's objectives for programmes that motivate, engage and encourage progression for disaffected young people include activities or approaches to improve skills that this study and many arts programmes also identify, namely:

- self-esteem and confidence
- personal and social skills
- learning skills
- practical and employment-related skills
- literacy and numeracy skills
- creativity
- knowledge and understanding of important life issues²²

²¹ Hirst E & Robertshaw D, *Breaking the cycle of failure – examining the impact of arts activity on young people attending Pupil Referral Units in Doncaster*, darts, 2003

²² LSDA *Back on Track: Successful learning provision for disaffected young people - Good practice guidelines*, 2001

3.5 Progression routes and legacy

Another key objective of PAYP is to 'provide access to quality arts, sports and cultural activities, and allow those with an interest and/or talent in any area to continue after the programme has ended.'²³

The elements needed for young people to sustain motivation and commitment include a sense of achievement and increases in confidence. In this study, all of the young people involved have benefited from the constructive relationships that they have developed with key workers. With one exception, all of the young people who completed the programme are, at the time of writing, engaged in other projects.

A positive, supporting footnote to the project came in the form of an email to the research team from PAYP coordinators in December 2005 as follows: 'Some young people from the drama project recently attended a week-long

sports coaching programme through PAYP and the Prince's Trust. Their engagement in this project was far greater than the other participants, they attended all full-day sessions... and they immediately, from day one, joined in with all activities (levels of participation far higher than others on the course). There is a strong correlation with their previous experiences of intense programmes of activity.'

One young woman who took part in the project was given a voluntary mentor role as she has expressed an interest in youth work, while on the other hand, one of the young people turned 18 years old as the project finished and moved to another area.

Voluntary sector organisations acknowledge that providing continuity and progression for young people's interests is difficult and demanding.

Increasingly arts organisations are developing progression routes as part of their partnerships and contracts with the key agencies working with young people at risk.

A prime example is Charnwood Arts in Loughborough, which facilitates a partnership involving the Youth Service, Leicestershire Constabulary, the Racial Equality Council, Councils for Voluntary Service, Youth Inclusion and Support Panels, Charnwood Borough Council and Sport England. This group is parent to a number of initiatives, which are directly involved with long-term inclusion, community cohesion and youth justice related work. Charnwood Arts is also represented on the board of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and is delivering and developing longer-term projects and work that take those involvements deeper including focused development work through Connecting Communities and the Community

Cohesion Pathfinder programme and working with the Youth Service and PAYP to deliver holiday projects, developing new facilities.²⁴

²³ Crime Concern, PAYP Good practice guide, 2005

²⁴ *ibid*



Section 4

Conclusions

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This small-scale study has focused on identifying the key elements of the participants' engagement and learning, the importance of coherent project design and management, and the significance of key worker involvement.

4.1 Key outcomes

- participants' attitudes to key workers and other adults involved in the study underwent a positive change
- participants' attitudes to group work improved significantly during the project; by the end of the project a strong group bond had formed
- all participants had contributed to the group process and had worked well with key workers, other adults involved in the study and their peers
- participants enjoyed working with drama, citing their sense of enjoyment and achievement as well as the development of new skills as a main factor
- participants enjoyed the learning of new skills and were proud of their achievements

- participants developed a new confidence in their verbal and written communication skills
- participants began to develop strategies for coping with stressful or challenging situations
- key workers developed a growing understanding of and respect for the young people they were supporting
- positive working relationships were developed between key workers and participants
- participants were left with feelings of being 'let down' and missed taking part in a structured activity when the project finished
- most participants were keen to engage in follow up activities immediately after the end of the project

4.2 Impact of the logistics of project design

The positive impact of tailoring the structure of the programme to participants' needs was evident in the lack of drop out from the programme. Key workers suggested that drop out rate would have been higher had participants been expected to adhere to

a typical school day.

Availability of food and refreshments also had a positive impact on the success of the programme. Initially the young people did not show much interest in the food available for lunch and only a few of them actually ate anything. As the group got to know each other it became routine to sit down and eat and have a chat before the session began. Consequently levels of focus and concentration began to improve noticeably. Each day the TiPP workers made the breaks shorter and shorter with little or no resistance from the group. As the programme progressed and they became more engaged, participants began to arrive earlier, stay later and request less breaks.

The choice of venue had a positive impact in that it was a neutral space well away from usual youth work activities with the added value for the young

people as the theatre based activities were taking place in a recognisable theatre space. The young people were also interested in the history of the building and asked to be shown around.

4.3 Key worker involvement

A striking outcome emerging from the study has been the impact of positive key worker involvement as central to the success of the project. On the very rare occasions when key worker input dipped, there was a measurable drop in enthusiasm from participants.

Although key workers found the project extremely rewarding they also suggested that they found the high level of commitment and intensity of the programme difficult at times. This might be addressed by PAYP coordinators through extra training and support for key workers taking part in intensive programmes.



Section 5

Recommendations

Section 5 Recommendations

The success of this project can be attributed to the following significant factors. The findings of this evaluation suggest the following factors need to be considered and implemented for the effective use of arts projects within PAYP.

5.1 Key planning and structure factors

- careful consideration is given to all aspects of delivery in the planning and design of projects including timetable, location, availability of food and refreshments, workshop design and delivery
- progression routes for participants are identified during the project
- follow up sessions are built into the design of the project to allow young people to debrief and reflect on their experience
- key workers and young people have already had an opportunity to work together on an intensive collaborative project

5.2 Skills and expertise of the arts (drama) facilitators

- the skills and expertise of the arts facilitators in delivering the Arts Enrichment programmes and their specific experiences of working with young people at risk is essential to project success
- arts workers and facilitators have undertaken relevant training in the delivery of arts for young people
- arts workers and facilitators have undertaken relevant training in the sectors they are working in, for example, education, youth work, youth justice

5.3 Levels of key worker involvement

- the level of key worker involvement is central to the project's overall success
- the levels of commitment and active involvement by key workers supports and reinforces the commitment of the participants
- key workers taking part in intensive programmes of work with young people at risk are given additional and specific training and support

5.4 Effective liaison and planning between partners

- liaison and planning between partners prior to the project commencing is essential for all of the key elements to be truly effective
- liaison and communication between the delivery partners during the project is crucial for the effective delivery of the agreed outcomes