

Enquiry Schools

Case Study Slides

Project Name: South and Central America project



School: Harmans Water Primary School

Local Authority: Bracknell Forest

Creative Partner: Paul Batten

Creative Agent: Philippa Berry

Year Groups: Whole school incorporating years 2,3,4, 5 and 6

Start Date: Tues 7th Oct '08

End Date: Thurs 23rd Oct '08

Enquiry Question	Context	The Story	Impact on young people learning	Impact on teacher learning	Impact on creative partner learning	Impact on school	Learning from the work	Revisiting the Enquiry Question	Next steps
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We decided to have ‘How can we use creativity to help students become more involved in their own learning?’ as our enquiry question because it linked to Guy Claxon’s ‘Building Learning Power’ initiative that the school has undertaken. We were trying to develop an ethos in the school of problem solving and perseverance to give the children essential thinking and life skills for the future. The project is also a development of a previous enquiry programme in the school, which focused on an outdoor willow sculpture. The evaluation from that project highlighted that children were more engaged with using and applying the skills learnt as opposed to the physical output, so we developed this into a new exciting project where the children could be more involved in the planning and be responsible for their own learning.



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There was a need to look at cultural awareness within our school which was raised in the school's last Ofsted report. This enquiry project has enabled the school to look at culture through creativity, with a view to helping children become more excited about their learning.

Links to Whole School Improvement plan

- Personalised learning

The children are to be involved in the planning and delivery of their own learning.

- Pupils

To develop the children's 'cultural, social, moral and spiritual education'

- Creative Curriculum

To continue to enrich the children's learning by teaching in a creative way.

This project also works toward us achieving Rights Respecting Schools Level 2, an initiative run by UNICEF making children aware of the rights of children globally.

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We wanted the children's opinions to be of utmost importance when selecting a creative partner to work with. For this reason we began the project by giving the children interview training from Jo Wright, who works at South Hill Park. Working alongside Jo, the children formed questions to ask the Practitioners who responded to our brief. The children conducted the interviews in a professional and responsible manner with little adult intervention. Afterwards we discussed exploring the benefits and drawbacks of each candidate, taking into account how the practitioner would help us work in a more creative way and how they would most impact our school. The children then voted in a democratic way to choose the Practitioner.

The children chose Paul Batten, a project design manager who has experience in visual arts/design and puppetry, to work with the school. They liked the variety of activities he could offer and the idea of a procession at the end of the project that the parents could attend. They were excited that they would be able to show off what they had achieved. Paul's partnership with the school on this project proved very successful with Paul being our guide to put together a 'carnival' style procession using work from each year group. Paul made banners with year 2 children, masks with year 3 children, lanterns with years 4 and 5 and finally, the large puppets with year 6.



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With Paul the children planned and created objects to contribute for our carnival. The year six children were given an outline for the carnival and the children researched Aztec imagery and potential puppets to be made. Paul came back in and talked with the children about the viability of their designs. The children had to engineer what part of the puppet was going to move-

I really enjoyed finding out how to make my monkey's arm move. I couldn't work it out at first but with a few trials and Paul's help we got it moving. It was a lot of fun.'
Sophie Y6

This project challenged many stereotypes the children had as well as making them aware of South America globally. This was assessed by a questionnaire that went to all children. A year 3 child at the beginning of the project thought that all **'houses were poor'** and when asked again at the end realised that there was a wide variety of materials used including **'stone brick and wood.'**

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At the beginning of the project, we included 2 INSET twilight sessions for the teachers and teaching assistants to provide them with the opportunity to make a lantern in the first session and work in small groups to make the initial structure for a puppet in the second. Paul Batten also spent time with particular year groups going over their element of the project and teaching any skills needed e.g. year 3 asked for demonstration and guidance in preparation for making masks. This was included to help the teachers understand what would be expected of the children but also to teach them a new skill that they would be able to make use of later in their careers. This time meant that many teachers could reflect in their planning and intentions for the project and could prepare much more successfully for their time spent with the artist.



Staff at school also spent time with a dance teacher to introduce some simple Latin American dance steps suitable for primary school age children. This skill was then incorporated into a dance routine for the children to join in with in our daily 'Kickstart' early morning sessions and also became the basis for a samba step used throughout the procession.

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During initial meetings, our creative partner, Paul Batten spoke cautiously about taking on such an adventurous project. His main concerns being the age of the children and their ability to complete the tasks given, the time-scale we had to complete the project and our desire to work with so many children and produce so much on a tight budget.

On completion of the project Paul could see that our children are developing the skills to work collaboratively and successfully together. In his daily logs Paul commented on the children's drive and motivation saying:

“All the children manage to grasp the basics and more importantly they all seemed enthusiastic and focused on what they were doing.” (Year 5 group making lanterns) and also when working with the younger children he commented that **“the children filled in (the banner design) using special**

canvas paint. They showed a good focus on the work and enjoyed what they were doing.” (Year 2)

Paul also commented on the usefulness of having staff INSET's before the project began with the children to share the skills and let them experience first-hand what would be expected from the children. This proved invaluable when a session with lanterns ran longer than initially planned and Paul had to leave to go and work with another group. Paul said **“The inset workshops I did with the teachers’ means they have the skills to carry this through.”**

One of Paul's final comments on the project with us was meriting the use of the procession as a climax to the project. He said:

“It was good to see all the children with all the work they have generated during the project.”

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This project has benefited all our members as well as the children of the school. Our Deputy, Lynsey Johns, highlighted that ‘the project has been a very good CPD tool for the middle managers involved – insight into budget and liaising with people outside the teaching profession, forward planning, introducing CPD to other staff.’

From this experience we have recognised the creative benefit to the children's learning and next year we hope to carry out a similar project using what we have learnt and further embedding the creative approach to learning. We wish to extend the time from 2 weeks to potentially a 6 week project making more useful and productive time with the creative partner to involve the children in all aspects of their learning.

The status of the school has also been affected as we have gained a reputation as a school that works in a creative way providing excellent learning opportunities for our children through the creative arts. We even received a visit from the Mayor and his wife to see what we had achieved.



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If we were to approach this kind of project in the future we would:

- Hold the project over a longer period and it has already been suggested when we for next year's continent project that it will be held over a half term to give staff and children more time to get really involved.
- We would endeavour to get the children even more involved in the planning of the next project. A potential idea of a 'young enterprise' experience where the children are given a section of budget to manage and the group showing the most cost effective usage could be used as part of the actual expenditure



What we found difficult/problematic

- Finding an area that could be used over a long period as there were timetabling issues with the hall space e.g. assemblies, PE, etc.
- Ensuring children have the correct clothing for creative work as some of the materials used e.g. copydex glue does not come out of clothing.

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How can we use creativity to help students become more involved in their own learning?

The children used the creative arts to explore South American culture and geography.

For example the Year ones researched the thriving arts and crafts trade through the region and made examples of woven products. From this experience the children could empathise with the time and effort that goes into making these items that are sold for very little.

By being able to choose from two applicants the year 6 council members were able to influence the process of learning that was to be embarked on. By working along side Paul the children took a mature role in developing their learning process.



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The children are eager to be included in the planning processes across the curriculum often making suggestions in maths lessons etc. Teachers have gained practical skills from the creative partner and are eager to continue with these in daily lessons.

Our Head of Governors, Patricia Leon, has acknowledged this partnership between teachers and children and said **‘both staff and pupils have been able to work in teams: strengthening a sense of belonging to a creative community which appreciates all contributions.’**

