The Creative Research Process:
Delights and Difficulties

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on an arts-informed approach to education research aimed to critically develop and promote teachers' creative practice and understanding of creativity for both pupils and teachers. The creative research process is described to reveal how it developed 20 students as researchers in a secondary school in England. The students' perspectives impressed artists and enlightened expert researchers into new ways of thinking and doing research. A reciprocal relationship was developed that unravelled novel data and promoted pupil voice.

Introduction

*T*he action education research described here aimed to explore creativity in one secondary school in the North West of England. Researchers, artists, and students worked alongside one another to embark on a creative research process to uncover what creativity means and how it may be enhanced. The creative research process is detailed and reveals how it can facilitate pupil voice, improve the skilled researcher's proficiency, and enhance student research expertise. Questions about how to negotiate differing roles between facilitator and researcher/artist and students and student-researchers are explored, as are the challenges concerning reporting creative findings in different formats such as in the form of poems, objects, or drawings.

The use of arts-informed approaches to educational research has become of significant interest in recent years, with some studies reporting the potentials and difficulties such methods can bring (Prettyman & Gargarella, 2006; Thomson, Hall, & Russell, 2006; Bagley, 2008). There has also been a rising recognition that young people have valuable contributions to make within their schools (Fielding, 2004; Bragg & Fielding, 2005; Leitch & Mitchell, 2007). In addition, some researchers have commented on the valuable insight that arts-informed approaches can foster when working with young people. Pupils can articulate their thoughts and display their experiences in a non-written format (Russell, 2007). Moreover, using arts-informed approaches helps the research process by being flexible and interactive.

Alongside the increased attention given to arts-informed approaches, there has been a rise in policy and research interest in what makes a creative school (Jones et al., 2007). Understandings about what creativity and creative learning are remain complex. Sefton-Green, Thomson, Jones, and Bresler (2011) define creative learning as extending beyond arts-based learning or the development of individual creativity. Rather, it covers a range of processes and initiatives at the individual, classroom, and whole school level that share common values, systems, and practices aimed at making learning more creative while also appreciating young people's potential.

Schools are increasingly being encouraged to "personalize" their curriculum, accelerate pupils' learning, and close gaps in achievement between the rich and poor (Thomson & Gunter, 2006). Consequently, many schools are turning to the potentialities of pupil voice to help bring about school improvement and change (Watts & Youens, 2007). This project endeavoured to help pupils and teachers understand languages of creativity using the knowledge and skills of a range of creative practitioners while simultaneously developing the pupils' capabilities as researchers.

The School

Wade Deacon High School is a co-educational, comprehensive, community school for 11-16 year olds. Located in the North West of England, it has 1121 pupils drawn from a large catchment area. Originally a grammar school founded in 1507, this school has an impressive long driveway leading to a striking architectural building that dominates the entrance to the school. Wade Deacon was deemed a good school by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) in 1997 with many outstanding aspects. In 2008, 95% of pupils gained 5% or more A*-C grades. The school has vast sports facilities, fields, and space. Staff and school promotional documents proclaim high expectations held by teachers and pupils.

In September 2008, the school applied to become a Creative Partnerships (CP) Change School: status which they intended to use to develop and embed a creative thematic approach to curriculum development, ongoing Continued Professional Development (CPD), and to transform teaching and learning throughout the whole school community. The focus of the Change School Programme was summarized in the following question:

> *How can 'Big Thinkers' in Creativity, Teaching and Learning help kick start and embed a creative approach to Teaching and Learning, within a cross curricular staff team, and ultimately across the whole learning community, planning for a new 'Creative Thematic Curriculum' across year 7 and beyond.*
>
> (Tender document, 2009)

The Creative Research Process

This project emerged as a result of a negotiation process between the school, CP, and the Aspire Trust—a Merseyside-based arts education development agency that works across the UK to provide creative and educational support for schools and communities. Aspire formulated the change school brief into a research project entitled, "LookingUP at Wade Deacon": named partially due to the school's remarkable structural design, impressive school displays, and high achieving status, and partially in acknowledgement of the implicit processes of *LookingUP* in research contexts; as a means of finding out, while simultaneously respecting and celebrating the school's physical structures and aspirations.

LookingUP at Wade Deacon was conceived of as

> *…an arts based research project which aims to critically develop and promote teacher's creative practice and understanding of creativity in the school. We want to establish the project as a rigorous, educationally driven piece of work which essentially asks questions of the creativity agenda, as opposed to providing a 'big sell' which exhorts everyone to buy into it. Whilst there will be staff there who are sympathetic to developing creative practice, there will of course be staff who are more cautious, need to be persuaded of the value and purpose of that agenda – and, understandably, may look more askance at approaches which rely on sales techniques as opposed to sound educational approaches.*
>
> (Project description, April 2009)

The project that was designed by teaching staff and Aspire aimed to identify creative practice in five departments including Arts, Design Technology, English, Mathematics, and Physical Education to encourage staff to discuss, empirically test, and reflect on what makes effective creative practice in the classroom and involve staff and pupils in the examination of how arts-based practice and methodologies can enhance creative processes in their classroom pedagogical practices. Twenty year 7 pupils (aged 12-13 years) were allocated to participate in the program. This group was off school timetable for a week to work with the team of practitioners previously identified.

Rather than embark on possibly fruitless discussions about definitions of creativity with pupils and the research team, this project introduced pupil researchers to the concept that the presence of creative processes could be detected through a series of "creativity lenses" (Owen, 2009) which could be used to focus on what conditions are present if creative teaching and learning is to be encouraged. The challenge on this project was to translate this work into language suitable for year 7 pupils (and arts researchers) without losing the integrity of that work. Nick Owen, author and Director of The Aspire Trust, presented the pupils with a selection of graphics which were to represent the lenses in question. Pupils were asked to look through the various lenses of creativity with a view to facilitate their work as analytic researchers and understandings about how to do research and how to look out for creative teaching and learning in the various classroom observations.

A creative practitioner team who had subject specific skills and interests across the five subject areas worked as researchers, workshop facilitators, pupil mentors, and conversation catalysts between pupils and staff. The creative team included a number of professionals practising within their known field; this in itself promoted an exciting flexible research process whereby different practitioners gave distinct insight into their understandings of creativity and how to conduct this art-based action research. A group of six performing and visual artists (including a poet, sculptor, artist, composer, video-maker, and actor) and researchers were brought together to comprise the research team with the pupils. This unusual mix of professionals and pupils (adults and teenagers) allowed for a special reciprocal relationship to be built between all participants that acted as fertile ground to enhance the creative research process. Different ways of seeing and doing research unravelled as the phase two research unfolded.

The creative practitioners were each assigned to a particular subject area at the start of the project but eventually moved across disciplines as the week developed and the common timetables changes and restrictions occurred.

The first day involved developing the pupil's research skills. After a basic research skills presentation led by Lisa Russell, pupils were asked to find out something new about their hall. The hall was where the group was located for the majority of the week; this place acted as a gathering ground for the team, a place to learn and share ideas. It was a central part of the school physically and metaphorically.

Pupils were separated into groups as advised by a teacher and were told to work with one practitioner across their affiliated field of interest. Pupils were allocated from all year groups and across the achievement spectrum. One practitioner worked with one group at all times while others (Russell and Owen) floated across research teams to gain an overall perspective of what was going on. Each creative research team identified creative practice in each subject area through pupil and practitioner observation, conversation and sound and visual images with staff and other pupils in those classes across all year groups. The team analyzed and disseminated data to each other and to the senior management team at the end of the week. Some crossover between the various subjects occurred with some groups researching the same lesson; this allowed for different groups' perspectives to be shared, facilitating triangulation and giving the research teams an overall sense of what creativity can mean in different sorts of classes.

Each team came up with its own identifying name, and had its own "private" notebooks and one larger communal "shared" notebook to write field notes, gather artefacts, reflect on the day's events, analyze its findings, and develop its conclusions. Pupils also had access to a Dictaphone to record staff and pupil interviews and sound bites of "noise" in lessons, an iPhone to access the Internet and record visual and audio data, a camera to take photographs of still images, and video cameras to record movement and face-to-face interactions and interviews.

Pupils, researchers, and practitioners worked together to obtain 21 staff interviews along with over 400 photos that included different areas of the school site, pupils learning, teachers teaching, and research artefacts. In addition to the pupils gathering information, the practitioners and researchers gathered written field notes, photographic evidence, and recorded interview data and film on the creative research process. Practitioners and researchers recorded and analyzed how pupils were becoming researchers, how the school as a whole were responding to them, and how they could facilitate the pupils in gaining rigorous data while expanding their research expertise and understandings about creativity.

The Delights

1) Generating different sorts of data.

In addition to more traditional ways of generating data such as written field notes, interviews, photographs, sound bites, and video imagery, more unusual forms of data started to emerge; these developed from the practitioners' workshop and the "students' eye" (Thomson & Gunter, 2006).

The practitioners' expertise was drawn upon in both individual research groups and in whole group contexts such as in workshops whereby practitioner expertise was explored and shared. These interactive sessions were done intermittently throughout the week to help stimulate pupils and give them a break from the intense research learning task, while also offering them insight into what creative practice in different arts-related employment contexts can mean and thus developing their understandings and analytical capabilities.

A recording of the practitioner and researcher discussion from the first morning's events reveals their concerns about how the practitioner can facilitate the pupils' ability to express their findings.

> Poet: I think it's great working with kids like this, because they'll see stuff that we wouldn't see; the challenge we have is to get them to articulate what it is they are seeing and to discriminate so that they can actually work out what it is they are seeing.
>
> (13/07/09)

Pupils accessed a variety of media in which to express their thoughts and communicate their opinions, analysis, and findings. This is something that developed throughout the week and was certainly not set in stone from the outset; rather, it grew as our relationship with the pupils matured and our common aims became more apparent.

Communal and private notebooks.

Research groups had their own identifiable communal notebooks—somewhere for them to write notes, stick in artefacts, and bring together the day's findings and thoughts. Each pupil also had a matching private notebook: a smaller notebook that was theirs alone to record whatever data they desired via whatever means. This allowed pupils to be brave in their thoughts and feelings as it was "private" in the sense that only they had access to it unless they agreed otherwise.

During the "finding something new about the hall" task on the first day, encouraged by the public artist, some pupils gathered artefacts such as disregarded used coffee cups. Throughout subsequent lesson visits, others collected bits of old sports equipment rope left behind on the sports field, flowers and grasses from the fields (to record smell as well as visual artefacts)—things that the so-called established researchers and practitioners may have left behind unquestioningly. These items were used as a forum to open up discussion about meaning and use of space as well as physically taken and stuck into the communal notebooks (where physically possible). Using familiar items in this way helped pupils to articulate their thoughts and feelings and gave them a focus for their work.

Movement.

Inspired by the dancer and film crew, the practitioners and researchers used the idea of movement. Movement was a key component to the week's events; it served to stimulate pupils, to wake them up, to think about things in a different way, and gave them a different medium to express themselves.

Poems.

During a workshop given by our composer, explaining how she wrote for the orchestra, a boy mischievously asked if she wrote for the triangle. Our poet suggested viewing this comment as a poem. This event reminded him that poems can come from anywhere; they are not confined to a specific place, discipline, or even to the conscious intention to write poems. The following poem was thus born:

I hate maths
I hate science
I hate school
I only love the triangle

Inspired by our poetry-writing workshop session, some research groups started to use poems as a way of reflecting on their findings in order to analyze and bring together their thoughts and experiences.

Drawings.

Other pupils preferred drawings and scribbles as a means of recording data and reflecting upon practice.

Fig. 1: Drawing of colleagues and composer researcher (Neil 15.07.09)

One boy (Neil) created this drawing during one of our feedback sessions—he did this without prompt and even without realizing its value; this was then collected as a piece of data that recorded a pupils interpretation of our research process. The fluid creative research process allowed the team to conduct student-led research, offering the students a sense of ownership over their project while revealing to researchers and artists the students' way of seeing the process. Data was being generated intuitively by students.

2) The reciprocal relationship.

By the middle of the week the pupils were finding their own ways of generating data and facilitating their understandings of creativity and creative practice, many of which challenged the practitioners and researchers' view of what constituted data and how to enhance pupil voice. A reciprocal relationship developed between pupils, practitioners, and researchers, whereby each group challenged the others' way of thinking about creativity and doing research.

During the first day's session on developing the pupils' research skills, pupils were challenged to "find out something new about their hall." It was on this task that the skilled education researchers and practitioners started to learn from the "students' eye" (Thomson & Gunter, 2006) and develop their own research skills. For example, our ethnographer had set ideas about what types of written notes should be recorded when entering a research environment. Written notes would usually include recordings of time, actions, behaviours, interactions, relations, descriptions of physical space and how it was used, people's dress, role, and actual speech. One group looked at the disregarded rubbish on the floor and had conversations about what meanings these

items could possibly have. One pupil held a used polystyrene coffee cup and talked about how the hall was normally used by staff—this is what this item symbolized to them. I (Russell), an education ethnographer, was intrigued by this; I started to realize that items I may usually overlook held significance. When asking the pupils about how they found this item, pupils said that they started the research task by looking on the ground.

Different groups approached the task in different ways and uncovered various sorts of information. One group, inspired by the research title, "LookingUp," were immediately drawn to a disco ball hanging from the ceiling; this item looked somewhat out of place and inspired the group to find out more. By interviewing the Site Maintenance Manager (SMM) they found that the hall had previously been used for ballroom dances and the like but was no longer used for such activities. The pupils showed real research skills by jumping at the opportunity to talk with the SMM, a gentleman who had a sound take on the history of the hall given his fifteen years of staff membership to the school. This not only demonstrated the pupils' curiosity and skill needed to find out a new piece of knowledge about their school hall, but it also revealed that they were confident enough to look at their familiar school hall in a different way, through non-pupil eyes and via researcher lenses.

The researchers and practitioners started to make note of the pupils' different ways of seeing their school and on subsequent observations implemented new observation techniques they would otherwise have disregarded. They made a conscious effort to look down and then up, in addition to studying people's movements, mannerisms, and speech. Together, the creative research team had developed a different way of seeing and recording the physical research space. The ground and what lay on it became more intriguing. Furthermore, they became more aware of "overlooked" items such as used coffee cups and thus started to develop their own data collection techniques and assumptions about what makes a research artefact. We felt as though our own ethnographic skills were challenged and developed by studying the pupils' take on research. On the first day, Russell articulated how the students as researchers stimulated her own working practices as an ethnographer. This excerpt is taken from dialogue between the artists and researchers.

> *They (the pupils) looked around at what was on the floor, they looked at objects that I would pass off as a piece of junk but which obviously had meaning to someone and held some purpose – even though it might just be a chocolate wrapper.*

I'd never go into a room and look at what's on the floor and what's been cast aside. Because I've being doing this for quite a bit of time I've become quite set in my ways and a little bit lazy in terms of what I'm looking for in a classroom and how I go about it… so I've developed my practice in terms of doing research through different eyes, looking at things in a different way.

(14/07/09)

3) The development of pupil voice.

Working as part of a creative team, in addition to utilizing an array of arts-informed approaches, facilitated the pupils' ability to express their findings and analyze data. The development of pupil voice was partly assisted via the reciprocal relationship built up between practitioners, researchers, and pupils; a partnership of trust, admiration, and intrigue was developed.

Artist: The more open you are, the more intelligent their response will be, no matter what we think as adults. You know I've got specific ideas about how to do research; they too will have their own specific ideas.

(13/07/09)

This work aimed to develop the pupils as "student researchers" before moving them to the next stage of becoming advocates for curriculum change in the school by suggesting and implementing ideas about how to make their school more creative.

Using art-informed approaches certainly aided the pupils' ability to conceptualize "creativity" and how it worked within their school while also allowing them a different medium in which to voice their opinions, talk about their experiences, analyze data, and disseminate results.

Using an array of arts-informed approaches during this creative process allowed pupils to pick and choose what mediums they preferred to adopt in what circumstances and thus facilitated their understandings about creativity and ability to conduct research and disseminate findings.

Initially, there was some concern about the pupils' research capabilities and grasp of the complex concept, "creativity." However, pupils responded well. When asked what it feels like to be creative, one pupil replied, *"you don't always know you're being creative but you are—creativity doesn't have to be in the moment but is something*

that is a process." Furthermore, they developed their own analytical concepts such as "self-managers" when describing what it meant to be a pupil in a creative lesson. It meant for pupils to have some degree of autonomy in the lesson content, to be involved, and to be able to take responsibility for one's own learning experience. During a high jump lesson visit based around an X Factor theme whereby pupils are separated to take on different roles of judges of the high jumpers' performance, high jumpers and photographer, one pupil verbalized the analytical concept "self-manager" and contextualized it in his private written notebook and later during discussion. He described it as *"giving pupils options, options to take on different roles."* Although this complex concept had been discussed in previous lessons prior to this research, it also showed a pupil able to grasp analytical notions and use them in other contexts.

In addition to facilitating pupils with their ability to conduct research and express their opinions, the project aimed to implement change at a curriculum level. Immediately after the project, the head teacher declared her willingness to investigate whether a student-led workshop could be delivered whereby the pupils involved in this project would lead a CPD session for staff in which pupils would help staff understand their perceptions of what makes a creative school and a creative lesson with a view to implementing change.

This action-based research project had thus achieved its aims of developing the school's own capabilities and resources to implement a change for the better in its own working environment.

The Dilemmas

1) Fighting familiarity.

One of the initial concerns the researchers and practitioners had related to how they could facilitate pupils' abilities to look at their school through researchers' eyes rather than the eyes of a pupil—a role with which they were very familiar. Surprisingly, many of the pupils demonstrated immediate dexterity when it came to separating themselves from the "pupil" role, and quickly showed an ability to fight the familiar during the task of "finding something new out about their hall" on the first day.

Interestingly, many pupils physically moved to the stage area of the hall, as this was an area many of the pupils had not visited before. They found this area

intriguing, described it as usually "off limits" and thus were drawn to its peculiarities. While this demonstrated ability for the pupils to see their school through different eyes, a confidence to see the familiar as unfamiliar (Delamont & Atkinson, 1995), it also became a source of contention in future days, as pupils wanted to hide in the stage's nooks and play on the piano. The pupils' adeptness to explore areas where they had never been and ask questions to older pupils in the school and staff developed and flourished throughout the week's events.

The researchers and practitioners were enthralled by the pupils' analytical and research abilities in addition to their growth in confidence as "student researchers" and "agents of social change." Pupils used the research equipment available to them in the lesson visits with certainty, focusing closely on other pupils, taking intimate shots, and recording probing responses from both staff and pupils. In knowing their school and obviously feeling a relative sense of security within it, pupils were able to gain different, sometimes more intimate photos and interview data that may otherwise have been collected from the skilled researcher.

As researchers we sometimes feel intrusive in our data collection techniques and take time to build a rapport with participants (Russell, 2007). However, these pupils demonstrated an immediate adeptness when it came to accessing intimate data. Unlike other researchers (Thomson & Gunter, 2006), these pupils (on the whole) did not fear asking questions to older pupils and staff; in fact, as their confidence quickly grew they gained a sense of autonomy from the process. This allowed for different sorts of data such as close up shots of older pupils doing high jumps that an outsider such as a researcher may have questioned taking so soon into the field-work process.

2) Negotiating roles and research practices.
Although practitioners (Thomson et al., 2006) and researchers (Becker, 1967; Lappalainen, 2002; Russell, 2005) have questioned their role during research conducted in schools, professionals in this instance automatically had a dual responsibility and as such experienced a constant negotiation between two roles. As "facilitator," they had to develop the pupils' research capabilities and the pupils and staff's understandings about creativity. As "researcher," they documented, analyzed, and concluded findings on the creative research process.

Moreover, the practitioners and researchers questioned their role in terms of discipline. The hall stage, for example, became an area of contention; pupils wanted to roam free around that area consistently: they hid in the dark crevasses and in

amongst the equipment, played the piano, giggled and played in an area which was usually forbidden. Researchers and practitioners started to question their role: was it to discipline or was it to let the pupils roam free and stimulate their imagination? After realizing that some pupils were disrupting other pupils working on the project, pupils were asked to keep quiet so as not to disturb others. A decision was made that if pupils did not want to conform they could leave the project, as we were "not teachers" and were not prepared to replicate the school's discipline code. Pupils were offered the opportunity to leave the program if they wished. No pupils left the project due to discipline issues but it remained a source of contention, with teachers sometimes thinking the practitioners and researchers should be taking more control of their pupils in the school environment.

Towards the end of the week, some pupils had noticed that teachers were "acting up" while they were present in their classroom: they were talking louder, moving themselves and pupils around the room more and appearing to be more "creative" in their presence and delivery of lesson content. One pupil described this as being "camera posey," aligning it to his experience of seeing how the school presents itself for maximum effect through its publications, displays, and videos which are a constant presence in the school's public spaces.

In response to this difficulty the pupils decided to linger outside classrooms and assess the creativity within it before and/or after officially entering/leaving the classroom to gauge a more objective sense of what went on in particular lessons with individual teachers. We negotiated our research practice and roles. This research practice developed as the reciprocal relationship between the creative team members flourished and practitioners and researchers had diverged from the "teacher" role more successfully. However, such episodes looked suspicious to teaching staff and in some instances made them even wearier of our presence within the school. This raises questions of ethical practice, but given that the school had agreed that this project would be pupil-led, and used to inform staff, the ethical dilemma concerning informed consent was somewhat appeased.

3) Dissemination.

Like researchers and practitioners using arts-informed approaches before us (Thomson et al., 2006; Bagley, 2008), we experienced contentions about how best to disseminate our findings and how best to express what the pupils felt without upsetting staff members. Issues around "censorship" and what could and could not be researched, and what should and should not be disseminated, arose.

On the very first day the practitioners and researchers were concerned that pupils would simply record the negative in their classroom visits.

> Composer: I was slightly concerned that some of them are thinking about negative things immediately, but then if it's only positive then that's not research.

> Artist: Seeing the negative is that they want to change something into more positive, and so if we're constructive with it, it can be a very useful tool for them.

> (13/07/09)

It was agreed that we wanted to remain as true to the pupil voice as possible.

We presented our findings to the Senior Management Team and had some lengthy discussions about how best to do this. Discussions revolved around how many words versus images should be used. At one point we entertained the idea of using no written text, but decided against this in light of our audience members and their needs. Their desire was to have set ideas about how to implement change; thus we needed to present some concrete findings that the school take forward, whilst also retaining the pupils' voice.

Our presentation was finally given to the principal, head of mathematics and two other staff who had participated in the project. Pupils identified the importance of atmosphere and space as important factors influential in a creative learning environment. They described creative lessons as ones in which furniture could be rearranged. Some discussed altering the atmosphere by changing the light: "*Lighter rooms help your brain work better*." Others considered playing music helped produce a relaxing atmosphere. Pupils agreed that relaxed did not necessarily mean comatose: "*Sometimes when more creativity is going on, you move move move*," one pupil noted. They also observed the counterproductive use of the interactive whiteboard: "*When the lights are turned off (for interactive whiteboard) your brain shuts down and it's easier to daydream and get distracted*." Pupils noted that creative lessons involved conversation and dissent. Whilst they noted that pupils were able to talk and work, and so enjoy themselves more, they recognized too that peer group pressure could be inhibitory and prevent pupils from getting more out of their lessons. They found that pupils tended to be friendlier in creative classrooms, and if given different tasks to do from the norm, this provided opportunities for independent problem solving. They also noted that pupil pairs worked well, that humour played a vital role in classroom relationships, and that they felt more creative "*when you like the teacher*."

Pupils found that all teachers could be creative in different lessons. Creativity was not located solely in the more traditional subjects of the arts and humanities, but could appear anywhere. They saw creative teachers as ones who were energetic, fun, and also exerted "*good control*" with some degree of structure; those who asked good questions to make pupils think about things were also deemed creative.

Resources were important too. Pupils noted that colourful classrooms were attractive to work in. The value of variety was also stressed as it provided moments of difference and unpredictability.

One of the chief delights of working in this way was to see the pupils understand the complexities of creative teaching and learning, to be able to observe it in their school, and to be able to construct interesting and insightful findings that they and the staff could take forward and use in their program of school change.

Conclusions

Working in this unusual creative, arts-informed way facilitated a flexible creative research process that acted as fertile ground that enhanced pupils' expertise in understandings about creative teaching and learning and research skills. During this process a reciprocal relationship between pupils and creative practitioners and researchers developed. The delights of working in this way included the ability for the creative research team to facilitate pupil voice. Pupils made adept researchers with astute understandings about the languages and analytical concepts concerning creativity. They were able to choose from an array of mediums to record data, analyze their findings, and disseminate their conclusions. Moreover, the professional practitioners and researchers adapted their means of understanding creativity and on how to conduct research during this process; this project enshrined partnership whereby the pupils and staff learned from each other, in addition to the pupils and practitioners/researchers engaging critically with one another and changing their own practice as a result. Thus there is a real opportunity for arts-informed research to have meaningful consequences for the school and the professionals brought in to work with them.

However, there were a few difficulties that developed, namely around issues of role definition and what it meant as an outside professional coming in to a school to work in a collegiate, professional manner with young people. Other issues included

how to disseminate findings to Senior Management Team members while retaining the pupils' voice and sense of rawness.

Whatever the delights and dilemmas experienced, the overall outcome of the research project was positive with both the school (pupils and staff) and the professionals (practitioners and researchers) benefitting from the creative research process. Working in such a flexible way via using arts-informed methods of data collection, inquiry, and workshop stimulation can certainly promote pupil understanding and school change while simultaneously challenging the professionals working practice.

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