

SCHOOL OF AMBITION

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE EVALUATION

August 2007-June 2008

Moving Image Artist Self Evaluation - Qualitative

Please answer the following questions as in as much depth as possible.

1. How successful do you feel the Artist in Residence SOA Programme was integrated into Dunbar Grammar School? Where possible please give examples of good practice and suggestions for improvement where possible.

The Programme seems to have been a great success within the school despite initial problems integrating the artist into classrooms and departments. It became quite clear from a very early stage that the majority of existing staff within the school were unaware of the artists role with some seeing the presence of artists as an ostentatious add on to an already perfectly functioning establishment while others who were more susceptible to the programme were still ill informed and often viewed the artists as potential class cover for their departments or simply as teachers there for the duration. This resulted in numerous highly stressful situations from initially feeling unable to select the projects undertaken and therefore over committing to everyone and feeling pressured to deliver more hours than contracted to satisfy the many, to the opposite end of the spectrum where staff became unhappy when the artists took control and dictated the kind of things that they could and would do throughout their residency.

That said, the artists residency provided a clear and concise opportunity to develop models of practice that complimented both the School of Ambition and The Curriculum for Excellence ethos and over the year many productive and cohesive partnerships were formed with various departments to the clear benefit of the pupils and staff involved.

As an artist entering any formal education environment there are often similar obstacles to overcome regardless of location. I have found in the past and this is definitely applicable to Dunbar Grammar School that staff respond much better when they know a bit about you as an artist, your specialism, your background, past works that they may have seen or heard of etc. This allows them to put you into some kind of context and therefore stimulate ideas for engagement. If an opportunity was given to the artists at the start of the contract to showcase a bit of their background and open questions to the floor then this could have saved a great deal of misunderstanding as to our function within the school. People who don't regularly engage with the arts

often have quite a dated opinion about what they are and how they can be used.

For example: Many teachers throughout the year that I had yet to work with would come to me and ask me to come and film something that their class was doing assuming that my role was that of videographer as their experience of filmmakers until then had pretty much been having a friend who does wedding videos or using their own camcorder. Of course there was definitely a role for documenting what was going on in and around the school though I feel if I had an opportunity to discuss my experience with arts across the curriculum, the creative process of making filmic installations for art galleries or indeed my works as an animator that there would inevitably be more creative sparks as well as perhaps an understanding that although I wasn't a teacher that I could justify my place within the school.

2. Please comment on the management of the programme, again emphasising areas of good practice and suggested improvements where possible.

The management of the programme was pretty much a mixed experience. Missing the staff induction due to disclosure hold ups I was completely unaware of who my line manager was for the first few months. Being partly managed by the arts service and partly by the school had many positives though scheduling meetings proved problematic.

On many occasions throughout the duration of the residency I felt disappointed by decisions made by in-school management and most other occasions felt undermined by their responses. Having dedicated a substantial quantity of time to a project set within a department of the school, the class teacher stopped the project as she felt it wasn't going the way she hoped/planned. I sent a letter stating my unhappiness at this decision and asking for an explanation and it was intercepted by management as I was told it may upset the teacher in questions. This in itself made it pointedly clear that the opinion and well being of the teacher was considered of higher importance than that of the artist. The matter was left there with the teacher not being held accountable for her actions. When addressing this situation I also felt that my in school line manager acted inappropriately as I stated that I did not feel supported or particularly well managed. The response was an incredible outburst about not having the chance to manage the artists as we had 'gone off in our own direction'. A manager's job is surely to manage their staff is it not?

Payment too proved to be hugely problematic throughout the duration of this contract with monthly payments regularly being late and being told that as self employed artists we must accept that this is the case. In my opinion this again proved that the artists were being treated differently from the teachers in the school though in fairness on this occasion I felt fully supported by the in-school management.

3. Please comment on the general day to day running of Artists Residency. What obstacles if any did you face?
(Communication, Accommodation, Resources)

It was clear from day one that Dunbar Grammar School was not really ready for extra members of staff and had not properly thought through the logistics of where we would be based, where our equipment would go etc. Having been moved around from boardroom to library to eventually finding a permanent space in the staff room next to a rather noisy toilet it still took 4 months for a shared computer with no printer to arrive and at no point did a telephone materialise. We did however manage to make the most of the space though were often distracted by people swearing at the photocopier, popping over to talk about nothing much and/or steal pens from us though often the monotony of this was broken by the whole staff descending into the room for coffee/lunch breaks and if we were lucky, very very lucky, we'd even get the head of the drama department singing Leonard Cohen songs.

4. How well were you able to integrate with other departments within the school? Again, please state obstacles, models of good practice and suggest improvements.

Some departments were easier to integrate with than others. Not surprisingly, expressive arts subjects took the opportunity to utilise my skills to develop their teaching, experimenting with ideas and expanding already existing projects. Out with that, Biology, PSE, German, French and Computing all approached me with ideas and assisted in developing projects though time constraints often played a detrimental part in the quality of the work/experience. This was due to limited contact time for subject teacher's and trying to manage the workload on a part time contract.

5. What preparations have been put in place to ensure the sustainability of the programme and to strengthen the infrastructure of the School of Ambition?

CPD in most of the transferable skill-sets I have brought to the school have been delivered to staff and senior pupils and the SOA companies should be able to operate from now on unassisted. Unfortunately, due to staffing changes within the school the number of bodies next term able to deliver these skills will have diminished.

6. How did the residency compare to the original brief?

The residency brief relied quite heavily on all staff being aware of our role from the start so that we may hit the ground running and unfortunately this was not the case and a lot of time was wasted trying to find our feet in the beginning. Due to the ambition of the final project, the final term had to be

given over to event management and as such I feel that I wasn't particularly developing as an artist or able to commit enough time in creating work of substance.

7. What would you do differently if anything?

Staff members who were trained to continue works in animation and live action filmmaking retired or contracts weren't renewed and as such the sustainability of the project has suffered. More CPD for more teachers could have reduced this.

I would have said no to things that I didn't feel were part of my job to allow me more time to focus on my targets.

I would have got my union rep to mediate pay issues.

Artist Self Evaluation – Quantitative

How many people were involved in the following activities as a direct result of your work?

OSHA	ACTIVITY	PUPILS	STAFF	PUBLIC
	Animation Club	20	2	0
	Live Action Film Club	12	0	0
	Documentary Film Club	14	3	0
	Importance of Being Ernest Documentary Company	12	2	0
	B-Boy Film Crew	3	1	0
	Isadorables Film Crew	5	1	0
	Laganlia Experience DVD	3	1	0
	Puppet Club	16	3	0
Total		75	13	0

CURRICULAR	ACTIVITY	PUPILS	STAFF	PUBLIC
	Biology Mitosis Animations	60 (S3)	4	0
	French	20 (S3)	1	0

	Directions Film & Animation			
	German Fashion Film	20 (S2)	1	0
	Biology Alcohol Abuse Filming	14 (S4)	1	0
	Computing Animation	16 (S4)	1	0
	Drama Mime Film	21 (S3)	1	0
	Dance Assessment Film	4	1	0
	Art & Design Animation	20 (S2)	1	0
Total		165	11	0

CROSS CURRICULAR	ACTIVITY	PUPILS	STAFF	PUBLIC
	PSE/Media	4	1	0
	Drama/English/ Art & Design	45	2	0
	Dance/Media	42	1	0
	French/Art & Design/Media/ Drama	20	1	0
	German/Media/ Drama	20	1	0
	Biology/Art & Design/ Computing	74	4	0
	Computing/ Art & Design	16	1	0
Total		211	11	0

CPD & TRAINING	ACTIVITY	PUPILS	STAFF	PUBLIC
	Persistence of Vision CPD	0	18	0
	NQT Editing	0	6	0
	Drama	0	1	0

	Filming			
	Art & Design Stop Motion Animation	0	2	0
	Storyboarding	0	4	0
	Goodwill Message DVD	3	1	0
	SOA Evaluation DVD	0	1	0
	Active Schools DVD/Filming	0	3	0
Total		3	36	0

EVENTS FOR MASS PARTICIPATION	ACTIVITY	PUPILS	STAFF	PUBLIC (Audience)
	When I Grow Up I Want to Be	40	3	?
	Top of the Pops	5	1	?
	Drama Festival	12	2	?
	Around the World in 80 Minutes	?	?	?