

South Dublin County Council
Arts Office
Creative Approaches for Learning
Arts in Education Professional Development Programme

Evaluation September 2009 – October 2010



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INTRODUCTION

Background on Work with Schools

Engagement within the school environment has been a strong aspect of South Dublin County Council's local arts development work. Prior to the publication of South Dublin County Council's *Arts Plan 2006 – 2010* (South Dublin County Council 2006), this work has been particularly focused on providing advice and support for schools engaging in arts projects (South Dublin County Council 2006: 17). Since 2005, however, the Arts Office has begun to work more directly in schools as a service provider through both long- and short-term artist residencies and artistic development initiatives. These residencies have included the Public Art Programmes of *InContext 1*, *InContext 2*, and *InContext 3*, a Musician in Residence 2005/2006 and a Dance Artist in Residence since 2008 as well as shorter-term visual arts residencies via the youth-focused NOISE South Dublin programme (www.noisesouthdublin.com/projects). In addition, the Arts Office has provided arts in education opportunities to schools via its Amateur, Voluntary, and Community Groups project grant scheme. While applied for largely by amateur and voluntary groups, the grant has been accessed by schools, indicating a desire for local funding provision for arts projects within the school environment.



Artistic development initiatives in schools have included the recent completion of posts in arts development held in North Clondalkin (music and visual arts) and West Tallaght (film), which were funded by RAPID and comprised a number of school-based arts development work. In addition, the Arts Office has contracted the services of a Music Education Development Coordinator since mid-2008. This work focuses on the strategic development of music provision across the County both within and without the school environment. The addition of a Youth Arts Coordinator to the team in 2008 has also provided new mechanisms through which the Arts Office has been able to engage more directly with schools.

All of the areas of work mentioned above have included focus on both arts education and arts in education. **Arts education** has been defined as the mainstream teaching and learning of the arts as part of general education while **arts in education** refers mostly to interventions by the world of the arts into the education system (Special Committee on the Arts and Education 2008). The latter focus may include work carried out both within and without school time.

South Dublin County Council's Arts Office has largely been focused on arts in education practice. This practice:

- “Involves skilled, professional artists of all disciplines working for and with schools in the making, receiving and interpreting of a wide range of arts experiences...”
- Ranges from one-off visits, through more extended programmes, to intensive, collaborative projects...
- [can involve] artists, arts organisations, pupils, teachers and sometimes primary carers working together to create arts experiences that enrich the curriculum and support the core educational mission of the school...

- Enriches the lives of all involved, with particular attention to nurturing the developing minds and imaginations of the pupils.”

(Special Committee on the Arts and Education 2008: 13).

The benefits of arts in education work have been outlined in the Arts Council’s (2006a) Artists ~ Schools Guidelines as follows:

- Making “a distinctive contribution to school-based arts education and to public arts practice...
- [Enriching] the curriculum. They complement the pupil’s own arts education and support learning in other curricular areas...
- [Making] available to schools and to artists and arts organisations opportunities outside their normal scope. Many artists attest to the personal and professional benefits of working with schools...
- [Helping] to connect the school with the wider community...
- Important gateways to the arts. Arts in education programmes assist schools in addressing their responsibility to reveal to young people the life-enhancing pleasure to be derived from high-quality arts experiences”

(Summary quoted from Special Committee on Arts and Education 2008: 17).

These benefits have been shown and documented via evaluations of various projects carried out through Creative Engagement, a fund provided by the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport, which was established and is still managed by the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) in 2005. The scheme promotes a partnership approach to the promotion and development of the arts in second-level schools, based upon positive interaction between learner, teacher, and artist. The programme also emphasises pupil-centred teaching and learning. Similar benefits have also been shown in evaluations of projects carried out by schools with schools by South Dublin County Council’s Arts Office.

Further, work carried out by the Arts Office subscribes to the notion that “arts education makes an important contribution to the wider goal of developing creativity in our society and economy, [particularly one characterised by knowledge, services and high-level manufacturing]”; as it supports creative thinking and promotes capability and adaptability as well as encourages risk-taking and experimentation. Based on these benefits, the Special Committee on Arts and Education (2008: 17) has concluded that that “a quality arts education is a key objective within the wider twin goals of education, as defined in the current *Statement of Strategy 2005 – 2007* of the Department of Education ‘(i) enabling all individuals to reach their full potential and (ii) contributing to our current and future economic success”.

The areas of work mentioned above have been informed by consultation for South Dublin County Council’s last Arts Plan 2006 – 2010. The results of this work have led to a desire to more strategically address the recommendations set out in *Points of Alignment* (2008), a report

published by the Special Committee on the Arts and Education. South Dublin County Council's Arts Office is currently completing the consultation period for the County's *Arts Plan 2011 – 2015*. This work has coincided with a more recent drive to push forward recommendations made in *Points of Alignment* via meetings entitled, *Creating Conversations* (January 2010) and *Encountering the Arts* (November 2010) as well as the Arts Council *Art-Youth-Culture: FYI Youth Consultation Meetings* (March 2010). The areas of need underlined throughout these discussions have been:

- That the arts need to be more integrated into education, rather than being outside of it (Art-Youth-Culture, Arts Council 2010)
- There is a need for approaches that involve learning through the arts (Art-Youth-Culture, Arts Council 2010)
- Young people as well as professional artists and facilitators should be asked for their input to teacher education programmes (Art-Youth-Culture, Arts Council 2010)
- Teachers do not often make an environment comfortable enough to ask questions (Art-Youth-Culture, Arts Council 2010)
- Local arts partnerships are one way to change what's happening in schools. A need to raise awareness in schools about arts and artistic groups has been acknowledged ((Art-Youth-Culture, Arts Council 2010)
- There is a need for long-term sustainable development in the field of arts-in-education (Encountering the Arts 2010)
- Teachers on the ground need to be encouraged and supported to foster a creative environment for learning within the schools (Looney 2010)
- The arts and cultural sector needs to help support schools by promoting the public image of arts in education, demonstrating that the school environment is not about control, but rather learning, critical thinking and engagement (Looney 2010)
- All involved in arts in education practice need to evaluate projects and share learning (Furthering Conversations 2010)
- Teacher education has a role to play in furthering arts in education practice (Furthering Conversations 2010)

Findings from these local and national meetings and consultations indicate a need for the Arts Office to more strategically develop its work in arts education as well as in arts-in-education.

Creative Approaches for Learning

One way in which this focus has developed is via the piloting of two seminars, entitled *Creative Approaches for Learning*, held by South Dublin County Council's Arts Office, one in September 2009 in conjunction with the 2009 European Year of



Innovation and Creativity and one in October 2010. These seminars attempted to harness the work carried out by previous and current artists working within the County's schools for two key objectives. One has been to empower teachers to engage more directly with the arts in order to access learners of all types. The seminars demonstrate the ways in which curriculum areas overlap, for example in the areas of Music and English, thus responding to the "multiple intelligences of pupils...[encouraging] greater scope for creative and constructivist learning" (Coolahan 2008: 37). Another objective has been to introduce new ways in which teachers and schools might further work directly with artists within their school environment to promote greater access and participation within the arts as well as build critical thinking, team work and learning across the curriculum. The overarching goal has been to work more closely with schools to develop a strategy to promote engagement with the arts. It is hoped that these seminars go some way toward empowering teachers and thus schools to overcome feelings of restriction that predominate regarding the timetable and syllabus and thus become more committed to arts in education practice as a valuable element of schooling. This focus addresses a specific need indicated by the Special Committee on the Arts and Education (2008: 23) on changes in school policy for promoting arts in education.

This report summarises the evaluation findings of those two seminars. In doing so, it presents a local perspective on a growing national movement within the arts and education sectors to address the recommendations of the 2008 publication *Points of Alignment: The Report of the Special Committee on the Arts and Education*.

CREATIVE APPROACHES FOR LEARNING: A DESCRIPTION

Background and Rationale

Initial discussion in establishing *Creative Approaches for Learning* began in November 2008 in anticipation of the EU year of innovation and creativity (2009). The Arts Office was looking for a practical way in which to highlight innovative work being carried out through partnerships the Office has in communities and schools. There was an overall consensus that it would be desirable to work with schools and teachers in order to share learning and teaching approaches that are part of our artistic process and could provide alternative and exciting ways to deliver the curriculum e.g songwriting and literacy/movement and language or maths/filmmaking and history.

Further investigation revealed that this kind of integrated approach to arts in education has not been widely used in Ireland, although programmes of this nature are widely available and their efficacy well documented in the UK and United States. This fact has been acknowledged in *Points of Alignment: The Report of the Special Committee on the Arts and Education* (2008).

The focus of these discussions amongst the Arts Office team of South Dublin County Council was on arts-in-education and providing a model whereby the Office could develop work and material from its artist residencies that could be delivered to schools and teachers at minimal cost yet with potential long term gain for teachers, students and the whole school environment as well as the local arts sector. In planning the first Creative Approaches for Learning seminar (held September 2009), questionnaires were sent out to schools in the Spring of 2009 to investigate teachers' needs and interests in such a programme.

Creative Approaches for Learning suggests two strands of working. First, the seminars provide teachers an opportunity to experience practical workshops in a particular art form that link across curriculum areas, including those outside the realm of the arts. Details of the Creative Approaches programme for 2009 and 2010 are in Appendices A and B. In working with an artist in dance or music or even an architect, the workshops give teachers practical, arts-based lessons linked to curriculum areas such as history, geography or English, for example, that they can implement and even adapt themselves in lessons they teach the following week. The potential outcomes are immediate. Lesson plans and workshop descriptions are detailed in Appendices C to I.



In addition to empowering teachers to engage directly with artistic processes, the *Creative Approaches for Learning* seminars advocate for a collaborative approach to working in schools, engaging the artist with the teacher before designing the programme and team teaching. Via discussion held in the seminar workshops, teachers are made aware of new long-term projects and outcomes that collaboration between artist and teacher can create for teacher, artist,

student and the whole-school environment. Such ideas are aimed at assisting teachers and artists involved in the workshops with gaining a greater understanding of the ethos and aims behind the Creative Engagement fund, *Artists ~ Schools* (Arts Council 2006a) and *Points of Alignment* (Special Committee 2008).

As reports and discussions have shown, this process can be challenging but also invigorating for both artistic and educational practice (*Encountering the Arts* 2010). This has been very successful in Arts across the Curriculum in Scotland and the United States and in Creative Partnerships in England. Kidsown Publishing Partnership in Sligo as well as Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's Creative Classrooms programme in primary schools are two programmes within Ireland that are working in this way. Practice.ie is a wider initiative delivered by Kidsown that researches and records work that professional artists are doing with children and young people.

Creative Approaches 2009

During the spring of 2009, teachers from 7 separate schools returned questionnaires demonstrating that they would take part in a ½ day or day long teacher training on creativity for learning. Deadline for questionnaires was April 24th.

A one-day long professional development day was held on September 11th 2009. The day was led by artists currently under contract with the Arts Office. Firhouse Community School hosted the event.

The aim of the training, entitled Creative and Innovative Approaches for Learning, was to demonstrate practical ways that arts practice can be an aid to teaching for learning and for the curriculum. The training was targeted at Secondary School Teachers and Home School Liaison and Transition Year Coordinators. It was not a requirement that one be an art teacher to take part. The day was for teachers from across the curriculum.

The Objectives of the day were:

- To introduce participants to creative learning techniques via an active, hands-on workshop that will be applicable to their own lessons back at their schools;
- To give participants a packet with ideas and usable lesson plans that they can take away to use and adapt to their own lessons; and
- To give participants the opportunity to discuss and work through some of the ideas with colleagues.

Workshops:

Individuals will attend three workshops with the following topics and tutors:

Movement and the Curriculum

Dance

South Dublin County Dancer in Residence, Louise Costelloe, will give teachers hands-on experience and lesson ideas for using movement in different curricular areas, such as art, literature and foreign languages. You do not need to be a dancer to use these techniques.

Visual Arts, ICT and the Curriculum

NOISE Project Artist Fiona Hallinan and South Dublin County Council Youth Arts Coordinator Tori Durrer will demonstrate how some of the NOISE Projects on www.noisesouthdublin.com can be used across all aspects of the curriculum, including history, English, science, CSPE, SPHE, and more! Teachers will gain experience and awareness of how NOISE projects, which are always available for use on the NOISE website, can be used as needed, within wider subject lesson plans. In addition, teachers will gain ICT skills to use the site and the projects available on it.

Civic, Social and Political Education through Music

Michael Fleming, Music Development Coordinator will lead a workshop where music is used as a contextualising tool to spark a debate about historical and political developments over the centuries as well as illustrating how the generation of music can serve as a public response to world events, both directly and indirectly. Suitable particularly for CSPE and history students, it also demonstrates to young people how music can actually function as a form of political engagement and uses music to foster debate and activity surrounding the social and political developments of the day.

The day began with a presentation on creativity across the curriculum. The presentation is included below, followed by some of the lesson plans.

Creative Approaches 2010

The aims and objectives for the 2010 event largely remained the same as the 2009 event. The programme was expanded, however, for reasons detailed in the Findings section of this report. The 2010 seminar took place at RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre. The centre provides fantastic facilities for engaging in artistic practice as well as being located in a good, central location for public transportation and parking. All workshops consisted of hands-on activities and lesson plans that link directly to national curriculum requirements and can be used directly and immediately in the classroom.

Derek West, Arts and Education Officer for the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, opened the event by presenting a context for arts in education. He also spoke about the Creative Engagement Fund and Projects, managed by NAPD.

Workshops

Movement and the Curriculum - Awareness of Peoples, Places and Landscapes

Dance Artist Louise Costelloe will lead a workshop linking dance and movement to CPSHE, Architecture, and Geography. Participants will be given practical ideas for ways to examine and respond creatively to different spaces, observing and mapping their features and connecting human interaction with the environment.

Music and the Curriculum

Composer and Musician Michael Fleming will focus on the links between Music and English for the Junior Cert.

He will show ways that music can aid in the delineation of characters from novels and plays and in examining broader narrative-based themes. For those interested, there will be time to discuss practical links between music and the Sciences and Maths.

Visual Arts and the Curriculum – More than Meets the Eye

Carolyn Jones, Development Officer of RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre, will lead a

workshop exploring how the narrative of a visual art exhibition can enhance learning in English. Participants will tour the exhibition, *This Land Again*, by photographer Peter Murray. Learning tools for Geography and CPSHE will also be discussed.

Architecture Across the Curriculum

Practicing architect Aoife Banim on behalf of the Irish Architecture Foundation will introduce participants to the world of Architecture. This workshop will be a creative and hands-on activity using buildings and spaces around us for learning in Art and Design, Technology, Maths, Science and other subject areas.

Information packets including Resources for Further Reading, information about opportunities for young people and teachers in the arts, as well as copies of the workshop/lesson plans have been provided at each seminar. Lesson plans are also available for download on the Arts Office website at <http://arts.southdublin.ie> under the Publications/Resources section.



FINDINGS

Feedback from Creative Approaches to Learning 2009:

16 people registered for the event and 12 attended. 9 participants returned evaluation forms. Registration came from secondary school teachers, artists, youth workers and those supporting youth probationary programmes, which demonstrated an interest in creative facilitation beyond those working in formal education settings. The 2009 seminar was only open to practitioners/teachers who resided and/or worked in South Dublin County.



Promotion for the event was press release and targeted emails and letters to secondary schools.

Participants found out about the seminar via:

- Direct contact with the Arts Office
- Letter sent to the school
- “Very enjoyable – found out through, TY Co-ordinator (Firhouse)”
- Email
- “Very informative – useful ideas – practical methodologies”
- From fellow School Completion Project worker
- “Very interesting and applicable ideas to implement in the school environment. Very enjoyable”
- Website
- Noise info emails

Upon registering, participants stated what they hoped to gain from attending the 2009 seminar. These included:

- New Hands-on activity-based approaches to teaching.
- Up-skilling and awareness of teaching approaches. New information about curricula and methodologies.
- Information on how to include music in teaching the curriculum.

- Practical 'hands on' tips that can be used for art sessions for young people. Artistic methods of engaging young people.
- New approaches to creatively teaching subjects at secondary level

Upon completion of the seminar, participants reflected on whether or not these expectations were met. Responses are quoted below:

- "Full of great ideas – probably need to digest ideas and see where the road leads"
- "Yes definitely, I've found lots of new ways to teach ideas and themes and also to pass onto colleagues"
- "Lot's of ideas – it was great to have a day to get stuck into thinking"
- One participant did not give a response
- "Yes – how to integrate music into the curriculum and use of media"
- "Yes, increased my confidence around using creative techniques with teenagers"
- "Yes and more, loved the hands on direction and handouts"
- "Yes, it was better than I expected, very easy to grasp the workshop concepts. Day well organised"
- "Em yeah. I thought it would be dealing with issues more directly related to the second level curriculum but kind of glad it wasn't."

Participants felt the highlight of the day was:

- "The movement workshop...gave me lots of ideas and artistic workshop ...was very thought provoking"
- "Found all 3 [workshops] very useful. They covered the whole arts range very well"
- "Dance/movement"
- "Music session"
- "Moving Bodies [dance] workshop."
- "Movement workshop"
- "The dance workshop"

- “Dance movement workshop”
- “The dance was quite liberating and I was surprised that one of my drawings was actually quite good”

Perceived challenges were:

- “Obviously for everyone it is sometimes difficult to be comfortable in new social situations, but everyone in the group was very welcoming and friendly”
- “Too many tea breaks for me. I like action. Not much of a complaint”
- “No”
- “Being put outside my comfort zone through the movement sessions”
- “No”
- “IT aspect of the day. This is an area I am quite weak on.”
- “It was new but getting out of my comfort zone was inspiring”
- “Opening up in dance movement”
- “Yeah, I think it’s always a challenge when you do something outside your area of expertise so that was a challenge and enjoyable”

Suggestions for improvement of the seminar included:

- “It would be great to have a further and more detailed workshop of movement ... – but that’s a personal thing – I found it very useful”
- “Keep it moving. Technical difficulties are annoying and prophesy the same difficulties in the classroom. Such is life.”
- “It would be nice to have time to share ideas and develop projects with others.”
- “Less breaks/fit in more activities or less time for day”
- “Less breaks/shorter day”
- “No answer”
- “Nope”

- “Less breaks or shorter breaks! Linking more in with the curriculum”
- “Maybe some videos showing some of the theories in use would be useful. Although it can be difficult, it is good to see the usage in context with young people”



All individuals who responded to the evaluation of Creative Approaches for Learning 2009 felt that similar events should be held in the future. Some comments included: “Yes it is definitely a new lease of energy”, “Definitely” and “Yes definitely. Wider, with more people”.

In addition, all individuals who responded to the evaluation said that they would recommend Creative Approaches to a colleague. Some comments included:

- “Yes, perhaps with colleagues from more mainstream subjects – I’d be interested to hear their response and reaction to workshops like today’s”
- “Yes. Thanks a million”
- “Yes – it was a pity more couldn’t attend, but getting cover for classes is always an issue”
- “Yes”
- “Definitely!”
- “Yes, I found today enjoyable and beneficial”

Feedback from Creative Approaches to Learning 2010

It was determined that due to the positive feedback from this event; the Arts Office would offer the training again in October 2010. Further anecdotal information gathered in the planning of the 2009 event demonstrated that moving the seminar to a later date in order to allow for more promotion time might encourage more people to attend. Further, it was felt that widening the geographical area from which people could attend might foster greater exchange of ideas with the ability to hear from teachers working in different areas.

As much of the work carried out for the 2009 event involved direct input from the Arts Office, there was also a drive to extend the programme and input, including expertise from organisations and practitioners from outside the Arts Office for the 2010 seminar. These included:

- Derek West, Arts and Education Officer for the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD)
- Aoife Banim, architect and representative of the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF)
- Carolyn Jones, Development Officer, RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre

In including these partners in the event the aim was to provide greater access for teachers to hear about opportunities available to them via NAPD, IAF and RUA RED, as well as make direct contacts with practitioners in those areas.

24 people registered for the event and 22 attended. 10 participants returned evaluation forms. Registration came from secondary school teachers from across Ireland including Roscommon and Tipperary. 1 individual supporting a youth probationary programme attended as well as 3 artists/facilitators.

Promotion for the event was via a leaflet in NAPD newsletters sent to school principals as well as press release and targeted emails and letters to secondary schools.

Schools/Areas covered by Participants:

- Hibernian College
- Tallaght Community School
- St. Paul's Secondary School, Greenhills
- Artzone
- Coláiste Chillian
- Stewarts Hospital Day Services Sports (Dancer)
- Our Lady's Secondary School, Templemore, Co. Tipperary
- Newpark Comprehensive
- Elphin Community College
- Tallaght Probation Project
- Saint Aidan's Community School, Brookfield
- BodyTalks

2010 Participants' areas of interest/teaching area:

- As a training and practicing Primary School Teacher, I am interested in integrating all subjects. I'm particularly interested in ways of integrating the Visual Arts Curriculum into the broader Primary School curriculum. I've worked with children and teenager's at writing and arts workshops and the Electric Picnic and through my wife, with teenager's in Lucan.
- Art Craft and Design (3, one with Architecture interest)
- Art (3, one including Fabric and Fibre)
- English, French, Resource

- Physical Education and Dance
- English, Art, LCVP, CSPE; Gymnastics and Performing Arts
- Adventure Sports, Drama, various personal development modules
- Interactive workshops aimed at transition year students, based on building awareness of body language and communication skills.

Participants found out about the seminar via:

- School principal or Deputy principal (5)
- Email from the Youth Arts Coordinator, South Dublin County Council (4)
- From a colleague (2)

Upon registering, participants stated what they hoped to gain from attending the 2010 seminar. These expectations were similar to those expressed prior to the 2009 event. However, it is clear that having Derek West from NAPD attend sparked interest as teachers hoped they would be able to learn more about the Creative Engagement fund. In addition, there appeared to be a good deal of interest in architecture.

Expectations included:

- “I’m interested in meeting other professionals in the field of the Visual Arts and Arts teaching and make contact with them. I have a personal interest in Architecture and a background in engineering and so am looking to make connections between existing knowledge and experience and the subject I will be teaching.”
- “Open-minded approaches”
- “More insight as to what is available for teachers to explore and engage in the Arts with Curricular initiatives such as this one”
- “New methodologies to implement across my subject areas for use in the classroom. I feel it will aide working within the area of SEN where “alternative methods need to be used.
- “Teaching Ideas”
- “Practical ideas to bring back to the classroom, particularly transition year architecture module; Meet Daniel West – info on creative engagement fund/projects; Peter murray exhibition”
- “To meet other teachers and gain new models of working”

- “Just some input on how people combine the areas. It’s something that I do already (cross-curricular work). Also I’ve an idea for a submission to the NAPD Scheme and I’d like to go through that with someone there”
- “I would like to adopt a fresh approach to how I deliver group work and find ways to create a more interactive learning environment which enhances experiential learning for all concerned.”
- “I would like to learn more about Creative Engagement Projects and the funding available. I would also be interested in ‘Architecture Across the Curriculum’ as it might give me some ideas for projects for my classes. Our school building is currently undergoing a series of improvements so I would really welcome any ideas regarding input my own classes could make to dull walls around the school.”
- “To learn more about issues arising with students, as this gives me more information about what they need.”

In addition, participants were asked to write down their hopes for the day upon arriving at the seminar. The following statements were written and posted on paper before the start of the day:

- “I would like to learn more about the Creative Engagement project—perhaps get some ideas for projects for my students”
- “Exchange ideas, experience. Architecture (how to make it interesting?). site specific work”
- “Interested in learning about arts and how it works through other curriculum and the funding available”
- “I’m training to be a primary school teacher and am looking for interesting ways to integrate visual arts into the broader curriculum. I’ve always been fascinated by architecture and jumped at this opportunity for that reason!”
- “I hope to get new ideas for teaching integrating the curriculum in dance practice”
- “Viability of performing arts for Creative Engagement. Fostering partnership.”
- “Hoping to gain some new/fresh methodology/approaches for teaching English in the classroom. It’s been a while since I was on any development courses”
- “Practical ideas to bring to the art class room and TY programme in my school. Information from Derek West/Creative Engagement projects”
- “Looking forward to exploring new ideas.”
- “I run a set of two interactive workshops for TY students based on the areas of body language and communication skills. I’m interested to hear teachers experiences and challenges, which may be helpful to my approach.”
- “I would like to put a little more energy and imagination into my art classes. I’ve been in the classroom for 10 years and am always interested in new perspectives.”

Upon completion of the seminar, participants reflected on whether or not these expectations were met. Responses are quoted below:

- “I went to the seminar to find out about the creative engagement fund. Through the workshops I experienced a range of approaches to teaching which I would not previously have considered using, but which I now intend to use in some form in my teaching, so in this respect my needs were more than met.”
- “Yes: NAPD is open to performance arts”
- “To learn more about Creative Engagement, yes, very informative, well structured day”
- “Yes, I gathered information, made contacts, got resources and became Creatively Engaged!”
- “Yes, all workshops were very inspiring in how to use arts as a method of teaching different subjects of the curriculum”
- “I gained a lot today. I would have liked a little discussion time at the end as one of my objectives was to talk to teachers”
- “Absolutely—[the music] workshop provided me with some new approaches for teaching English and history in the classroom”
- “I was expecting more hands-on work, but overall I got some excellent ideas and it was a great chance to mix with people and exchange ideas”
- “More/wasn’t really clear”
- “My only agenda was to be inspired to continue to share learning creatively! And today more than succeed in this. Thank you.”
- “I was hoping for a little inspiration, to breath some new life into my teaching methods”

Regarding highlights of the day, participants largely reflected on particular workshops:

- “There was no single highlight of the day, not was there any low point. It was all good, in fact the day was better structured and more informative than any of the many department of education in services I have been on. I particularly liked the way that the people giving the workshops took part in all the other workshops. “
- “Architecture workshop: surprised me with the level of potential engagement by participants”

- “The architecture talk—building a sculpture/structure based on observation, looking at space”
- “Creative Engagement projects detailed in the report by Belinda Moller and Derek West”
- “I enjoyed everything”
- “The video/audio presentation (made by a student) which gave a visual and musical interpretation of the Cold War”
- “The architecture workshop and its link with dance!”
- “Performance/maybe some performance art?”
- “Each aspect/section had an inspiring effect on me.”
- “The dance and architecture module were particularly interesting and enjoyable for me.”

There were few perceived challenges:

- “Dance one: have a cold. Also last workshop was very long to be standing”
- “No. all very well explained. Excellent”
- “The dance workshop!! Move?? Interact??”
- “No”
- “Overcoming personal reluctance to engage in the movement workshop”
- “The music content was pitched at second level. The challenge for me to pair it back for 1st class in a primary school”
- “No. I am part time but others could not attend”
- “Thankfully, no!”

Suggestions for improvement of the seminar included:

- Extending the activities to two days
- “The day is very enjoyable. More hands on in terms of the music content would be beneficial”
- “Little more time for practical stuff, more making/doing. Maybe a follow up workshop?”
- “As ever its difficult to fit in so many interventions in a single day but I think today was very successful”
- “A film module would be great (appreciation and filmmaking)”



All individuals who responded to the evaluation of Creative Approaches for Learning 2010 felt that similar events should be held in the future. Individuals highlighted the networking aspect of the day as a positive. Some comments included:

- “Yes, support network—good to collaborate and share ideas”
- “Yes, I think the continued development of this approach is vital”
- “Yes. Creativity is the most disregarded part of the primary school curriculum”
- “Absolutely and to a wider audience of practitioners, not just teachers”
- “Absolutely. It was re-energising, very organised and a lot of practical things to go away with and apply”

In addition, all individuals who responded to the evaluation said that they would recommend Creative Approaches to a colleague. Some comments included:

- “Yes. Well done. Great. Best I’ve been to.”
- “Yes Thanks to everyone who put such an effort into today’s series of talks. It was so well organised and interesting. The tea and fruit was a nice touch too. Thank you.”
- “Yes. The various workshops were very concise and clear, especially since there were tight time constraints. Well organised.”

An additional area of consideration was given to professional development in the 2010 evaluation process of *Creative Approaches for Learning*. Participants were asked ‘What, if anything did seminar contribute to your own professional development?’ Responses included:

- “I would now consider using other art forms in the teaching of visual art.”
- “Linking with professionals is very possible. “
- “Gave me food for thought “
- “Ideas! Thinking, planning, problem solving, outside the ‘box’ of the school”
- “All the subjects ...will contribute “
- “The actual practical ways in which the various art forms can be applied on a daily basis”
- “A broader understanding of opportunities available in arts in education (especially discovering the Arts and Culture Committee in NAPD)”
- “The integrative content of the seminars is in line with what I’m being taught in terms of primary school teaching approaches to implementing it is what these seminars contributed.”
- “It has inspired me to explore and inhabit my surroundings”
- “It has been nice to meet other people who were in the same boat and to get a new perspective on how to incorporate music, dance and architecture into my class work”

Outcomes from 2009 and 2010 Creative Approaches for Learning

Outcomes from the two seminars have included:

- Individuals who participated have a greater awareness of the potential impact of arts in education
- All individuals who participated felt they had learned new skills
- A number of teachers who participated felt empowered to deliver their own arts-based interventions in the classroom
- The seminar provided networking opportunities for artists and practitioners in/out of schools
- The structure of the seminar has improved over time
- Some teachers attending the 2010 seminar made direct links with artists in order to propose new Creative Engagement projects, thus making strides to providing new opportunities to build a culture of partnership between schools, artists, arts organisations and local authority Arts Offices
- Some individuals participating seem to feel validated by approaches taken in the seminars

- Other individuals participating seemed to change attitudes to the fact that they could now engage in promoting artistic experiences in the classroom

Unexpected Outcomes:

The 2010 Creative Approaches seminar has also provided two unexpected outcomes:

- One teacher from a school in Greenhills got in touch with the Arts Office shortly after the seminar to explain that she was so “inspired” by the seminar that she had endeavoured to establish a student Arts Council in the school to promote the Arts in Education at St. Paul's. The statement is shared in the box below. The Arts Office has responded in offering support and advice to the council and teachers.
- Coláste Bríde Presentation Secondary School recently opened an art/exhibition space within the school canteen. The space, entitled Green Gallery, was launched with an exhibition, Home, created by students across year groups in an after-school project led by Home Economics teacher Louise Ronan and artist Jane Fogarty. Opened in May 2010, the gallery has provided a new opportunity via which to engage professional artists further in the school. Artists Jane Fogarty and Andrew Carson have recently installed an exhibition of work by photographer, Peter Murray, after creating a call and shortlisting artists to participate. The aim of installing work by professional artists in the gallery for part of the school year is to promote an integrated arts programme within and owned

October 18, 2010

Hi ...,

This isfrom Secondary School, Greenhills. I attended a workshop "Creative and Innovative Approaches for Learning" on 1st October. I was so enthused and inspired by what I learned that day that I am (bravely!!) planning to attempt to establish a student Arts Council in the school to promote the Arts in Education at St. Paul's.

The plan of action is that we will comandeer a prominent notice board and use it to promote a different aspect of creativity each term-performance, the visual, music etc. Alongside this we plan to organise events, debates, concerts, field trips to the print museum etc to demonstrate the links that can be made between the subjects we learn at school and the arts. I hope to encourage some of the teachers in my own subject areas to try out some of the active methodologies we learnt about on the workshop.

To this end I was wondering if you could help If you have any suggestions for events I could try or lesson plans I could encourage teachers to use I would be eternally grateful. Even if there are promotional updates for events that we could hang up and advertise or posters etc.

....

Thanking you again for a wonderful workshop and thanking you in advance for any help you might be able to give."

....

contemporary art accessible and appealing to an audience of second level students and teachers. Any artist exhibiting in the space is asked to give a workshop to teachers

and/or students to promote interaction between the curriculum and the artwork exhibited.

Peter Murray's art exhibition in the Green Gallery, 'This Land Again', was on exhibit in RUA RED during the Creative Approaches seminar in October 2010. As a result, Peter is utilizing the workshop designed for Creative Approaches within Coláiste Bríde, as a workshop for teachers to see how they might engage across the curriculum with the gallery space within the school.

Such an outcome provides a strong demarcation of the potential of arts in education as well as the significant contribution that artists, local authorities and arts organisations can make within schools.



POINTS OF LEARNING

The *Points of Alignment* report indicates that the Department of Education is “increasingly open to, and gives some support, to the enrichment of the curriculum and of the wider educational agenda by artists and arts organisations external to the school” (Special Committee 2008: 12). As no specific resources are provided for arts in education work by the Department of Education, local authorities are well-placed to provide a range of supports, particularly as they are situated and working within the socio-geographic context of specific localities. In addition, local authority Arts Offices, with a brief to ensure arts provision is available and accessible to all (Arts Act 2003), have strong points of access to the expertise for providing strategically focused arts education and arts in education initiatives. They also represent a bridge between national and local policy and practice and can assist in providing organisational structures that address national policy concerns while accounting for challenges of implementation that exist on the ground (Wenger 1998).

More direct acknowledgment of these factors, outlined above, by the Department of Education may better ensure that teachers, students and the whole school environment may have access to and the ability to drive arts in education programmes. The inclusion of teacher training initiatives, such as *Creative Approaches for Learning*, within the Department’s certified professional development programme, for example through support for cover teachers, may provide greater access for schools to gain training and thus ownership of arts in education within their individual schools. Greater awareness and ownership of arts in education by teachers working on the ground will help change attitudes regarding the value of pupil voice, creativity, and the arts as a valuable part of the whole school environment and the national curriculum (Looney 2010).

This report presents findings that demonstrate the potential for professional development initiatives that are focused on creativity and the arts to

- Give teachers greater awareness of the potential impact of arts in education
- Give teachers greater ownership of arts in education
- Provide opportunities for teachers to meet artists and other teachers engaging in the practice of arts in education
- Increase the potential for changing attitudes to arts in education within school practice
- Provide new opportunities to build a culture of partnership between schools, artists, arts organisations and local authority Arts Offices

More specifically, working in schools via *Creative Approaches for Learning* assists the strategy of South Dublin County Council Arts Office in the following ways:

- Audience development - Young people are the audiences of tomorrow, programmes in schools and with teachers build relationships with the arts venues and organisations in the county

- Working with schools widens the impact of the work of the Arts Office's engagement with the wider community through teachers and parents
- Raises the profile of the Arts Office projects and gives status to cultural achievements
- Sustainability – creating an appetite for cultural participation in schools

For future *Creative Approaches for Learning* seminars the following could be considered:

- Continue to make links with other organizations to involve them in the process, such as the Irish Film Institute's Education Programme
- Continue to keep the event open to individuals across the country
- Share this report with Education Centres and the Department of Education. Advocate for the possibility that the seminar be considered part of the Department's inservice, providing teachers the opportunity to access the programme via cover
- Consider a follow up session/meeting with participants at a later date to review the challenges, practicalities, concerns and highlights of implementing suggestions presented in the seminar.