

Raising pupils' aspirations and confidence through a photography collaboration

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Case study: #14

School Profile: This large 11–18 comprehensive school has Language College Specialist Status

What was the school trying to achieve?

The case study was in response to a perceived need of this secondary school on the outskirts of Derby to improve teaching and learning through a better understanding of its learners. For a local Arts organisation, it was a means to fulfil its own educational mission to introduce young people to, and encourage their engagement with, cultural events in the city.

A recent teaching and learning staff group at the school investigated what the school was trying to achieve with learners. Discussion focussed on 'what were learners like now' and 'what did the school want learners to be like?'

The main aims for change to emerge were centred on the need to move from encouraging 'spoon-fed' learners to promote independence by encouraging students out of their 'comfort zones' to take risks with their learning. Higher aspirations for all students arising from more positive attitudes to learning were an aim as was greater global and political awareness.

Simultaneously and fortuitously the Arts Education Officer at 'QUAD' offered the art and design department, a series of three coordinated workshops. Their offer was intended to raise awareness of the Format biannual international photography festival held in Derby (key partners QUAD, Derby University and Derby City Council) with young people and schools to introduce young people to, and encourage their engagement with the cultural opportunities available in Derby.

How was learning organised to achieve these aims.

While conscious of addressing the four key concepts new Secondary Curriculum concepts of Creativity, Competence, Cultural Understanding and Critical Understanding through the photography sessions, the chief aims of this project stem arose from the need to change the learning patterns of the students. Meetings between art and design staff and the QUAD officer, and artists, planned a coordinated series of three workshops for three mornings over three weeks intended to meet the aims of all participants.

Session 1 – History of photography and examples of different genres. Portrait photography and setting up a portrait studio, (pin hole cameras or other photography related activity)

Session 2 – School visits Derby to see 'We the People' (see fig 1) exhibition on the QUAD hoardings, Industrial Museum 'Young Man with a Camera' and the 'Silent Monuments' exhibition. Photographs by Maggie Milner and Colin Wilson at the museum and art gallery pupils complete disposable camera photography brief.

Session 3 – Selecting photographs, mounting techniques and installing an exhibition at school

The Senior Leadership team were fully supportive and a dedicated sixth form Art studio was made available throughout the project.

How well did the school achieve its aims?

The students gained a breadth of new knowledge about photography and local 'old and new' culture. They worked independently and collaboratively to a brief and gained confidence working as street photographers. Their achievements were celebrated and valued in a professionally mounted exhibition. Having evaluated their work as a group, they are ambitious to develop the project in early 2008 by teaching their peers their new skills and knowledge. Further collaboration with QUAD is planned prior to its launch in 2008.

Photography

- Lighting • Slides of photos • Props • Different directions • Light reflector • To look evil or scared
- Quad (Q arts Derby, opening new building)
- John Legg (Photographer/lecturer in college)
- Old cameras • Different cameras • Styles of photos/presentation • Angles • The buttons on cameras • Positioning of the camera • Camera obscura, took photos upside down, needed good light • In the Victorian times photos took hours to develop • Victorians took full body photos
- In their photos they never smiled • Camera graphics • Disposable cameras • Focus positioning
- Museum • Derby art gallery • Looked at books
- Pictures on the TV • Poses

Photos in town

- Taking pictures • Put in pairs • Things to take pictures of, eg pointy things, weird perspectives, black and white • Went to industrial museum
- Went to art gallery • Looked at photo exhibition
- Learnt how to take a good photo • Market square
- Quad being built

Mounting

- Viewfinder • Cropping • Cutting mat • Mounting board • Mount cutter



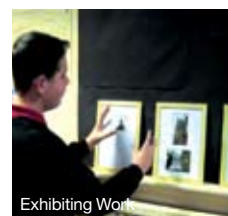
Evaluating their work



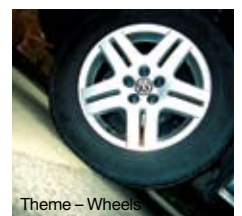
Quad New Build



Theme – 'Support'



Exhibiting Work



Theme – Wheels

What are learners like now?	What did the school want learners to be like?
Unaware of the wider world and Community, leading to a lack of understanding, and acceptance of others.	Accepting and respectful of others.
Enthusiastic but under confident in their Ambitions and aspirations.	Increasingly confident in themselves.
Reluctant to celebrate their achievements In front of their peers	Strive to achieve and enjoy celebrating this achievement
Lower expectations than in other schools	Ambitious, forward looking with high future expectations.
Strong personal identity (most)	Independent learners
Form strong relationships and groups	Know about big world issues