

Arts Award in Museums: Case study

Luton Cultural Services Trust

Arts Award programme: Luton Culture Arts Award week, The Art of Storytelling
This programme was offered by: Luton Cultural Services Trust (LCST). The trust brings together services across the Arts (Hat Factory), Museums (Stockwood Discovery Centre and Wardown Park Museum) and Libraries (9 venues including Wigmore Library)
Who took part in the programme? 15 x Year 9 students from two Luton High Schools; Putteridge and Lea Manor
Description of the programme: Recruitment of Schools: We attended the Art Curriculum subject teacher's group meeting, held termly in Luton to ask for volunteer schools offering up to 15 places for students after sharing the proposed week of activities put together for the funding application. Emma Russell from Putteridge and Catriona McNutt from Lea Manor came forward at this stage. We held two planning meetings with Emma and Catriona who helped plan the student recruitment and activities programme. At this stage we were advised that a week of activities in October half-term would be difficult for the students to commit to as they have a lot of coursework to complete and were already complaining of needing the holiday to rest. Between the schools, we decided on a programme that brought the students out of school for 1 day per week for two weeks leading up to half-term, two days in half-term and a last day later in November. It was agreed that this gave the students time to complete work between the activities enabling the teachers to support the programme and time to participate in self led arts activities. As there were limited spaces on the course, students were encouraged to write letters of application to their teacher outlining why they should be given a place. The selection process was conducted by Emma and Catriona at this stage, who had been allocated half of the places for each school. Because of the change of schedule away from half-term, some of the activities had to be changed, namely the behind the scenes with a cinema projectionist as exclusive to half-term. We had also received feedback from the teachers that there was no visual art in the plans, so this led to the truck art workshop being substituted in the place of the cinema projection session. The programme: The programme had been devised to introduce students to a good selection of cultural activities and to all the cultural sites available within LCST. In order to overcome the cost of transporting students between sites, activities were planned to maximise staff time and facilities at any given site in one day. Activities lasted from 10 – 3.30, daily to fit in around the school day and <u>Day 1: Stockwood Discovery Centre</u> Introduction to Arts Award, Benchmarking activity, Bollywood Dance workshop, inspiring arts paths talk x 2. <u>Day 2: Wardown Park Museum</u> Behind the scenes tour, inspiring arts paths talks x 2, object speed dating/storytelling in museums <u>Day 3: The Hat Factory</u> African Drumming workshop, inspiring arts paths talks x 2, portfolio workshop

Day 4: Wigmore Library

Research skills, Information gathering for portfolio, Assist with Half-term code breakers event. Inspiring arts paths talk.

Day 5: Stockwood Discovery Centre

Truck art workshop, Skills sharing to management team, portfolio work and Evaluation

What was the impact of the programme?

All 15 students gained the Bronze Arts Award. We will be hosting a celebration event on 2nd May 2012 (delayed due to LCST staff restructure and school commitments)

The advisors completed a benchmarking activity at the start of the week's activities to gauge the level of knowledge in the arts award and interest. The students were mixed together and put in small discussion groups and asked to write/draw what they knew about Arts Award and Luton culture. At the start, students had little idea of what was involved, lots of questions about work they needed to do and interest in what qualification they would obtain and when. On the last day, an evaluation game was played with dice to stimulate discussion about the week of events and to gain feedback, the dice had the words who, what, where, how which led to prepared questions held by the advisors:

- 1) Who inspired you? *Listening to other people's stories and how enthusiastic they are about working was really inspiring.*
- 2) What were the best and worst bits of the arts award? *The best part was doing different things that I'd never thought I would be caught dead doing. The worst was missing 2 days of our holidays and it was cold.*
- 3) What did you want to get out of the arts award? *I wanted to learn new skills and to learn about Luton Culture*
- 4) Where did you find most inspiring? *Reincarnated rubbish* (exhibition)
- 5) Why did you take part in the arts award? *It will make things easier to get a job if you pass you get a qualification.*
- 6) How much would you pay to take part in the arts award? *£30 (we quickly learned that teenagers have no sense of value of money and were unable to comment)*
- 7) When is a good time of year to take part in the Arts Award? *Not in holidays or holidays with more days off not having to give our time up, I would like to have it at the end of June start of July because it should be hot*

General group comments:

- Had new experience
- Luton Culture staff were inspiring
- £50 highest they would pay
- More time wanted for portfolio work / Wanted more help with portfolios
- Like recycling exhibition and activity
- Liked truck Art
- Didn't like library
- Want more hands on
- More adventurous activities

GLOs evidence (Scans of portfolio comments):

"I think the arts award is something that everyone can enjoy where they can learn new skills, find and discover new paths and meet new friends. And the whole arts award experience is one of the most fun experiences I've ever done." Laura, Putteridge pupil.

The art advisors picked up on several of the student's arts path journeys, some examples of their comments:

"I was really impressed with Freya's presentation on Truck Art. Working with Rory, Freya quickly picked up on the basics of Truck Art painting, and clearly explained the techniques she used within her own truck art piece. It was interesting to hear how she applied layers of

paint and how the finished piece often looks quite messy, which is not immediately obvious when you first see the trucks.”

“Jonathan showed great enthusiasm and passion when he shared his skills of truck art painting. It was interesting to hear how he struggled at first with his design but then was able to work through his design and created an eagle which also from one angle looked like a man. Jonathan spoke knowledgeably on truck art painting techniques”

Another positive outcome of the project was the team building across the Luton Culture Teams, it gave a positive opportunity to work together on a shared task. The project also gave valuable CPD opportunities for the 3 arts advisors, not just in the course of becoming an advisor, but also for the pastoral experience of working over a longer period with students, and also for project managing each day, evaluating the process and working with young people.

What did you learn about offering Arts Award in a museum setting?

What was good?

Staff development – though loss of experience with staff moving on.

Working with young people – good experience for staff and for the wider venues teams.

Working with partner schools – built on relationships already established.

The gaps between event days – long exhausting days for staff which would have been impossible to manage given our original plan.

The theme of storytelling – brought together all the different strands of the events.

Cultural award – sharing all available cultural activities available to young people and communicating the Trust new identity to the community.

Inspiring arts paths talks by staff – students engaged, asked lots of questions and demonstrated well how you can arrive in an heritage/arts/cultural career. The diversity of staff careers was exceptional and proved inspiring.

The arts award pack/paperwork – practical, useful for back up of work in sessions.

Use of Flickr to share events/photos securely within the group – though time consuming for staff so need to factor in extra time for this.

Pre marking – ensured students from two schools working to same standards and helped them achieve the award.

What done differently?

Ensure staff have experience and confidence to cope as “mentor” to teenagers and for unexpected pastoral care – attempted suicide comment and phone theft needed to be managed within two separate days.

More lead time to plan activities

Consider the award timing – to fit in around coursework and workloads in school.

More time without activities – to complete portfolio work, time consuming for students and staff ensuring correct levels of work being met. Suggestion to run a half day drop in for advice and support on a voluntary basis.

Have a sample portfolio to show students – we have scanned copies of good/bad examples for future events.

Use more photographs with students – less writing for evidence, feedback from moderator.

More of an introduction and icebreakers – group new to each other and the award, we underestimated how much time they needed to get in the idea of creating a portfolio and what that was.

Have a laptop and access to the internet available at all sessions – practical and helpful to sessions when presented with questions/for portfolio support.

Could have filled longer days – extend to between 9 – 4 instead.

Twitter didn’t work – students were too young.

Demonstration opportunity needs to be set up for students to support them recording the event.

For school model – encourage presentation in school assemblies or form groups, with

teachers acting as documentation. Or for group to share different experiences with each other of self led arts activities in own time.

Evaluation of summer school model and discussion of price – this age group have no concept of price/value for money. Perhaps evaluation of parents during next opportunity to gauge their perception of quality of events and what students got out of the process. Make the library led activities more hands on – feedback was less positive. Creative writing workshop instead of focus on research.

What are your plans for the future?

The original intention was to launch the Arts Award summer school model in the summer of 2012. However, the Formal Learning team and the wider trust teams have been through a period of restructuring in December/January 2012 which has left all teams with reduced capacity, with one of the Arts Advisors moving on. At the same time, the Trust has taken on two major projects over the summer of 2012, the National Citizen Service and Day Centre provision which has restricted availability and access to sites and the availability of staff in summer 2012.

All Trust summer school schemes have been put on hold this year, as combined with the abundance of Olympic opportunities in Luton which is now a venue of the torch relay, it is felt that there is too much competition for the public's time and money this year.

Having discussed the summer school model with pupils and teachers, we have summarised the following:

- Run a week – 10 days of activities but straddle a weekend to break up over two weeks. This allows time for prep of activities, reflection for students and also time to complete portfolios.
- As a summer school week, charge up to £100 for 1 week reasonable as student's leaving with a qualification and for parents; their child's time has been occupied well. This charging policy fits in with other schemes run by the trust and in the area. A reduced price could be offered for any participants not taking up the moderation, this cost could be transparent and charged at time of submission of the portfolios.
- Longer days for both the benefit of the students and staff.

Vauxhall Motors have expressed an interest in sponsoring a school term time model to encourage artistic/creative career choices that can result in a career in industry also. We have been asked to come up with a brief that incorporates a visit to the design team at Vauxhall. The intention being that funding be provided by Vauxhall for the placements. This is currently being investigated by the trust.

The Arts award is one of the Formal Learning Team's priorities for 2012/13 as we go through a transitional year with ACE funding. A target for this year is to retrain two new advisors and work with the bridging organisation at Thurrock to continue to develop this sustainable model with partners.

What advice would you offer other museums thinking of offering Arts Award?

Allow plenty of time and staff capacity for activities, especially for the portfolio support and preparation for moderation. The team took in work for a pre moderation marking and were able to feed back to the students any gaps and positive comments to bring up the standard. This took time to coordinate and allow time for students to respond.

Do what you do already – allowing time for reflection and evaluation.

Have quality experiences for young people to interact with Arts/Cultural professionals, making sure to mix activities from hands on to portfolio work to keep up the momentum.

Use the arts award paperwork and pack, continually reference for students to encourage them to use their pack too.

Any other comments?

The funding has allowed the Formal Learning team and other Trust partners to explore a new way of working and develop a new formal learning offer for Luton. The support from the community, local business and schools has been wonderful and we aim to build on this in 2012/13 by exploring the two new potential models – summer school and in school support.

Completed by:-

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