

introduction

by Andy O'Brien

★ Named after a legendary sea monster The Kraken rollercoaster gradually pulls you to the top of its 151 feet, offering a spectacular view over Seaworld and Orlando.

Seated in floorless cars, your feet dangle as you sit with nothing around you except the over-the-shoulder restraint. Suddenly Kraken begins with a plunge from a height of 15-storeys to reach a top speed of 65 mph. The train will then turn upside down seven times as it flies along more than 4,000 feet of steel track. ★

2 minutes
and 2 seconds later
it is over.

The Bolliger and Mabillard design has left you shaken legged, exhilarated, puzzled and wondering if the second time will be as good.

3 years ago
we became a
Creative Partnerships school.
our ride has been a rollercoaster.

At times I have felt that same panic, exhilaration
and satisfaction in a series of projects
and relationships that have begun to
transform learning in our school.

if there is one thing i have learnt, chat is critical.
admittedly we probably chat too much.

As we came to the end
of what appeared no longer
than the Kraken ride,
I sat down with Jez Dolan
(our Creative Agent -
and now good friend)
to chat about what we
had got out of the ride...

So here it is. Our CP rollercoaster stuff in hopefully less than 10 minutes

The conclusion of our cogitation over a 'nice cuppa' was that we needed to share our journey.

We are not saying it's perfect, or telling anyone how to do things. We just wanted to document our journey so that it may help someone, somewhere, someday.

Now, we reckon that if anybody actually opens or reads this book they would probably want to know 'stuff' that worked, 'stuff' that didn't work, and what we will do better next time. Probably if you are like me you want it in less than 10 minutes.

is the national curriculum rubbish...?

We posed this question to our middle leaders one Friday at a training weekend to launch Creative Partnerships.

24 hours later we had developed our new year 7 curriculum and the launch pad for our work over 3 years

Essentially the staff had written a cross-curricular thematic curriculum. We decided on 6 half-termly projects a year. All departments were to deliver the curriculum through the themes.

We decided on a simple model. Launch it with a 'big bang' assembly - deliver the units - finish with an even 'bigger bang' year group and school event. Three years in we are just moving into year 8. Our current units are:

	year 7	year 8
gallery evening →	Me, Myself and Irene*	Special Olympics ← art & sport
time capsule →	Time Machine	Charlie Cooks Favourite Book
	Actions and Reactions	Mega Structures
Film makers →	Your Numbers Up*	
loads! →	Going Places	My-Bay ← virtual ebay
		Shine

A number of these projects would be supported by Creative Partnerships. As you look through please see how some of the projects* have come together.

what do we replace it with ?

We went a bit further and asked 'Why are we doing this?'
Actually we asked **what do our students need to look like when they leave us.**

What followed was the development of our own set of competences or skills.

We used the RSA as a reference point. We were left with S.P.O.R.T. When we combined this with our curriculum approach we were left with a package.

Skills for thinking
Personal qualities
Opportunities to develop
Relationships
Teamworking

'exciting minds through s.p.o.r.t'

We have the basis of what we believe is a 'creative curriculum'. If we were starting again our advice to ourselves would be;

- * Do the launch event in the same way. Out of school and in a weekend or twilight session.
- * Allocate more ongoing planning time.
- * Decide on a common format for writing up the new schemes with skills as the first column.
- * Don't worry about assessment! That will be your big headache in year 9.

The Learning Journey



this project emerged from a discussion about how lots of students found it difficult to connect what they did in school, to why they did it, and how it was really relevant in the rest of their lives....

we also talked about the idea that each child started a learning journey on the first day they entered the school - mix into this the individual journey's students take every day, and for good measure a set of huge banners to fill the street.

“ The finished banners look amazing, bringing together aspects of traditional forms of art such as painting, digital imaging techniques and contemporary art practice. The banners themselves, are made up of every single photograph taken on routes around Accrington. There are four layers to each transparent banner, helping to create movement dependant on the position of the viewer in the school hall: one has to be in the correct position to see the full image. Each banner image represents a famous masterpiece i.e. The Mona Lisa, The Scream etc. ”

[All quotes by visual artist William Tittley]



“ these days its good to see that artists also get to lead with ideas as opposed to being told what to make or explore ”

“ Moorhead was brilliant. All the people involved were enthusiastic and open to contemporary ideas and full of support for the project. When it comes to ideas, the young people are way ahead, completely immersing themselves in the creative development of their ideas and sharing that enthusiasm among the group ”

- 1• Pick a subject
- 2• Explore how you see that subject in everyday life
- 3• Think about your journey to school
- 4• Mix up 1, 2, 3 by taking images of that subject on your journey
- 5• Get a groovy artist to show students photo manipulation
- 6• Voila!
- 7• Repeat x 12 (for every subject area)

“ I hope the Learning Journey helped the participants to view their locality with a fresh perspective, helping them to see things which would normally go unnoticed, like a broken pavement or fence post, a particular type of flower. I like to think that the young people also learned skills which will help them to develop an enthusiasm for visual arts and a new media knowledge base which can be continually built upon at their own pace ”



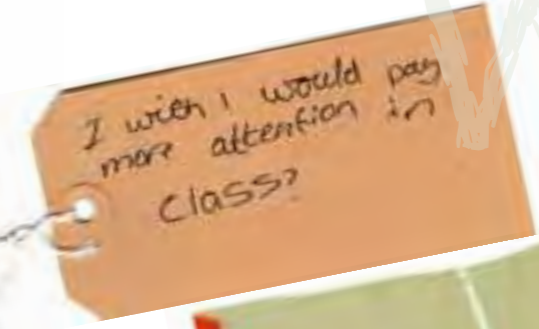
★ A Wishing Tree is an individual tree, which is used as an object of wishes and offerings. These trees are thought of as possessing a special religious or spiritual value. By tradition, believers make votive offerings in order to gain from that nature spirit, saint or goddess fulfillment of a wish. Sometimes coins are hammered into the tree bark, notes tied to branches or offerings left underneath ★



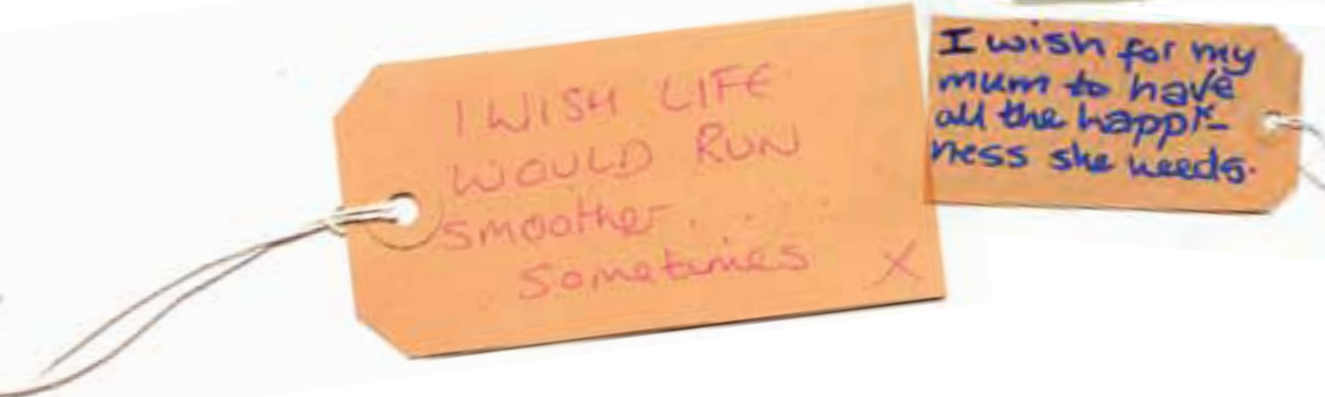
Our **wishing tree** was made from branches brought from a nearby woodland, and a few **simple** metal stands. We disguised the stands using some **garden stones**, and **used** luggage labels and coloured paper to create **the** 'wishes'.

The Wishing Tree

the wishing tree is seen in many cultures and places throughout the world.



learning Consultation -
 How do we do it?
 Why do we do it?
 What do we do with the information we get?



★ **learning and signposts**
 This is a really good way of consulting with people to find out their **thoughts** or **ideas**.

Rather than a wish, ask a question:
 "What would your ideal school look like?"
 The wishing tree is a positive and interactive tool for gathering information, and can get more interesting results than a questionnaire ★



One surprising outcome was the **seriousness** which people lent to the task of **making a wish**. Apart from the few obvious "I wish I could win the lottery / be a millionaire..." the **majority** of people used the opportunity to make **really meaningful statements**.

"we don't get to make wishes often enough"

NUMBERS UP

★ the idea ★

To create a project, which would engage with, and impact on a large number of pupils, and throughout school. To produce an exhibition / installation based on where we live, the built environment and how we see it, interact with it and see ourselves as part of it.

- Where are we in the world?
- What makes this place (and therefore us) unique and special?
- How do we relate what we learn (and teach) in school to the rest of our lives outside school?

“We brainstormed: we talked about our town, about good things and bad things, and realised that there were a lot of good things about Accrington, and going to school here.”



photo gallery ★

“We took pictures of the views from the school and around the school. For example: Flowers to show the countryside and the nature and the colours of Accrington. Rain - to show the weather. We did this to be able to show our models in context - the houses set in the landscape.”

We looked at, and took images of houses around the school. Discuss why they look like they do, and what makes them different. Use the photos to make scale models (ours were 1:10 scale) students then create!
* Make sure you create a template beforehand *

★ the soundtrack

“We made a soundtrack to add another layer to the installation. Using basic recording equipment we have at school. We thought about the noises and sounds around our homes - What are they? Cars, football teams, animals.... We made the noises using our own voices and recorded the sounds”

the event ★

“We designed the exhibition. We discussed all the different things we have to think about e.g. the layout of the room, what to get rid of, what to hide, how best to display our work, lighting, sound, how to make our guests feel welcome, how best to explain what we have been doing this week. We put all of our energy into getting the exhibition ready.”





“We made paper costumes and dressed up as the families in the stories. We took family portraits in the giant frame of ourselves acting as the families..”

NUMBERS UP

★ conceptual maps draw a map of your life, which includes:

- You
- Your extended family
- Other countries you have visited
- Where you spend your spare or leisure time
- The people you live with (also draw your house)
- Family or friends who live in other countries
- Where you go to work / school
- Your journey between home and school / work

How do you fit in to where you live...?



★ family photos - in the space of an hour!

- Working in small groups of 5 or 6
- Using only newspaper / newsprint, masking tape and marker pens
- Using the family histories, create costumes and props which visually tell the story using the students as characters
- Strike a pose and photograph!

learning and signposts
consider this as a transition project
Citizenship curriculum exploring identity
or split it down, just do the project in small bits

“We wrote stories of imaginary families living in the houses around the school. We designed and decorated the house based on the stories of the families”

Elevate

“why would you want to fly to accrington?”

Elevate is the organisation working with local authorities to rebuild and regenerate Pennine Lancashire. The people at Elevate had heard about the creative work we had been doing and wanted us to work alongside them to look at how the future regeneration might look in Accrington, and more importantly, how people might feel about it.



Working with two creative practitioners, Jez Dolan and William Tittley we started to look at:

ACCRINGTON: what we liked & didn't like about it
PUBLIC ART: what is it? and what is it for?

★ We looked at what spaces in town people used and what people did in them (shopping, work, relaxing...)

★ We worked with students from the School of Architecture at Sheffield University who were already working in Accrington – They showed us plans that they had made. We discussed ideas and developed them together.

★ We went on a visit to Workington in Cumbria to see how they had improved their town by working with artists and architects. We talked to people there about what they thought worked (or didn't).

★ We recorded everything through radio interviews, photographs and sketchbooks. We used this information to decide what we might do. But you need to turn over to find out what we did

★ It was good to have to think about what else people use the town centre for apart from shopping.

One of the more unusual ideas (having real sheep in a pen on grass in the town centre) was the one which most people talked about.



We developed our own **ideas** for how we could **improve spaces** in the town, **especially** thinking how we could make more **people WANT** to use them. Based on these ideas we used **design, model making** and **display skills** to enable us to **present** our ideas to people. We had an **exhibition** at school, and another in town, where we received a **visit** from the **Government's Minister for Housing**.

it was scary having to present our ideas to a lot of people but really good that they really enjoyed discussing our work, and took it seriously!

Elevate



moothead CARNIVAL

the idea

To stage a summer school event for gifted and talented pupils from years 6 – 8 which utilises a variety of new skills and techniques. All in **3** days, including a showing of the work produced.

We chose to use carnival as a starting point as it encompasses a wide range of skills and techniques, all of which can be related directly to future learning in school. We worked with **music, costume** and **food**.

the pressure and excitement of bringing an event together in a short timescale really brought people together as a team.

Everyone got the chance to try each activity, before deciding what they wanted to concentrate on.

food

Food is always linked to celebrations. We worked with a chef who introduced pupils to unusual food, fresh fish, spices, exotic vegetables and fruit. On the first day everyone contributed to making lunch for each other.

We made chicken curry, fish curry, vegetable curry, chapatti to go with them, sushi, fresh soup, salads, dessert, we even cooked a live lobster!

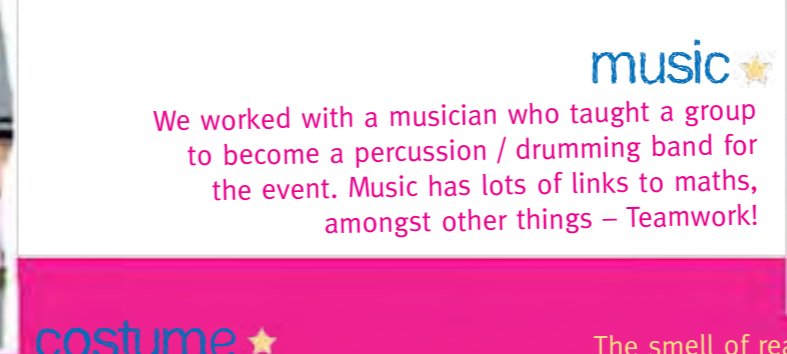
costume

Carnival always contains some element of costume. Pupils worked with an artist to design, construct, then perform in carnival style costumes. Transforming finalised designs to finished costumes

music

We worked with a musician who taught a group to become a percussion / drumming band for the event. Music has lots of links to maths, amongst other things – Teamwork!

The smell of really good fresh food encouraged staff to come and join the team to eat! Some girls still insisted on bringing their plastic bread sandwiches and monster munch rather than try something different.



CAPE FAREWELL

www.capefarewell.com

fancy going to the arctic?
yes please!!!
well actually, only 1 student will go...

We were really fortunate to get the chance to take part in 'Cape Farewells' youth expedition to the Arctic. Basically an expedition to take Canadian, German and British students to the Arctic to undertake scientific research and arts projects alongside the professionals.

from acorns to oak trees

I have never witnessed one idea ignite so many educational opportunities or spark and encapsulate in students 'real' learning to such a degree.

I feel unable to write this paragraph as the students did it all.
So over to Amy and Nina to recount their journey.

ok this is what we did...

a group project in a 'learn to learn' session and an individual project we had to pick from:

- a) Drama – 1950s infomercial
- b) Oil painting
- c) Science experiment
- d) ICT – Radio broadcast

we then had to present to our parents at an evening event (embarrassing). the final 5 got picked.
We went to the South Bank centre and met the other finalists. (We even managed to con Mr O'Brien into a TGI Fridays meal.)

then we had to do an individual project based on a scientific project we would do in the arctic and how we would interpret this in a creative way. then another presentation to colin from cape farewell.
Then a long wait before the winner was announced.....ME (Amy!!!!)

i went on the voyage. i completed my projects (which ended up a mix of all our ideas).
i recorded video messages, radio pieces and made many new friends. it changed my life in someways.
Very good Amy, but we did all the hard work in school whilst you were on holiday. We ran a series of o-Zone events. These included an 'Ask Amy' competition for the live blog, an 18 ft mural and huge masking tape images (that symbolised the melting glaciers and effect on eco-systems.)

since then we have done a lot of stuff. we have spoken at climate change conferences, helped the school get eco-schools awards, as part of the student arts council worked with creative practitioners to plan and run a conference for primary schools 'Ice is Nice' (more details later) and lastly produced an award winning bbc school news report documentary this year.

comes to



The project has also led to:
a) a scheme of work that combines students thinking skills and creative writing. Basically each lesson students get two alternatives and write a chapter leaving it always on a cliff hanger. At the end the books are published as e-books on the web.

b) A project using handheld technology and GPS. 8 winning stories were taken. Two creative practitioners worked to create art and multimedia to create a virtual landscape in which the stories were placed. Using handhelds if you walk around the school grounds you get each chapter virtually (check out the futurelab website for more reading on handheld technology)-
I am not sure whether any of the students involved will read this but I cannot stress enough how outstanding you all were. My express thanks to the final 5 Nina, Alex, Amy, Sammy-Jo and Zoe (oh and Chelsea who to this day does not know how close she was to making the final).



ice is nice

Our involvement in Cape Farewell led to lots of interest in how we as a community could start to think about, and act on issues around climate change.

We wanted to have some kind of creative response that everyone who participated could **take away, share, and learn from.**

We asked a selection of **creative practitioners** to come up with **IDEAS** for a 1 hour long workshop, which they could deliver with our students to pupils from local primary schools. Students worked with them to develop the workshops and to look at how they could work together as a **team.**

We also wanted the workshops to have as **little cost** and need for specialised equipment as possible, so that the workshop could be replicated by participants back at their own schools.

We brought these ideas together in a **1 DAY CONFERENCE** with a mixture of **workshops, displays, speeches** and other activities.

sessions included:

★ What is the carbon cost of us eating fruit and vegetables flown from around the world? Lots of good opportunities for maths and science learning - We then looked at planting seeds and how to grow your own food!

★ Building a model of Accrington, and looking at what happens as the climate changes to where WE live.



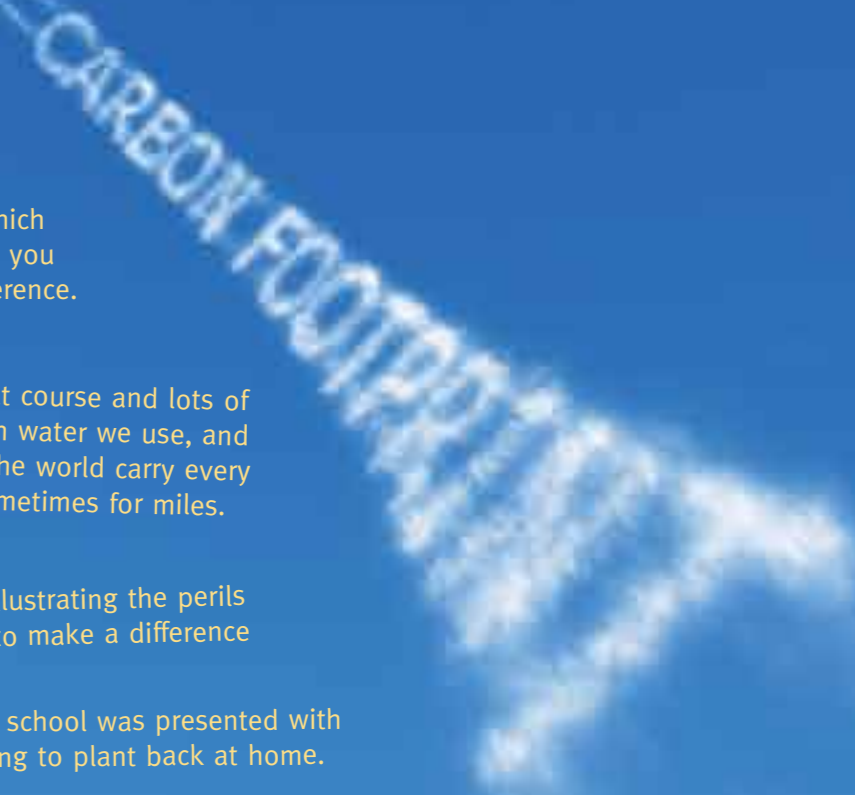
★ Making a piece of visual art which shows a personal pledge which you can do which really makes a difference.

★ Using a real toilet, an assault course and lots of buckets to look at how much water we use, and how lots of people all over the world carry every drop of water they use, sometimes for miles.

★ Making brief shadow shows illustrating the perils of climate change - and how to make a difference

★ Each visiting school was presented with a tree sapling to plant back at home.

loads of learning took place, and people went away from the day thinking that they really could make a difference



handheld Learning

The idea was to create a virtual map of the school on the PDA's and as you moved around the school, navigation points would trigger the PDA's to show an image / a sound / ask a question - so that we build up a multi layered 'map' which could also contain a 'story' which students could interact with.

we were using new technology

a tall order...Which of course it was.

We started with stories written by students around ideas about climate change, and adapted them into the PDA. We then made collages - both visual and with sound.

Remember those old fashioned adventure story books - dungeons and dragons style tales of wizards and heroes;

" walk down the dark spiral steps. at the bottom is a wooden chest. open the chest. in the chest is..."

We had been thinking (and talking!) about using technology, and how we could use 'gadgets' to encourage more active learning and participation in learning.

We learned that:

Using new technology, allow yourself AT LEAST twice the amount of time you first thought of.

Prepare for the fact it will go wrong. Again, and again.....



After a (very) long period of thinking, talking, consulting, visiting conferences and looking at gadgets, we bought a stock of PDA's which came equipped with a basic notebook, camera, video, GPS navigation system, and loads of other techno stuff.

The learning was fairly big for the students, but the 'outputs' or results fairly small for such a big investment.

Creative Practitioners need a lot of time to work with the equipment before working with students.



Disseminate disseminate

- * Photograph everything. Turn them into 'journey' postcards.
- * Gather up all the products from your project.
- * Take the best bits of work from all the subjects around school.



- * Take 24 IKEA wooden storage draws.
- * Get loads of lovely (Paperchase – if you are posh) materials.
- * Get students to research a theme and decorate the boxes. We also worked with pupils from Peel Park Primary School.
- * Place the boxes together to form the 'cabinet of curiosities'
- * Return to the 'Stuff' you have collected and put 1 item in each draw
- * Bring out the cabinet at major events/openings/evenings
- * Sell each box for a fee OR ask for a donation. The buyer keeps the box.

We did spend time with our arts council producing a business plan and running it as a company.

now vend away!!!!!!



The project CROSS-CODE

Unfortunately there are no friendly hedgehogs to advise you on stopping, looking and listening in organising a project. The following is meant to provide the hedgehogs guide to developing and running a successful Creative Partnerships project.



approach the road

Have a clear idea which road you want to cross.

Approach Creative Agent (with caution if money involved)

Discuss project – complete proposal form

Check the directory to identify potential creative practitioners,
Creative Agent contacts them

Arrange meeting and approach creative practitioners
(with even more caution).

Be prepared to be challenged and accept weird ideas.

Discuss project – complete proposal form

begin to cross

Select students – who and why?

Select Dates – check with Big cheeses and the calendar

Complete risk assessments if necessary.

Sort out rooming

Sort out any cover needed

Sort out materials (if needed)

Publish everything to staff

DO IT! RECORD IT!

when you have crossed

Sit down and chat with....

The Students

The Creative Practitioners

Your CP coordinator

On your own.

Consider what have you got out of it! Did you achieve what you set out to do?
What went well, Even better if, next time I would...

Get all the evidence together ... Fill in the evaluation form...



There was no obvious starting point for this road... just another chat.. This time about how technology should and could impact across the school. This turned into: how can we get the students here to run a professional media company?

From 0 to 7 national awards

After some interesting visits to community radio providers Radio Regen and web based television company 'Lets Go Global We opted to start with radio..... This is how it went...

TO LAUNCH we did a whole staff training on the possibilities of radio. In conjunction with Radio Regen we then sent **12** students and **4** staff for a 3-day crash course.

We worked with David Forgham-Bailey over a four month period 1 day a week. We decided that we wanted to:

1. Get initial programmes done
2. Train up core staff
3. Get every curriculum area to produce a radio programme.
4. Start to integrate radio into the taught curriculum.

Now you've got it - USE IT!

we have found radio is accessible, easy to use in the classroom and produces huge interest from students.

We purchased the kit to set up a school station and several portable handheld recorders (professional quality). This was a big investment from the school and separate to CP funding. (On a tighter budget get the portable recorders. They are so flexible for classroom use)

We have so many successful projects they could form a chapter in themselves. However - a few ways in which radio has manifested itself...

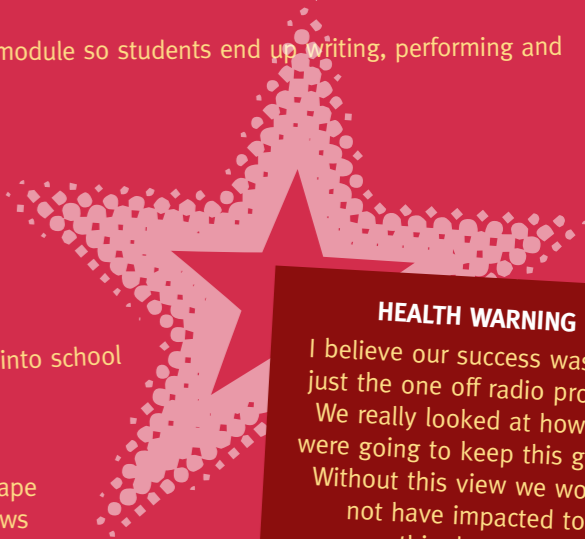
★ **murder mystery** – A radio drama project with writer and director Mandy Precious. We re-wrote a year 8 drama module so students end up writing, performing and editing their own radio plays. All the plays were accessible on the school website.

★ **stand-up comedy** – see the next page for details!

★ **open evenings** – students come and write 60 second scripts in English, record them in the station and take home CD.

★ **interviews** – we now interview all guests who come into school and send out radio teams on most trips.

★ **BBC school news report** - We teamed up radio with the Cape Farewell project. This ended up with our submission to BBC news report on Climate Change. We won 7 awards!



HEALTH WARNING
I believe our success was not just the one off radio project. We really looked at how we were going to keep this going. Without this view we would not have impacted to this degree.

stand UP comedy



heard the one about the 12 students who needed to improve their confidence in public speaking?

Well it goes like this...

We took **12** students and **1** comedian (Ian Longstaff).

We told them that in 8 weeks they would be giving a live performance that would also be recorded live for the school radio.

Oh, and we were inviting friends and family.

We set them in a room one afternoon per week. We videoed everything and interviewed the students in between.

The student arts council organised the event, invited guests, produced publicity etc! etc!

On the 30th of March, 80 guests came into our comedy club and the students all performed their own scripted 60 second routine.

This year we were planning to use comedy as our revision model for SATS, then they scrapped them. Now it is merely a way of revolutionising our approach to teaching Shakespeare.



is this an end or a new beginning..?

So... we wanted to make something that showed a whole lot of people what we had been doing on the first leg of our Creative Partnerships journey. Hopefully it is interesting, and maybe you can use some of the things we have done yourself.

how do you become an innovative school?

innovation doesn't just happen - it needs a lot of scaffolding to hold it together -the same applies to working creatively.

All of the work outlined here has emerged from a LOT of chatting, as we said, maybe too much, and maybe we could have involved more staff earlier on. Other schools have done things very differently and of course gone in a very different direction. We think that the way we have worked has given the work an overall cohesion and a sense of progression. Now our challenge is to involve more staff and get them to invent projects and run....

We also realise that what we have done is only the tip of the iceberg. Yes we have managed to alter some mindsets, but to mix metaphors, its like an oil tanker..... they take a long time to turn round. Careful not to crash your tanker into that iceberg...

We are not as far advanced as we'd like in terms of involving students in the really early stages of planning the work, making them equal partners. We think we do this pretty well, but we are still looking for how we can do it better. In an ideal world we would be bombarded by students with ideas and proposals for projects, on how to improve lessons, or the way we run the school...

It is still the case (most of the time) that teachers perceive creative practitioners as the people coming in to do the creative stuff. It's actually more about building a team of teachers, practitioners and students who can come to a creative solution together.

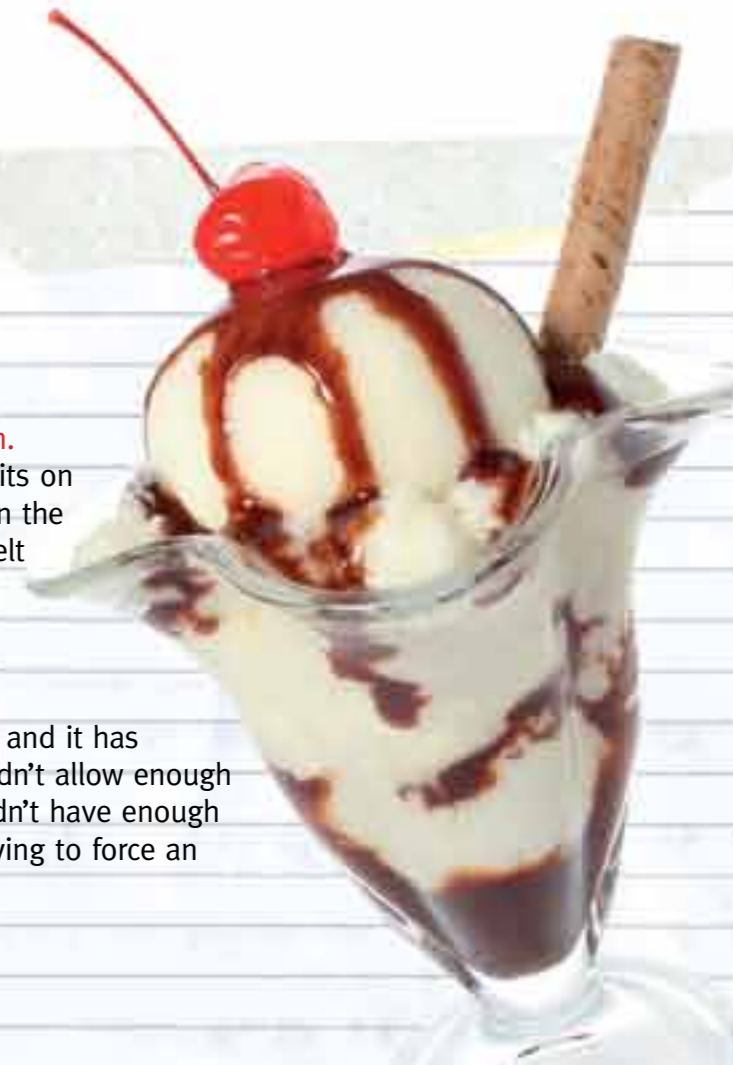
Creative Practitioners can and should continue to learn from teachers and students and vice versa.

Think about having chocolate sauce with ice cream.

When you put the sauce on the ice cream, first it sits on top in a big blob. Eventually it melts and runs down the sides. After a while the sauce and the ice cream melt together, and become, together something different. We think we are now at the chocolate sauce running down the sides stage.

On the odd occasion when something hasn't worked, and it has been an exception, it has usually been because we didn't allow enough time for planning or preparation, that the project didn't have enough links to what teachers needed, or that we were trying to force an end product out rather than a process

And now... to creativity... and beyond!





Accrington Academy

The best in everyone
A member of United Learning Trust

Accrington Academy is committed to seeing every student succeed through an inspiring and fulfilling education. We are passionate about our students and their education and are driven by the desire to continuously improve, within a caring and supportive 'learning community'.

We are delighted to be sponsored by the United Learning Trust (ULT), a registered charity that is the largest sponsor of academies in the UK. ULT's aim, which we share, is to bring out 'the best in everyone.' At Accrington, this means a commitment to providing the very best teaching and learning opportunities through a curriculum which engages and inspires.

www.accrington-academy.org



creative
partnerships

Creative Partnerships is the Government's flagship creative learning programme, designed to develop the skills of young people across England, raising their aspirations and equipping them for their futures. We foster innovative, long-term partnerships between schools and creative professionals, including architects, scientists, multimedia developers and artists. These partnerships inspire young people, teachers and creative professionals to challenge how they work and experiment with new ideas.

www.creative-partnerships.com



Initiative Arts is a creative consultancy company established by Jez Dolan and based in Manchester, which works with a wide range of partners within the arts and creative industries sector. Initiative Arts specialises in arts development, project management design and delivery, strategic and business development, and has a specific focus on participatory arts and creative teaching and learning. We have access to a large pool of experienced freelance artists, arts organisations and practitioners who aim to deliver the highest possible quality of creative practice in both process and product.

www.initiative-arts.co.uk
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The work shown in this book would have not been made possible without the contributions of the following artists and practitioners:

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STUDENTS ART COUNCIL

Fairly obviously, students are central to everything we have done. From the start we knew that getting students on board was crucial.

We advertised for students wanting to join the school 'Arts Council' - they had to formally apply, and had a formal interview

Students on the Arts Council have helped to organise events, plan projects, select and interview artists and practitioners, visited theatres, galleries and the offices of Arts Council England, and through publicity made sure that lots of other people knew about what we were doing.

And they get a really cool Arts Council badge too...



Accrington Academy
The best in education
Accrington, Lancashire



creative
partnerships



