



ECLN Partner Test Report

Collage Arts, UK

Work Package 4



ECLN Core Curriculum Pilot Test

	Observations (Progress and Points of View)
UK	<p>Project Title: 'VOICE'</p> <p>Facilitators: Jan Ponsford, Daniel Lawless</p> <p>Description of Arts-led learning activity used for test:</p> <p>The 'VOICE' project was jointly designed and delivered by Jan Ponsford and Daniel Lawless based around the requirement to take young learners (16 – 18) through a capacity building process over a 4 week period to enable and empower them to produce and present content for an internet radio station and meet key assessment criteria from their level 3 diploma studies, develop interpersonal skills, team skills and self awareness. The project consisted a series of workshops which Collage used to test the prescribed competencies of the ECLN core curriculum. The outcome of participation was intended to increase confidence through increased self awareness and improved communication skills and encourage team cohesion in a working project group. The facilitators were asked to evaluate themselves in these areas. Coaching and peer coaching was encouraged throughout.</p> <p>The workshops were broken down initially into 6 full days split into morning and afternoon sessions where mornings focused on group activities (team cohesion and communication and the afternoon sessions were appointment based one to one coaching sessions with participants focusing on coaching and self awareness.</p> <p>There were a subsequent 4 workshops focusing on practicing the skills developed during the initial workshops, ongoing coaching for production</p>

Comments of facilitators demonstrating core competencies:

teams leading to the production of content for radio to be produced in a recording studio.

The group of participants were diverse with varying needs and participated in activities to varying levels of presence and commitment. Not all participants attended all 6 coaching workshops or one to one coaching. All did however attend the later 4 workshops in content creation though no content was successfully created during this period. The project is on-going.

The project started with group workshops and one to one coaching sessions. The participants were 16 – 19 with mixed needs. The context was a group of 8 creative media learners who were working toward a level 2 and level 3 qualification. The learners were not all familiar with each other as they were not from the same learning group. All were managing their own project schedules. Immediately, there was resistance to group activities where there was an element of performance or showcase. Reasons for this were identified by the voice coach who stated the nature of the activity was such that people were resistant to 'try' because they felt too self conscious in front of their peers. Initially a camera was going to be set up during this workshop. However the facilitator requested that no filming take place while until and if people settle with the planned activity.

Expectations

There was a noticeable gap in the expectations of the voice workshop facilitator and the expectations of the group and where participants were resistant, the facilitator was not easily able to deal with this, often losing momentum and occasionally losing the actual participant(s).

Reasonable participation was achieved during initial group discussion but where the young people were asked to attempt any element of performance exercise in front of their peers, about 50% would not participate. Partly due to the exercise feeling somewhat irrelevant but also

because they were “on the spot” and felt embarrassed. However, with the exception of one, during one to one coaching, many of the initially resistant young people participated enthusiastically in discussion and limited performance activities where the facilitator used a piano and taught breathing techniques in an intimate and one to one setting.

Results

Of the 10 participants starting, only 4 completed the 6 group 'Voice' workshops though an additional participant wished only to participate in one to one activities bringing the total one to one coaching participants to 5.

One of the participants was deaf and had speech development needs which she reported to the facilitator during one to one coaching, had not been addressed during school. This participant enjoyed and benefited from the one to one coaching and using simple speech exercises, showed some immediate improvement in speech through the breathing exercises and as she reflected, being shown that if she takes her time and feels how the words form, they improve.

Workshop facilitators reported back that there was some resistance from participants where they were not able to immediately see the relevance of activities and where they felt too self conscious to participate when working as a group. However, following one to one coaching by the voice coach, the radio facilitator reported that during his planning sessions for radio podcast recordings, there was an increased willingness by participants to express creative ideas and present them to a group in spite of them being critical of the group workshop activity. This seemed to be based on a keenness to 'get started' on the 'product'.

Criticism was mainly based on participants claiming not to see the relevance of the workshops to their objective (to feel more confident and able to present and subsequently produce radio content).

Currently, recordings are in progress.

Tutors, also related anecdotally that they saw some improvement in communication, teamwork skills and engagement in learning activities immediately following the coaching workshops and one to one sessions.

The workshop delivery style was different to what the learners were used to and the culture in the workshop space was more formal in that it was a traditional chalk and talk model used which many of Collage Arts learners have barriers to and subsequently some 'classroom' management was required which detracted from learning time. However, the obvious level of expertise from the voice coach was able to engage some participants by employing micro exercises which were instantly gratifying to the participant (ie shallow and deep breathing).

Tick box questionnaires were completed by participants before and after activities

Participants were invited to a facilitated group evaluation and one to one evaluation with their tutor.

The overall consensus of the learners confirmed Jan's assessment that they felt the activities during the 'voice' workshops were interrupting their project work and few were able to relate the activities to the project work. Learners completed a pre and post workshop questionnaire and this suggested that overall, their expectations were not met by the voice coaching workshops but were met by the content creation workshops. In post workshop discussion with both Jan and Daniel, both suggested simple strategies which would address this and improve the commitment

and engagement of participants, mainly focusing on delivering all workshop activity together and in context (ie in the radio studio or recording studio) to provide a more practical experience taking full advantage of both the available resources and the different relationship dynamic that each facilitator had with the learners.

Description of artist/facilitators ability to deliver core curriculum

Jan Ponsford (artist - educator)

Jan is an established vocal coach, teaching individuals and running workshops independently, at colleges, and universities. Jan Ponsford's teaching method has enabled many to develop vocal skills. Vocal coaching content covers practical, enjoyable individual and group exercises which develop: Pitching and intonation A deeper understanding of sound The use and maintenance of our vocal machinery Solo, group and harmony singing enhancing team and ensemble skills. Jan also teaches and coached actors and public speakers whose voices have been working hard and need gently reviving or those seeking to improve voice communication skills. Jan's workshops and coaching has also been effective in helping with breathing problems, asthma, hearing and speech problems, and back pain. Jan is also a successful artist in her own right.

Daniel Lawless (Community radio presenter/producer and tutor)

Daniel studied music business and began working in the music industry in publishing and event promotion. Daniel's considerable knowledge of and enthusiasm for reggae music got him noticed and secured him a position working for Greensleeves and later, Westbury Music Publishing. At this time Daniel was starting to develop his 'Lawless Reggae' brand on community radio. Daniel began teaching in the non formal sector as a peer tutor with Collage Arts, completing the EU STEP

programme as a peer mentor during which time he worked as a music production workshop facilitator with The Metropolitan Police in partnership with Collage Arts. Following this, Daniel trained as an assessor and qualified, now assessing level 3 apprentices across a range of media and transferable competencies.

Strategies attempted to transfer knowledge/skills/attitudes to others?

- formal induction and introduction outlining objectives and expectations (Jan Ponsford / Daniel Lawless)
- demonstration and imitate – breathing techniques and vocal exercise (Jan Ponsford)
- creative awareness through group workshop activity (Jan Ponsford)
- one to one individual learner needs analysis and bespoke coaching/performance coaching (Jan Ponsford)
- group discussion (Jan Ponsford)
- one to one coaching (Daniel Lawless)
- tutor led planning workshops (Daniel Lawless)
- tutor led production (Daniel Lawless)

The strategies identified above were attempted in the specific workshop or activity that was carried out as part of the ECLN

testing phase based on learner profiles and their current learning activity (Creative and Digital Media Apprentices – Radio and Film)

The activities carried out were chosen as they would have a beneficial effect on the participants to engage better with planned activities (communicating and presenting ideas, pitching to an employer, present a radio programme etc which makes up part of their current level 3 curriculum)

Transfer of the knowledge/skills/attitudes essential to this core curriculum item on this occasion?

The transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes was more effective in the latter, more practically based workshops where the structure was more fluid and collaborative and where the facilitator demonstrated a close relationship with the learners he works with every day and achieved a high level of 'buy in' from the learners. So in these latter workshops, self awareness, communication and teamwork was demonstrated by participants.

Although, during feedback, there was a relatively low level of enthusiasm for the the earlier 'voice' workshops which was demonstrated by participants often walking out of the group sessions or 'pleading' not to have to participate in one to one session, during the latter workshops, learners were, albeit limited in number, talking about some aspects of the taught vocal techniques.

As the overseer of the process, I allowed the experiment to happen unhindered and provided minimum support to participants or

facilitators, limited to, in the main coaching either a participant who felt their media work was being interrupted by something they felt irrelevant or the facilitator who required me to intervene in the classroom or to discuss frustrations.

To ensure a more effective transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to the core curriculum, a greater level of trust needs to be established between the facilitator and the workshop participants. There was an very minor incident where a participant was reluctant to engage and quietly sat at his workstation and the facilitator became quite angry at his non participation and subsequently over reacted when perhaps a more coaching centred approach also using humour could have been employed. The young man was demonstrating behaviour linked to self awareness and 'how others perceive me' so it was an opportunity to digress from the planned activities into an interesting area where the young man could have been incorporated into a lead role. The opportunity wasn't however recognised and this impacted on the rest of the group activity, many of the group feeling the young man had been treated unfairly. I spoke with both Jan and the young man immediately following the incident and my own view is that Jan did indeed over react and found it difficult to engage with the young man who, in her assessment was “rude and disrespectful and wont engage” which surprised me as the workshop had been running less than one hour and the young man is normally neither difficult nor non participatory. Following the exchange between Jan and the young man in front of his peers, group workshop activity became difficult.

The efficacy of learning relies heavily on the successful match of the creative practice trainer and the participant group assisted by a greater degree of planning so participants can appreciate the context of and the benefits of the visiting facilitators syllabus, together with a discussion with workshop facilitators prior to the delivery to imprint a feel for the culture of the non formal learning environment and suggested strategies for addressing perceived challenging behaviours.

In the latter workshops, the same strategies were employed (see a) with the addition of 5 (construct an experience with learners(and 7 (set a learning objective and suggest resources and leave learner to get on with support on demand) and there was a high level of commitment from learners and obvious cooperative relationship with the facilitator who the young people knew and felt they could be relaxed and open with as you would expect from a facilitator who works over a long period of time with the same learners. For these reasons, transfer of knowledge was more effective during the latter workshops. There was open and honest group discussion relating to ideas for podcasts and a high level of self awareness from participants proposing their program ideas and receiving peer critique. A more relaxed atmosphere was present and learners were willing to take more risks and feel less self conscious doing so because they felt 'safe'. The facilitator was achieving transfer of knowledge and skills through play and experimentation.

Another observation is that there was a degree of transfer of knowledge of shared practice between the facilitators who were at times co-delivering limited aspects of the workshops together. During breaks in the workshops, the two facilitators discussed in detail, individual needs and presenting behaviours and both suggested strategies to address learners' needs and manage group dynamics.

Jan also discussed with me, her perception of how the young people may be perceiving her and how that perception may have impacted on their participation in the workshops.

UK PILOT	<i>Did the facilitator demonstrate and transfer communications skills (how)?</i>	<i>Did the facilitator demonstrate coaching (how)?</i>	<i>Did the facilitator demonstrate and transfer self awareness</i>	<i>Did the facilitator demonstrate and transfer team skills</i>
Jan Ponsford	Yes: this was achieved via a formal syllabus using traditional workshop teaching methods and displaying a high level of awareness of NVC and its effect on others. This approach was reliant on note taking and practice.	In one to one coaching of participants – initial supporting 'informal' chat on likes/dislikes. Use of humour and supportive language, physical position (next to <i>not</i> in front of). Progressed during the session to a more formal AIG ending in transferring practical skills to improve everyday communication	Demonstrated during evaluation discussion on 'what worked – what didn't' Jan's perception was that the participants' perception of her affected the quality and outcome of each workshop. Transfer of self-awareness was formally taught 'how do others see us?' 'what impression do we make with the communication we use'?	This was not easily evidenced in Jan's workshops in the form of team centred activity. The nature of the arts-led activity afforded some opportunity for ensemble play but this was not used. There was a focus on effective communication and presentation which, if transfer of knowledge and skills was successful, would facilitate a greater ability to be effective in team activity through improved self awareness and communication skills.
Daniel Lawless	Yes: this was achieved via a formal syllabus using informal learning methods, collaborating with participants, open discussion, experimentation and review. Less structure and rules than the earlier workshops, encouraging participants to lead and contribute freely, debate and argue. A more dynamic workshop space with learning via doing.	In one to one coaching of participants – using technology to demonstrate audio editing possibilities and coaching participants through ideas generation for content items, using encouraging and supportive language and a non hierarchical approach – very collaborative helping participants to unpack and explore ideas.	Demonstrated during filmed discussion where Facilitator discussed the difference in approaches between the 2 sets of workshops and what strategies could be used to improve the experience for both facilitators and the participants. (show daniel film)	Evidenced in workshop activity where facilitator encouraged collective responsibility and a sense of community in the working group. There was team centred activity used ie facilitator played a round robin game where participants had to build on an initial idea, critiquing and honing what was said by their peers by using discussion and negotiation. “that's good but could be improved by...”

SUMMARY

What was carried out? Six vocal coaching workshops focusing on communication and self awareness delivered by musician / vocal coach professional. Delivered over 2 weeks (3 workshops per week) workshops lasting 2 hours in the morning with one to one coaching during six afternoons.

Four content creation workshops focussing on team cohesion through collective and collaborative content creation exercises.

How were the core curriculum items tested?

- Observation of and reflective discussion with facilitators
- interviews with participants

What was the result?

SELF AWARENESS
There was some evidence that emotional triggers were not fully recognised and diffused which impacted negatively on the facilitator /participant relationship. Counter productive interactions could perhaps have been avoided with an increased awareness of own emotional processes asking, “is this way of responding helping or hurting the relationship?”

There was also some missed opportunities for positive reinforcement (recognising achievement in contribution or behaviour)

Some pre discussion on “what happens to me emotionally in the process of teaching / facilitating?” would be an advantage to evaluate self awareness in this context. Peer feedback is important regarding behaviours/attitudes which effect relationships during worksop facilitation.

COMMUNICATION
Both facilitators displayed awareness of the ability for using and imparting communications skills. However, there were instances when some student behaviours were found difficult to work through.

COACHING
Both facilitators displayed considerable skill is using the coaching model in a one to one setting. The latter practical based workshops were more able to demonstrate effective group coaching because the activities and tasks were 'team' based.

TEAMWORK
Actively taught in the latter workshops to facilitate an effective production team and a high level of collective responsibility and team loyalty . Not evident in the earlier vocal workshops which was mostly demonstrated exercises and one to one coaching. There was some expectation of ensemble play but this was not facilitated.

