

Case Study 1:

Background

- 1.1 Russell Prue describes himself as a 'broadcaster, author and educator,' and through his work has extensive experience of working creatively with young people and the wider education sector. Through his company Anderton Tiger, Russell designs and helps to implement Live Education Stations for schools aimed to engage with learners of all ages and abilities to teach them valuable skills such as creative problem solving.¹ Since qualifying as a Lead Creative Practitioner in 2016, Russell has worked at three schools on behalf of the Lead Creative Schools (LCS) Scheme. To date his involvement in the scheme has been primarily with Cathays High School in Cardiff.
- 1.2 Russell first got involved with the LCS scheme when he was approached to work with Cathays High School after delivering a keynote speech at the Arts Council's annual conference. Following this, he was contacted by the Arts Council and encouraged to apply for funding. In order to prepare for his role, he attended the creative learning workshops which he felt were "*excellent*" and prepared him well for working one on one with pupils. Thanks to both this training and his prior experience, Russell felt very well prepared to work with teachers and pupils on the projects. However, when asked about the administrative requirements of the application process he reflected that these were extensive and took his time away from working on his other active projects.

Objectives

- 1.3 The primary objective of his work was to improve creative outcomes, language, confidence and literacy levels amongst young people aged between twelve and fourteen (mixed genders) who had been pre-chosen by school based on literacy and numeracy levels.
- 1.4 The aim was to develop collaborative based projects which provided a legacy for each school.

¹ <https://andertontiger.com/russell/>

Delivery

- 1.5 The activities delivered in the schools centred around assisting pupils to produce radio broadcasts. These broadcasts involved putting on shows and covering topical issues such as the news and current affairs, and students were encouraged to develop their own content. All broadcasts were 'live' with parents and listeners being encouraged to phone in with comments or questions. The radio broadcasts typically ran for one hour each Wednesday afternoon for a period of 12 weeks at each school and covered topics such as Knife Crime, Climate Change Protests, Agony Aunts, and 'Conspiracy Theory of the Week'. Sessions were led by Russell, although teachers were integral to supporting the learning process.



(Source: <https://andertontiger.com/workshops/> 2019)

- 1.6 In order to help shape the working practices of teachers, Russell encouraged them to be more flexible in their approaches and, where appropriate, let pupils "take the lead on their learning".

"It is very much a collaboration. I'm only ever there in the background, it is the students who do the work, it is very much student led. I wanted it to be student focused, where they can talk about the things that matter to them."

Outcomes

- 1.7 Part of the rationale for delivering radio broadcasts live was in order to develop the confidence of students involved in the projects, and Russell

believes this has been achieved particularly thanks to parental engagement with the broadcasts.

“...some of these children often don't have much contact time with their parents, many parents work full time, so it was great to see the parents phoning into the station to comment on how well their child was doing on the radio. Having that recognition off their parents really boosted their confidence.”

- 1.8 Delivering Radio Broadcasts also necessitates the development of oracy skills. Observing that some pupils involved had relatively poor skills in this area, Russell believes that these skills have really developed through the projects in a way that's been “wonderful to see”.
- 1.9 Russell also observed that the teachers involved seemed more confident to take a less prescriptive approach to teaching and understanding that they can teach beyond what is included in textbooks. He believes he has helped them to give students the freedom to “learn in different ways”.
- 1.10 For the schools involved, Russell believes that his work has led to improved oracy levels for pupils across the board. More broadly, Russell indicated that both students and teachers had commented to him that the activities had led to an improvement in class attendance, and a reduction in behavioural problems. Many of the schools decided to purchase their own radio broadcasting equipment in order to continue with the projects.
- 1.11 On an individual level, Russell felt that the LCS scheme had helped him to develop a more reliable income stream both in terms of school-based projects, but also through selling his own range of radio equipment to other schools. As a result of being a part of this project, Russell has secured four more school-based projects across Wales, with a further three under discussion. Furthermore, Russell has also developed substantially more confidence in working with young people from a range of backgrounds and abilities which has had a very positive impact when applying for other youth-based grant projects.
- 1.12 Russell viewed this work as sustainable as it has provided the schools with a legacy which could be maintained after he left. With the school purchasing

their own radio equipment, the pupils and staff have continued to broadcast their weekly shows, building on the work which Russell did with the schools.

Conclusion

- 1.13 From Russell's perspective, the Lead Creative Schools experience was positive. Key outcomes that were planned for were achieved, although significantly there were broader, unintended benefits and outcomes achieved.
- 1.14 He spoke of the way in which students and teachers both indicated positive experiences of the projects by way of developing skills, improving confidence and enjoying the activities. An improvement in the oracy and communicative language skills amongst the pupils was noted and creativity was judged to have improved across the board.
- 1.15 Following the end of the projects, two of schools purchased their own radio production equipment and have since begun broadcasting on a bi-weekly basis. This suggests that the projects have resulted in positive impacts.
- 1.16 Curriculum change was a key reference point for Russell, who indicated that he felt positive towards the Donaldson Successful Futures curriculum changes, as it promoted more creative learning.