



# the art of looking sideways

the role of a  
Creative Agent  
in supporting  
school  
improvement



# → The Art of Looking Sideways: Developing Creative Agents

A report from the research conducted by Black Country Creative Partnerships for The National College for School Leadership and Creative Partnerships National Office



Black Country Children's Services  
Improvement Partnership

hmmm  
Creative Partnerships



*exciting minds*

NCSL National College for School Leadership

## The purpose of this report is to outline the thinking that has emerged into:

- ➔ Defining:
  - What a creative agent is
  - What they do
  - How they do it
- ➔ The skills set that a person needs to develop in order to deliver effectively the role of creative agent
- ➔ A suggested process for developing these skills
- ➔ A pilot Creative Partnerships model to develop Creative Agents

These recommendations have emerged following a research process between young people, school leaders, creative agents and staff from Creative Partnerships National Office and Black Country Creative Partnerships. Additional material has been developed in conjunction with colleagues from Creative Partnerships East Lancashire and London Challenge.

The research has been supported by the National College of School Leadership and Creative Partnerships National Office.

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# → 1 — Executive Summary



## A — Background to this research

The report was written following consultation with young people, school leaders, Creative Agents and staff from Creative Partnerships National Office and Black Country Creative Partnerships. The report defines what a Creative Agent is, the role that they undertake and the skills that are necessary for this role.

## B — Creative Learning

### **Creativity defined**

Creativity can be defined as, 'Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value' (*All our futures: creativity, culture and education, NACCCE, 1999*).

### **The need for creativity**

Today's world faces unprecedented challenges – economic, technological, social and personal. Creativity is a necessity if people are to be prepared for their professional and personal lives.

### **The need for creativity in schools**

Creative young people live richer lives and will ultimately contribute more to society. Schools should develop the creative capacity of their pupils in order to equip young people to cope in today's world of complexity and change.

### **What is creative learning?**

Creative Partnerships expresses creative learning as the process of the opportunity to question, connect, imagine and reflect. Creative learning has enquiry and research at the heart of the experience.

### **Creative learning and schools**

Creative schools model the practice of creative learning. There is a difference between teaching creatively, where the teacher is being creative and teaching for creativity, where the teacher fosters the child's creativity. Teaching creatively makes learning interesting and engaging. Teaching for creativity fosters creative thinking and behaviour in children and young people. Creative Partnerships supports creative learning by establishing partnerships between schools and external creative partners.

## C — The Role of the Creative Agent

The role of the Creative Agent is to work with the school leadership team in order to support the development of creative learning and to contribute to school improvement. This is done by establishing a creative learning vision for the school that is closely linked to the school development plan. The Creative Agent fosters an enquiry based approach and supporting partnerships.

The role involves four phases (not necessarily sequential as they often happen simultaneously).

### **Diagnostic**

Analysing where a school is and how a Creative Partnerships might support development.

### **Planning and Brokering**

Establishing a focus question, enquiry framework and action plan.

### **Change Management**

Supporting the school and creative practitioners in introducing and implementing change.

### **Evaluation and Sustainability**

Encouraging reflective practice and embedding learning and change.

The Creative Agent must balance a school's operational function of results and targets with an innovative approach that can support school improvement. Through supporting the development of creative learning with school leadership teams, the Creative Agent can contribute to butterfly effects. (A definition of the Butterfly Effect is 'the effect of a very small change in the initial conditions of a system which makes a significant difference to the outcome.')

These can vary in terms of breadth, intensity and sustainability of impact: from the momentary experience that a child will remember for ever to the profound alteration in school ethos. What is important to remember in delivering the role of a Creative Agent is to be constantly looking to create the conditions for the butterfly effect.

This is the art of looking sideways.

## **D — The Competencies required of a person to undertake the role of Creative Agent**

A Creative Agent requires a range of competencies that are demonstrated by:

- ➔ Knowledge and understanding
- ➔ Skills and abilities
- ➔ Behaviours, attitudes and values

The Competency Framework details what a Creative Agent needs to demonstrate and how this is done.

### **The 17 competencies included are:**

1. Understanding of Creative Partnerships
2. Development and management of effective relationships with schools
3. Understanding the relationships between the Creative Practitioner's own creative practice and the creativity of others.
4. Encouragement and development of reflective practice
5. Ability to project plan
6. The delivery of face-to-face activities
7. Promotion of children and young people as co-participants at the core of everything Creative Partnerships does
8. Development of the school as a supportive context for creative learning
9. Development of creative & collaborative pedagogy with school staff as a basis for enquiry-based learning
10. Understanding of evaluation
11. Knowledge of the social contexts in which Creative Partnerships operates
12. Knowledge of the cultural contexts in which Creative Partnerships operates
13. Knowledge of the educational contexts in which Creative Partnerships operates
14. Understanding of Creative Learning and its place within contemporary educational theory
15. Development and delivery of creative learning programmes in schools
16. Celebration of achievement
17. Advocacy skills

## E — Continuing Professional Development Programme for Creative Agents

The report outlines a Professional Learning programme for potential Creative Agents, which is linked to the Competency Framework.

### **The model is split into three phases:**

1. Maximum 7 day training programme that addresses the knowledge, skills and mindset / behaviour competencies that is delivered to a group of 20 learners by 2 mentors. This is delivered through a mix of seminars which include practice based learning, 1:2:1's and shadowing lead Creative Agents.

More established practitioners can negotiate a shorter learning pathway if they can evidence that they have already acquired a number of the competencies. Investigations are currently underway to develop this Professional Learning into an accredited programme, probably at Level 3. This demands that a portfolio of evidence is created by participants.

At the end of this Professional Learning programme the mentors make a recommendation to regional office, following discussion with each learner, as to whether they progress to the Apprentice phase.

2. Learners become Apprentice Creative Agents. They deliver the role of Creative Agent with change agenda schools / associate or project schools.

They are shadowed by an established Creative Agent at a meeting with the School Leadership Team and Creative Practitioner in order to provide advice and guidance. This is followed up by a review meeting between the Apprentice and lead Creative Agent, who will then make a recommendation as to whether the Apprentice is ready to move to Phase 3.

3. New creative agents now operate independently in the role. There is an identified lead Creative Agent, who will lead three Reflective Practice Sessions over the course of the year with the new Creative Agents in order to identify issues and concerns and share learning and best practice. This lead Creative Agent is also there to provide on-going advice and guidance.

This model is being piloted in the Black Country and in Birmingham.

## → 2 — Background: the role of Creative Agents in supporting school leadership and school improvement: Introduction by Jan Roman

Black Country Creative Partnerships (BCCP) has over five years experience of working with schools and creative partners to raise aspirations and standards of achievement. We have done this by making sure that children are engaged and switched onto learning which is innovative, exciting, challenging and relevant. A key driver of the programme has been the role of our creative agents. They work with the school as an objective agent of change offering advice, challenge, brokering and promoting alternative ways of thinking in order to support an enquiry based approach to addressing school priorities. The role has worked so well that it is now being implemented as a key element of the next phase of the national Creative Partnerships programme.

### The purpose of this research programme was to enable us to articulate:

- Just why the role works as a significant tool for school leaders in driving through the improvement process
- Those skills and aspects which the role brings which have made it so effective
- The replicability / transferability of the role within the wider school improvement context
- A development framework to enable other creative professionals to take on the role

A key aim of the national Creative Partnerships programme is to enable Head Teachers to realise their personal vision for a school, freeing them up to innovate and succeed. BCCP works hard to support leaders at all levels in creating schools where both pupils and staff are continually learning. In our research therefore we were eager to explore how the role of creative agent directly impacted on school leadership and leadership behaviours.

What sort of behaviours were we looking to foster?

### The Qualifications and Curriculum Agency sets out a range of behaviours associated with creativity:

- Questioning and challenging
- Making connections and seeing relationships
- Envisaging what might be
- Exploring ideas / keeping options open
- Reflecting critically on ideas and outcomes

BCCP would argue that these are essential elements of an effective school leader. The BCCP programme has actively placed ownership of the programme with the school, aligning an enquiry based approach to problem solving around school generated priorities. Working with external agents and partners and fostering change from within has resulted in a surge of energy throughout our schools. Where our programmes have had most impact and have become truly embedded in school ethos and strategy the Head Teacher has been a vital driver.

### The key attributes of those head teachers have mirrored those identified by QCA. Leaders have:

- Been flexible and made the most of unexpected learning opportunities
- Exploited opportunities to learn from external expertise and an external perspective
- Encouraged and trusted staff to take risks
- Seen the “bigger picture”

So how have our creative agents supported and nurtured these qualities and what best describes their role in relation to supporting school leaders?



## This could be summarised as follows:

- They champion the value of creative teaching and learning: seeing it not as an alternative to raising standards but as an essential tool
- They provide a shared language and understanding on which to base school discussion around creative thinking and learning
- They share tangible changes and give people the confidence to think outside the box
- They provide the “permission” for creative approaches in a high accountability, risk-averse profession
- They model genuine collaborative enquiry as an effective tool for positive change
- They act as a “constructive irritant” questioning the purpose of decisions and focus questions
- They value the unexpected and see “mistakes” as stages in learning
- They emphasise the process not just the outcome
- They continually practice the art of looking sideways

The Creative Partnerships programme has had a tangible impact on the aspirations and achievement of Black Country children and young people and we have recognised its potential and capacity as a key driver in raising standards and contributing to the wider regeneration of disadvantaged urban areas.

The Black Country has some significant issues to address if we are to have a place in the future economy. We are losing population, we have a £3.2 million output gap, and we have a significant shortage of skilled workers. The thirty year vision for the sub – region provides a cohesive approach to regeneration across all aspects of work and life. A key element of the proposed strategy is the transformation of education and skills. This will commence with a £28.5 million DCSF funded programme “The Black Country Challenge” which will involve schools and local authorities working in partnership with other key stakeholders to raise standards of achievement and aspiration. We believe that creative agents could play a significant role in the programme.

The research has been supported by the National College of School Leadership and Creative Partnerships National Office. It involved a Creative Agents working with school leaders from the Black Country on a two day residential at NCSL, facilitated by Mathilda Joubert and Leslie Hampson. This residential was also visited by David Woods, Lead Advisor to London Challenge.

With the material that emerged from that residential and through on-going dialogue with colleagues in the Black Country, Creative Partnerships National Office and Creative Partnerships East Lancashire, Noel Dunne and Alison Haynes have produced this report and an accompanying presentation and professional learning programme.

I am delighted that David Woods has provided a forward which locates the work of Creative Agents in the wider perspective of the value that external partners can bring to schools and the role and value of such partnerships. Creative Agents have shown that the function they provide to school leaders is a valuable addition to the range of external partnerships that are available to support schools and David’s forward clearly locates this.

We believe that the findings of this research will help us in our future planning and decision making as we move forward with our plans to work with schools to find creative solutions to the challenges we all face.

### Jan Roman

Director of Black Country Children Services Improvement Partnership  
October 2007

## → 3 — The Power of External Agents: Foreword by David Woods

Schools work with a range of external agents including local authority advisers and consultant leaders, school improvement partners, and in some cases Creative Agents and City Challenge Advisers. This Report identifies the key phases through which a Creative Agent supports a school. Although presented sequentially they often happen simultaneously. This model has been adapted slightly to fit the work of all external agents.

- Diagnostic
- Planning for Success
- Brokering and Commissioning
- Change Management
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Sustainability

Although this model fits the work of all external agents, the emphasis will shift depending upon the desired outcomes, such as, in the case of this report, the need for more creativity in schools, particularly in teaching and learning and in building a culture of continuous learning and sustainable change. Hopefully, common to the work of all external agents will be the dominance of ‘appreciative enquiry’ rather than simply ‘problem solving’, indeed business theory would suggest that three parts appreciative enquiry to one part problem solving is needed.

## Appreciative Enquiry

1. Identify what is good in what is not
2. Ask how it would be possible to have more or extend it further
3. Promote a dialogue and search for other practice inside and outside the school
4. Support action to follow up (ask why not?)

## Problem Solving

1. Identify a felt need or problem
2. Analyse causes
3. Brainstorm possible solutions
4. Decide on a plan of action

One of the features of successful external agents is being able to ask the right questions in the right manner at the right time. Every school needs 'critical friends' but the school needs to know that the 'critical friend' has an empathy with and understanding of its task, their challenges, their successes and setbacks. If 'the critical friend' then has insight, good powers of observation and deduction, the right questions can be asked that enable the school to learn and move on. There is often a fine line between expert critical friendship and being an 'unloving critic', asking too few questions and making too many judgements, and perhaps even worse being an 'uncritical lover' making no judgements and simply echoing in an unfocused way the view that the school has of itself.

If we now examine the model of outlined in the report in detail we can draw out differences of approach with other external advisers.

## → Diagnostic

Put at its simplest, this model is helping to analyse where a school is, whether this is in general terms of school effectiveness or readiness to engage with a particular project. All schools now complete and keep under review a Self Evaluation Form which gives a good start to this process. However, whether from a Creative Agent, School Improvement Partner or a City Challenge Adviser, the notion of challenge as part of support comes in play.

This report stresses the role of the Creative Agent within a Creative Partnerships process in acting as a 'constructive irritant', questioning the purpose of decisions and focusing questions on the value of creative teaching and learning.

The City Challenge Adviser offers another perspective in critiquing the school's analysis with reference to attainment and achievement and overall effectiveness. It may be that there is a ready agreement on the school's strengths and areas for improvement particularly as some of this analysis is based upon comparative data, but in terms of building an achievement culture, leadership for learning and the capacity for change management, there may be much less certainty. Through a judicious mixture of appreciative enquiry, problem solving and challenge the external agent should stimulate the debate with schools and help them feel secure in their analysis.

## → Planning for Success

Schools have a considerable range of plans as part of their overall School Development Plan or School Improvement Plan and are used to inquiry frameworks and action plans with milestones and success criteria. Nevertheless an external agent can often help both simplify and energise this process through asking the right questions and bringing other practice into the equation. The Challenge Adviser, for example, often works through a 'raising achievement plan' framework, which simplifies considerably the planning and accountability framework but of course all planning must ultimately relate back to a single development or improvement plan.

## → Brokering and Commissioning

For the local authority adviser, School Improvement Partner or City Challenge Adviser this is an essential element of the work of an external agent. Although the school itself will work hard to generate the capacity to improve through continuous professional development and leadership development, it will often be the case, especially where schools are in difficulties, which the external agent can best help through brokering and commissioning specific forms of support as well as through their own support and challenge. In the case of the City Challenge Adviser, for example, depending upon the initial analysis, and drawing upon Challenge funding, they are able to broker additional leadership capacity, support for teaching and learning, pupil tracking and support programmes as well as commissioning expert support to meet highly specific needs. Sometimes the best external support is simply to connect schools to good practice elsewhere whether through published case studies, 'Butterfly' collections, families of school benchmarking data, or through brokering direct contacts to look at particular aspects of the curriculum and learning or whole school practice.

## → Change Management

This is everybody's business from the classroom teacher and support staff to the leadership team, and connects strongly to diagnosis, planning, and monitoring and evaluation. The Creative Agent is clearly at the heart of this process in terms of supporting practitioners to be more creative in implementing changes in teaching and learning, emphasising the process not just the outcome and continually practicing the art of 'looking sideways'. The School Improvement Partner and Challenge Adviser are concerned largely with whole school change and improvement on a broader scale. Although change management is best done as an internal process within the school working through teams, it may be that some change will be external in the sense of strengthening leadership capacity through consultant leaders, for example, or through new personnel or a review of the school's organisational and management capacity.

## → Monitoring and Evaluation

All external advisers have an implicit or explicit monitoring function, working with the school to measure the success of particular plans or interventions. If the planning is thorough there will be milestones to check against established success criteria and alignments made accordingly. In some cases such as the monitoring of attainment data it will be obvious whether the school is successful or not, in other cases such as the monitoring of teaching and learning it will be a more subtle process in terms of evaluation. Everybody, whether internal or external to the school, needs to reflect on the journey of school improvement so that we can learn the lessons from failure and celebrate the successes. The School Evaluation Form, constantly up-dated, provides a common set of criteria for this process..

## → Sustainability

The test for all external agents and forms of external support is the embedding of change processes and enhanced capacity into the school so that the school can improve by itself, although still remaining intellectually curious about good practice elsewhere and alive to the possibilities that external consultancy can offer. In this Report, this would be the successful extension of the creative learning approach across the curriculum and into other aspects of the school's life. For the City Challenge adviser it would be the recognition that the school is capable of continuous improvement outside the challenge programme, such as those we refer to in London as 'alumni schools', indeed not only can they sustain their own improvement but they can help others do the same.

Some characteristics of sustainability to promote continuous school improvement would be:

- Effective leadership and change capacity
- Leading learning / creative learning / innovation
- Personalising teaching and learning
- Enhancing pupil well-being
- Raising standards of achievement
- Reflecting critically on ideas and outcomes.

Good schools will have leadership that drives all of these within an explicit culture and ethos, emphasising clear values, beliefs and purposes that are shared and developed with all staff, pupils and parents and the wider community. This will manifest itself in customs, rituals, symbols, stories and language as 'the way we do things round here'. Thus pupil's learning, achievements or discipline are emphasised constantly in assemblies or other collective occasions, always framed by high expectations. In terms of professional relationships there is a culture of staff choosing to work together, to share creative ideas and practices, and a strong belief in continuous improvement. Good schools recognise that they are always in the business of strengthening their culture, ethos and achievements and that this means constant questioning and challenging, being open to new ideas and the advice and support of external agents.

**Dr David Woods**

Lead London Challenge Adviser  
October 2007

## → 4 — Creative Learning

In order to understand the definition of creative learning developed by Creative Partnerships, it is useful to contextualise the thinking about creativity and education that has emerged since the new millennium. The spring, from which so much debate and discussion about the role of creativity in learning has flowed at the start of the 21st Century, is the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) and their 1999 report, *“All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education”*.



## → A. What is Creativity?

Creativity is defined by the NACCCE report as...

*“Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value.”*

Many things come to mind when thinking of creativity, such as people being imaginative, inventive, taking risks and challenging convention. Consideration may be given to notions of originality and the value of what people produce. Many believe that someone can only be creative if they are artistic. The definition quoted above has guided much current thinking in education. This report states that we are all, or can be, creative to a lesser or greater degree if we are given the opportunity.

Creativity is described as having four characteristics...

- it always involves thinking or behaving imaginatively
- the activity is purposeful; that is, it is directed to achieving an objective
- the process must generate something original ( at historic, relative or individual level)
- the outcome must be of value in relation to the objective

Creativity is not only about the arts: it is about thinking, problem solving, inventing and reinventing and flexing the imaginative muscles. This model of change can raise the aspirations of young people so they can find their own ways to succeed in the 21st century and enhance their individual sense of well-being and fulfillment.

Creativity is a process that maximizes learning, making connections across curriculum areas and between school and the wider world.

Creativity develops the capacity to imagine the world differently. In today's world of complexity and change we need to equip young people with the ability to thrive on change and engineer it for themselves. Young people require the tools to imagine, as well as the skills, confidence and motivation to make change happen. Pupils need to understand the reason to learn, to know how to seek out relevant information, apply knowledge in new ways and try out ideas in real world situations, where they can receive positive feedback.

## → B. The need for creativity

The NACCCE report states that...

*“education worldwide faces unprecedented challenges: economic, technological, social and personal. Policy makers stress the need to develop ‘human resources’ – in particular creativity, adaptability and better powers of communication.”*

Due to the ever changing developments in new technologies, many of the jobs that children in primary school will be doing in twenty years time have not yet been invented.

Charles Leadbeater in his report Arts organisations in the 21st Century: Ten challenges 2005, invites the reader to think of Britain in the year 1900 and compare it to now.

“Horizons and aspirations have expanded more in the past century than perhaps any other ... We can sit at a computer and arrange to travel further than the most intrepid explorer a century ago.”

The combined economic and technological changes are bringing about huge social changes. Take networks for example. They are now part and parcel of how we do things: msn, sms, mms, facebook, e-bay, and amazon: As Helen McCarthy et al points out in Network Logic: who governs in an interconnected world? (Demos, 2004) we take advantage of a whole host of new connections to “earn, learn, trade and travel”.

“In an era of dramatic shifts and rapid technological innovation, the issue is not how or even why change occurs but how we as individuals and, indeed, collectively as a society, choose to meet the challenges that are being daily thrown up by these literal transformations.” *David Puttman 2006*

In a world where change is the only constant, children and young people will need to be prepared socially, spiritually, emotionally as well as academically. “Schools must help them make sense of their lives by discovering their own strengths, passions and sensibilities.” (*All out Futures; NACCCE; 1999*)

As Gordon Brown, when then Chancellor of the Exchequer said... “We know how much stronger our economy and our society will be if we see released all the dynamism and creativity of all our people.” Which was followed up by him in a call in June 2007 to ensure “all schools are committed to high standards and are at the same time centres of creativity, innovation and enjoyment.”

## → C. The need for more creativity in schools

Creativity in learning is increasingly being recognised as a powerful contributor to the quality, performance and impact of schools across the country. It has a key set of characteristics and attitudes of mind that are at the heart of good learning and good teaching. Already crucially important for all of us, it will become essential for young people as they go through their lives in the 21st century.

A recent report by OFSTED on Creative Partnerships noted the positive attitudes shared by school leaders, teachers and creative partners involved in the initiative, and identified a link between creativity and outstanding teaching. It found evidence of a positive impact on pupils' personal and social development; on their ability to improvise, take risks and collaborate with others; and on their engagement with school and learning in general. (*Creative Partnerships: initiative and impact, Ofsted, 2006*)

The National Curriculum Handbook (pages 11-12) encourages schools to find ways of delivering the curriculum that 'enable pupils to think creatively and critically, to solve problems and to make a difference for the better', that offer pupils 'the opportunity to become creative, innovative, enterprising and capable of leadership to equip them for their future lives as workers and citizens' and which enables them 'to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change and adversity'.

With increasingly rapid change a constant factor in society, the workplace and the world, the capabilities that will equip young people to thrive – flexibility, vision, innovation, making connections and the application of knowledge in a range of different contexts – come together in creativity.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's research project *Creativity: find it, promote it* on the nature of creativity helps define creative learning.

### QCA identified the following three characteristics about the importance of creativity:

- creativity improves pupils' self-esteem, motivation and achievement
- creativity prepares pupils for life: an important aim of the National Curriculum and the Every Child Matters Agenda
- creativity enriches pupils' lives

### *Creativity: find it, promote it* outlined the following behaviours that can be identified and promoted through adopting more creative approaches to teaching and learning:

- questioning and challenging
- making connections and seeing relationships
- envisaging what might be
- exploring ideas, keeping options open
- reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

For further information see [www.ncaction.org.uk/creativity](http://www.ncaction.org.uk/creativity)

'Pupils who are creative will be prepared for a rapidly changing world, where they may have to adapt to several careers in a lifetime. Many employers want people who see connections, have bright ideas, are innovative, communicate and work well with others, and are able to solve problems. In other words, they need creative people. By promoting creativity, teachers can give all pupils the opportunity to discover and pursue their particular interests and talents. We are all, or can be, creative to some degree. Creative pupils lead richer lives, and in the longer term, make a valuable contribution to society'. (National Curriculum in Action, 2004)

It has been this work that has provided the thinking behind creative learning: what it is, why it is important, what it looks like and how to foster it.



## → D. What is Creative Learning?

*“Creative Learning develops our capacity for imaginative activity, leading to outcomes which are judged by appropriate observers to be original and of value.”*

*Spendlove, Wyse, Craft and Hallgarten et al, 2005*

Creative learning, in the context of Creative Partnerships work, is a particular type of learning experience that occurs when a collaborative relationship between young people, teachers and creative professionals is established. Whilst accepting that all creative practices have areas of overlap, creative learning, as defined by Creative Partnerships, does have certain characteristics that differentiate it from other forms of engagement. It is:

- It is long term and collaborative in nature;
- It demands a joint commitment and shared vision and a willingness to embrace open ended outcomes, challenge and risk;
- It offers an opportunity to look at the world in new ways, to value difference and to experience new things;
- It encourages creative, critical and reflective thinking;
- It produces excited, enthusiastic and enquiry-driven learners.

*From Building Creative Partnerships: A handbook for Schools; Creative Partnership; 2007*

What is different about creative learning programmes of work, as opposed to arts education programmes and artist in residency schemes, is that enquiry and research are at the heart of the experience. A creative approach is being developed to explore a question. Whilst an outcome may well be clearly articulated, it is the question, not the outcome that drives the programme. This key question is developed with the whole school community: school leaders, teachers and pupils. External partners, from a broad range of professional expertise, are invited to work with the school to begin a process of imaginative enquiry together, as equals, willing to collaborate explore and learn together.

Therefore the partnerships that are developed are sustained over a period of time. They are exploratory and intended to help school leaders, teachers and pupils explore questions rather than achieve pre-defined outputs or products. These questions drive the programme and enable school leaders, teachers teaching and pupils to develop their creative behaviours. Creative Learning is an opportunity to think about the wider culture of learning in a school and how creativity can contribute to school improvement.

This is expressed through these four key words that express Creative Partnerships' values:

### Question

We challenge, and relish being challenged, experimenting to find unexpected solutions

### Connect

We encourage a brave approach to collaboration, and are relentlessly partnership-spirited

### Imagine

We believe that the development of the individual imagination is a fundamental human right

### Reflect

We invest energy to ensure that learning never stops so that creative experiences result in change which has lasting sustainable impact

## → E. Creative Learning and Schools

Creative schools are like creative learners – modeling the creative process, they are questioning, reflective, tolerant of ambiguity and celebrate difference.

This means that there has to be a difference between teaching creatively (teacher creativity) and teaching for creativity (child creativity). 'By teaching creatively we mean teachers using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting, exciting and effective. Teachers can be highly creative in developing materials and approaches that fire children's interest and motivate their learning. This is a necessary part of good teaching. By teaching for creativity we mean forms of teaching that are intended to develop young people's own creative thinking and behaviour.' (*All our Futures*, NACCCE, 1999.)

As NACCCE suggests, teaching for creativity is a demanding process that involves encouraging learners, identifying creative abilities and fostering these talents. It aims for autonomous learners who feel ownership and control over the ideas that are being offered; authenticity in initiation and responses, deciding for oneself on the basis of one's judgement; openness to new and unusual ideas and methods; respect for each other and for the ideas that emerge and fulfilment in terms of involvement and enjoyment of the creative relationship.

Working with external creative partners can support teachers in addressing these challenges. Combining the creative teaching skills of school staff with the perspective and experiences of external creative partners can activate the intellect, emotions and imagination and engage young learners in their development. Creative partnership working can transform schools: it can enable school leaders to realize their vision for their schools and in so doing develop a culture of continuous learning and sustainable change.

Creative Partnerships supports the development of creative learning through brokering partnerships between schools and external creative partners who facilitate the process of creative learning through demonstrating these behaviours:

- The distinctive behaviours that creative partners bring to the collaborative partnership
- A belief that creative learning is the most effective way to learn
- The predisposition to seek out collaboration and engage dynamically in partnerships
- An approach to working with children and young people as equal partners in an exploratory process
- The habit of looking at things in unconventional ways from unusual perspectives
- The status of being an outsider – someone fresh to the school
- The skill of making connections with the creative and cultural sector – building creative networks
- The predisposition to challenge convention
- The habit of thinking divergently
- A heightened imagination and sense of possibilities
- The confidence and desire to express oneself and communicate creatively and imaginatively
- High level creative expertise which is impressive and inspirational

Developed by Creative Partnerships East Lancashire

## → 5 — The Role of the Creative Agent



## The role of the Creative Agent is to support the development of creative learning in schools through:

- Articulating and sharing the vision of creative learning between all the partners
- Developing an enquiry based approach to Creative Partnerships work, with clear links to the school development plan
- Brokering and supporting the partnerships between schools and creative practitioners to enable creative learning projects to take place

\* An enquiry based approach is 'the process of asking about or investigating something in order to find out more about it' according to the Collins English Language Dictionary.

## The role of the Creative Agent delivers this through:

- Working in partnership with a school leadership team to identify a clear focus area of work or research question that has relevance and importance to the school
- Exploring creative, realistic and tailor made approaches to exploring that focus question in order to produce an enquiry framework, unique and specific to that school
- Brokering partnerships with creative practitioners who can work with the school to turn this enquiry framework into an action plan for a creative learning programme of work
- Linking the school with other ideas, approaches, experiences and organisations that may support this work
- Ensuring that the project is kept focused on the key question and supporting the school in evaluation and reflection
- Supporting the school to identify and embed the learning that has emerged into their planning in order to sustain the development of creative learning across relevant aspects of the school

There are four key phases that a Creative Agent supports a school through on a Creative Partnerships process. Although presented sequentially, they are often happening simultaneously:

### → Diagnostic

Analysing where a school is at and how a Creative Partnerships process might be most effectively introduced and owned by a school. For Creative Partnerships to be most effective, it has to be done with, and not to, a school

### → Planning and Brokering

Establishing a focus question, enquiry framework and action plan, with appropriate creative practitioners, to deliver a creative learning programme of work

### → Change Management

Supporting the school and creative practitioners to introduce and implement changes, planned and incidental, that emerge through a Creative Partnerships programme

### → Evaluation and Sustainability

Ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are involved in reflecting on the learning that has emerged from the Creative Partnerships process. Exploring with the school how the relevant learning that has emerged can be embedded into school planning and to support the school in thinking how it might extend a creative learning approach into other aspects of school life

Through supporting the development of creative learning, the Creative Agent is contributing to wider school improvement agendas. However, the nature of the enquiry, impact and sustainability of a creative learning programme is entirely dependent on the starting point of the school in terms of their...

- Understanding of creative learning and Creative Partnerships
- Commitment of the school leadership team to a Creative Partnerships process
- Openness of the school to taking risk and new ideas
- Organisational capacity for adopting a more creative learning approach into the school's thinking, planning and delivery of its teaching and learning

A key function of the Creative Agent is to establish where a school might be on these spectrums at any point during their collaboration with Creative Partnerships..

To effectively undertake the role, the Creative Agent has to be absolutely committed to genuine partnership and collaboration and know what that looks like. They need to be able to broker partnerships in which collaborative planning, delivery and reflection are realised.

Genuine ownership needs to be felt by all stakeholders: pupils, teachers, school leaders and external partners and all are committed to a process of learning together. This can mean that the Creative Agent needs to be able to navigate effectively between what can appear to be this apparent contradiction at the heart of the creative learning process.

The predominant paradigm within which schools have to operate is output driven: teachers have to 'plan and do' to achieve results. Creative Learning is enquiry driven, where an open ended process and reflection are critical. These two paradigms could be seen to be in conflict with one another. It is the role of the Creative Agent to ensure they are not. It is the role of the Creative Agent to support a school in its delivery of its targets whilst taking risks and experimenting with a creative learning programme.

The Creative Agent should not see this contradiction as 'either / or' but as 'and / both'.

In essence the Creative Agent is working with the School Leadership Team (SLT) to form the body of a butterfly. One wing is the operational functions that a school must deliver: attendance and attainment targets; effective delivery of National Curriculum requirements and so on. The other wing is the innovative functions any organisation will need in order to adapt and change to the world around it. The two wings must be equally balanced, inform one another and work together if the butterfly as whole is to move forward towards school improvement. That process is done through the butterfly's body: the school leadership team, supported by the Creative Agent.\*

And butterflies can be known to have a significant effect.

"In the spirit of seeking high leverage interventions (relatively low effort to formulate or implement, but yielding extremely beneficial outcomes in terms of learning and ethos) ... we believe that small interventions can have a disproportionate effect. We call them 'butterflies' after the chaos or complexity theorist's story that if sufficient butterflies were to beat their wings in the Amazonian forest they could trigger a hurricane thousands of miles away." Tim Brighouse and David Woods; Butterflies for School Improvement; London Challenge; 2005

A definition of the Butterfly Effect is...

*'the effect of a very small change in the initial conditions of a system which makes a significant difference to the outcome.'*

Through supporting the development of creative learning with School Leadership Teams, the Creative Agent, can contribute to butterfly effects. These can vary in terms of breadth, intensity and sustainability of impact: from the momentary experience that a child will remember for ever to the profound realisation that teaching staff have been underestimating the abilities of their children. What is important to remember in delivering the role of a Creative Agent is to be constantly looking to create the conditions for the butterfly effect.

This is the art of looking sideways.

\* This metaphor has been developed from Synectics 'Cycling Worlds' of Operation and Innovation

## ➔ 6 — The Competencies required of a person to undertake the role of the Creative Agent

These competencies emerged from the dialogue at the National College for School Leadership. As indicated in the previous section, it was thought that the competencies fell into a cycle of four basic areas of Creative Agent practice:

- ➔ Diagnostic
- ➔ Planning / Brokering
- ➔ Change Management
- ➔ Evaluation and Sustainability



However, when mapping the necessary competencies, it became evident that nearly all of the competencies are required during nearly all of the four stages and it was therefore a fairly redundant task to specify which competencies were required for which stage.

The competency framework that was developed at Black Country Creative Partnerships was then further refined by colleagues at Creative Partnerships East Lancashire. It is this competency framework that is presented here. The Creative Agent Competencies are part of a wider competency framework that Creative Partnerships East Lancashire have developed that start to define the creative practitioner competence required to work in educational settings: the Trainee, Established and Lead Practitioners and the Creative Agent. The following has been developed by Chris May and Ornette Clennon of Creative Partnerships East Lancashire.

It is anticipated that the competencies required of a Creative Agent will be demonstrated through creative practitioners building a Personal Creative Learning Portfolio. This will enable a variety of forms of evidence that demonstrate competence in relation to a number of areas of practice or themes. Evidence can take the form of journals, reports of projects, DVDs, audio recordings, photographs of indeed anything that an assessor could use to assess practitioner competence.

### Competency is demonstrated in three main areas:

- Knowledge and understanding: a sound theoretical base underpinning practice
- Skills and abilities: the ability to carry out key processes
- Behaviours, attitudes and values: essential qualities that underpin all our work

### It is anticipated that practitioner learning will be defined in a number of ways including:

- The accreditation of prior learning: many practitioners will be readily able to demonstrate competence as a result of previous training as a teacher, youth worker, community artist or similar professional
- Attendance at courses provided by Creative Partnerships and by others
- Personal study: through reading books, journals and using the Internet
- Action research: a key element of 'on the job' learning undertaken during projects
- Mentored activity: structured learning supported by an experienced mentor, whether within a Creative Partnerships system or otherwise

It is anticipated that some practitioners may wish to spend one or more years completing their portfolio. For more experienced practitioners the portfolio could be completed in months, taking prior learning into consideration. It is expected that the Creative Practitioner Competency Framework (of which the Creative Agent Competencies are a part), will act as an important mechanism within quality assurance strategies that when used diagnostically, will enable the planning of appropriate training and learning.

### Effective Professional Learning occurs, according to the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Coordinating centre (EPPI) when “the following characteristics [which] produce 'positive outcomes' [are in place]:

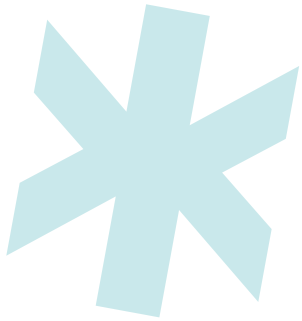
- Use of specialist expertise linked to school based activity
- Peer support or coaching, including observation, to provide a safe environment for experimentation
- Scope for participants to identify their own Professional Learning focus and starting points
- Processes to encourage, extend and structure professional dialogue, reflection and change
- Processes for sustaining Professional Learning over time

*(GTC, 2005, response to the EPPI centre)*

This supports the idea that the model of multi-layered mentoring and support can most effectively support practitioners in developing the following Creative Agent competencies to become a Creative Agent.

The following competency framework is currently a work in progress and will be subject to further revisions. It has been developed from the Creative Partnerships East Lancashire model. Due to the depth of that competency framework, not all the competencies are addressed through The Art of Looking Sideways Professional Learning programme. Where the competency is addressed by the programme, this is indicated by The Art of Looking Sideways. In addition, the last section sets out how this competency is demonstrated when working as a Creative Agent for Black Country Creative Partnerships. This can then be adapted to the particular local circumstances of each area

# → The Creative Agent Competency Framework



the art of looking sideways



# → Competency 1 — Understanding of Creative Partnership

## Knowledge & Understanding

- Has knowledge of the background to and establishment of Creative Partnerships and its evolution to the organisation it is today
- Understands the organisational structures and systems that operate for practitioners locally, regionally and nationally, e.g. recruitment, reporting mechanisms, finance

## Skills and abilities

- Is confidently able to communicate the principles of Creative Partnerships practice to a range of audiences in ways that are appropriate and persuasive

## Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Consistently convinces others with the power of own belief in the principles of Creative Partnerships practice and the power of creative approaches to teaching and learning

## Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Reports back, through both written and verbal presentations, on their assessment of a schools understanding of the principles of Creative Partnerships practice

## → Competency 2 — Development and management of effective relationships with schools

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Understands the complexity of relationship management with a broad range of partners involved in the creative learning agenda and the importance of good working relationships as a basis for growth and change
- Has a high degree of understanding of the importance of high standards of professional conduct for self and staff teams and extensive knowledge of the mechanisms to achieve this
- Understands the complexity of schools' organisational structures and the structural challenges facing schools

### Skills and abilities

- Is able to analyse and respond to key factors such as leadership and authority, the readiness to embrace risk and change and schools' resistance to change
- Is able to challenge and stretch the school while demonstrating strong communication, thinking, interpersonal and organisational skills
- Is able to act decisively, making use of a broad perspective and available data when weighing up options
- Is able to balance short-term decision making with the longer term strategic objectives of the programme
- Manages complex networks of relationships within schools, helping others to develop potential connections and collaborations
- Is skilled in generating the school's ownership of change processes and the development of an environment that supports creative learning in the long term

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Is a highly credible presence within the school and is perceived to act in a professionally competent way

- Models high standards of professionalism at all times whilst demonstrating a consistently strong set of interpersonal skills
- Behaves in ways that consistently enable the development of positive relationships throughout the programme
- Works in an empowering manner, assisting the development of the skills of a broad range of partners and colleagues through a combination of guidance and support and encouraging a positive and valuing culture throughout the programme
- Is self-managing, self-reliant and capable of taking the initiative in difficult situations.
- Demonstrates inspirational creative leadership

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Diagnoses a school's capacity for developing creative learning through assessing the ethos and culture set by the School Leadership Team, openness to ideas of the staff team and general organisational ability
- Uses the School Development Plan, Self Evaluation Form and Ofsted reports to help a school develop an appropriate focus for their enquiry
- Creates a key focus question that the School Leadership Team, teachers and pupils that they are in full ownership of and committed to exploring with external creative partners
- Assesses what might be an effective type of programme for a school to run at its particular stage of development and allowing for its particular circumstances
- Assesses the appropriate level of risk to introduce into the school a project that will stretch both thinking and practice and has a good chance of success
- Understands that this is a long term developmental process and plans accordingly for change with the School Leadership Team

This is evidenced through the partner school reporting in detail on the Creative Agent's communication skills, professional conduct, ability to develop positive relationships and act in an empowering manner and also evidenced through the partnership resulting in positive change.

## → Competency 3 — Understanding the relationships between the Creative Practitioners' own creative practice and the creativity of others

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Integrates in depth understanding of personal creative practice with broader knowledge of creativity theory
- Demonstrates sound analytical knowledge of others' creativity and the means to extend this

### Skills and abilities

- Is highly skilled and experienced in facilitating and enabling the development of creativity and creative practice in others
- Is skilled in the development of long-term programmes that combine excellence in the work of practitioners with powerful creative outcomes for participants and partners

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Acts as an inspirational role model of a 'creative leader' – creating contexts and conditions where creativity can flourish

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Brokers a range of creative learning programmes that are different from one's own creative practice or that of the organisation s/he works for and evidence this through journals, photo documentation, video to demonstrate they are doing this
- Has the ability to articulate one's own creative practice

## → Competency 4 — Encouragement and development of reflective practice

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Understands the use of reflective practice as the foundation of all learning
- Understands the crucial importance of reflective practice at all levels within the organisation and has extensive knowledge of the means of encouraging reflective practice

### Skills and abilities

- Is skilled at motivating reflection among a range of partners in a planned and systematic manner
- Is experienced in making use of a range of approaches to reflective practice

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Generates a non-judgemental atmosphere as a basis for encouraging reflective practice
- Values and rewards achievements, generating a positive climate for reflectiveness to flourish in an atmosphere of honesty and trust

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Creates time and mechanisms for school leaders, teaching staff and creative practitioners to reflect together and separately upon creative learning programmes
- Evidences those reflections in appropriate formats: reports, presentations, art works etc

## → Competency 5 — Ability to project plan

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Has in-depth knowledge of a range of approaches to project planning, working systematically to ensure focus is maintained
- Has detailed knowledge of the relevant legal aspects associated with project development including health and safety, insurance, risk assessment, child protection

### Skills and abilities

- Takes a long-term view of programme planning, balancing short term and longer-term objectives
- Is able to provide guidance about the appropriate level of project complexity to match the school's readiness for challenge
- Sets objectives through negotiation with a broad range of partners ensuring expectations are appropriately managed
- Ensures that an appropriate schedule for meetings is established in order that practitioners and teachers maximise collaborative working
- Makes best use of available resources creating added value through collaborative working
- Is highly skilled in managing multi-stranded complex project budgets, creating budget management systems where necessary

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Approaches programme development in such a way that a positive and professional approach to planning is demonstrated by everyone involved

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Creates a framework with a school that sets aims and outcomes but leaves enough freedom for creative practitioners
- Creates briefs for creative partners that set clear project boundaries but enable their creative partner to bring their own thinking and expertise to the process
- Supports the school in managing the project through providing templates (e.g. contracts); advice and guidance and regular project management review meetings. Project Management is the school's responsibility
- Collaboratively creating project plans which include...
  - Shared aims and objectives
  - Due reference to intended learning outcomes
  - Session plans indicating the use of resources, time and space
  - Plans for the involvement of a range of practitioners
  - An integrated evaluation plan
  - Plans for pupil progression
  - Budgetary detail and finance management plans
  - Plans for documentation
- Supports the school in budget management through providing templates and advice and guidance. Financial accountability is the school's responsibility

## → Competency 6 — The delivery of face-to-face activities

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Has expert knowledge of a broad range of activity options, grounded in more than five years of experience of project delivery

### Skills and abilities

- Is able to develop a creative vision across programmes for the use of a broad range of inspirational activities that meet the needs of the programme
- Is skilled in deploying and managing teams of practitioners across a range of projects.
- Is skilled in motivating others and generating feelings of positivity and excitement about creative learning

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Develops programmes in ways that maximise the active participation of a broad range of partners in a truly inclusive manner, inspiring others to do likewise

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Demonstrates evidence of managing teams of practitioners and programmes of activity that demonstrate high quality experiences within and across sessions

## → Competency 7 — Promotion of children and young people as co-participants at the core of everything Creative Partnerships does

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Has an informed understanding of pupils as co-participants in learning, pupil voice and child centred learning. Understands the need to develop programmes that are truly learner focussed

### Skills and abilities

- Is skilled in developing programmes which place children and young people at the core of the activity and which value their status as co-participants in learning

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Campaigns actively throughout the programme for the rights of children and young people to achieve their creative potential

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Supports the School Leadership Team in finding appropriate forms for young people to influence the design, development, delivery and reflection of creative learning programmes
- Supports young people in making decisions within creative learning programmes and demonstrate that the decisions of young people have been acted upon
- This will be reflected in journals and verified by teacher and young people comments to reflect how young people have been involved in the development of project proposals.

## → Competency 8 — Developing the school as a supportive context for creative learning

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Has a detailed understanding of 'next steps' planning in relation to the Creative School Development Framework self-assessment process
- Understands the complexity of schools' organisational structures and the structural challenges facing schools.
- Demonstrates in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complex nature of enabling change in school environments using creative approaches

### Skills and abilities

- Is skilled in developing programmes that take full account of the organisational challenges facing schools
- Is able to analyse and respond to key factors such as leadership and authority, the readiness to embrace risk and change and schools' resistance to change
- Acts as a highly skilled 'agent of change', capable of inspiring colleagues and partners to welcome and embrace change as part of an approach to continuous improvement

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Has a highly credible educational persona within the school while maintaining appropriate levels of challenge and commitment to change

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Evidence of supporting a school in the process of carrying out a Creative School Self Evaluation exercise, leading to the co-devising of a prioritised action plan for developing the school as a creative learning environment
- Making use of the School Improvement Plan, the SEF and Ofsted reports to help a school create an appropriate focus for development and enquiry

This competency is addressed in The Art of Looking Sideways through Competence 2: Developing and Managing Effective Relationships with Schools



## → Competency 9 — Developing creative & collaborative pedagogy with school staff as a basis for enquiry-based learning

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Has substantial knowledge of a broad range of methodologies used to develop creative and collaborative pedagogy within long-term creative learning change programmes

### Skills and abilities

- Encourages and enables in-depth dialogue between a broad range of programme partners about the structural, organisational and operational challenges associated with the development of embedded creative and collaborative pedagogy

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Acts in a manner that inspires others to actively collaborate with one another and enter into constructive dialogue about the nature of creative and collaborative pedagogy
- Demonstrates a high degree of conviction about the value of everyone's contributions

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Evidence of developing and enabling collaborative working practices between teachers and practitioners based on mutual trust and respect and leading to innovation in creative teaching and learning

## → Competency 10 — Evaluation

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Has broad knowledge of a range of approaches to evaluation and reflective practice gained from several years of working in educational settings
- Understands the importance of providing robust evaluation material which supports the long-term advocacy and development aims of the organisation

### Skills and abilities

- Is skilled at agreeing shared project and longer term objectives and associated measures of success with partners
- Is able to shift the focus of projects when necessary in order to maximise the use of resources and achieve objectives
- Confidently gathers evidence of impact and measures quality of process, reporting findings in a persuasive manner
- Is highly creative in generating positive approaches to evaluation while encouraging others to develop their own creative approaches
- Makes use of the learning arising from evaluation processes in order to plan future activities and embed effective creative learning practice

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Inspires others to engage actively in evaluation processes, demonstrating the benefits by behaving in ways that embody dynamic reflective practice

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Ensures that projects are evaluated using the BCCP adapted version of the national evaluation framework and that those evaluations are disseminated both internally and externally
- Defines criteria of success with the different partners and negotiates the use of appropriate indicators and methodologies to measure those criteria of success
- The evaluation of one year's programme actively informs the planning of a subsequent year and this can be demonstrated
- See how, through evaluation, working partnerships, relationships and approaches can be extended to more teaching staff both within and outside the school

## → Competency 11 — The social contexts in which Creative Partnerships operates

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Demonstrates extensive knowledge of the range of organisations and networks with whom Creative Partnerships works or could work and their significance in addressing social exclusion
- Has broad knowledge of policy and practice relevant to the social inclusion agenda

### Skills and abilities

- Is able to form effective collaborative partnership work with a broad range of partners and organisations across the social inclusion agenda

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Models inclusive behaviour at all times and exhibits an explicit commitment to social justice and inclusion

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Evidence of carrying out a simple demographic research study to be used as the foundation for programme development in a particular geographical area

## → Competency 12 — The cultural contexts in which Creative Partnerships operates

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Has detailed knowledge of policy and strategy affecting cultural development locally & regionally including the Arts Council, England and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Has broad knowledge of policy and practice relevant to the social inclusion agenda. This will include understanding the social context of any given school through researching the demographics of the area and the social factors which will impact on a child's experience of educational success

### Skills and abilities

- Is able to align programme development in a way that is informed by broader understanding of cultural contexts and the changing nature of those contexts
- Understands the role of the creative industries in the Creative Partnerships area's social and economic development, together with related employment and training progression routes

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Models a positive and proactive valuing of cultural diversity at all times and exhibits an explicit commitment to social justice and inclusion
- Demonstrates a varied interest in cultural practice and networks proactively with cultural professionals, constantly extending the strength of these networks

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Evidence of carrying out a simple research study to be used as the foundation for demonstration an interest in a variety of cultural activities and an ability to talk about those interests
- Network with a range of individuals and organisations within the Creative and Cultural sector across the West Midlands
- Can produce a mind map that outlines the broad creative and cultural, regeneration and social inclusion agendas that may need to be taken into account when developing a programme with a school

## → Competency 13 — The educational contexts in which Creative Partnerships operates

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Demonstrates knowledge of current education policy and initiatives impacting on the creative learning agenda and Creative Partnerships
- Demonstrates knowledge of local authority organisational structures and how they relate to schools in which Creative Partnerships operates
- Has an informed understanding of philosophies and models of education that relate strongly to Creative Partnerships practice, e.g. Reggio Emilia, Multiple Intelligence Theory, social constructivism, emotional literacy, learning styles theory, brain science
- Demonstrates broad awareness of particular area or regional educational priorities or initiatives

### Skills and abilities

- Is able to oversee programme development in a range of settings, making use of specialist areas of knowledge while responding sensitively to the particular needs of settings in detail
- Is able to work in a way that underpins project activity with sound educational theory

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Creates a highly affirmative atmosphere throughout programmes, based on a genuine valuing of the work of educational partners
- Believes in the transformative power of education and the ability of schools to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Discusses the role of Creative Partnerships in delivering the National Curriculum, links to current QCA thinking and Every Child Matters
- Links creative learning to other pedagogical initiatives such as Personalised Learning and Deep Learning
- Links creative learning to key strategic initiatives such as Black Country Challenge

## → Competency 14 — Creative Learning and its place within contemporary educational theory

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Understands DCFS position on creativity, QCA curriculum guidance related to creativity & Ofsted approaches to creativity
- Understands creative learning and what makes this approach different from arts education
- Has informed knowledge of contemporary thinkers and writers on creativity such as Craft, Gardner, Claxton, Robinson, CAPE

### Skills and abilities

- Is able to develop long term programmes of activity that are grounded in an informed understanding of contemporary creative learning theory
- Is able to express ideas and theories about creativity using accessible language

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Demonstrates commitment to continuous enquiry about creative teaching and learning grounded in sound research practice
- Believes passionately in the value of creative learning and its distinctive contribution to education
- Believes in the added value creative practitioners bring to education

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Enables both schools and creative partners to understand why they are participating in Creative Partnerships, this to be reflected in the project proposals
- Enables the school to articulate how creative learning is supporting their school improvement agendas and how a Creative Partnerships programme is impacting on the life of the school with due reference to some theories that underpin this work

## → Competency 15 — Developing and delivering creative learning programmes in schools

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Has in depth knowledge of creative learning programme development gained from several years experience of developing and delivering programmes in a variety of settings
- Can demonstrate an interest in management change issues

### Skills and abilities

- Devises with colleagues, a broad range of needs-based programmes of activity that are aligned with the individual or group learning needs or broader developmental issues in the school
- Is skilled in deploying and managing teams of practitioners across a range of projects
- Demonstrates high order analytical thinking as a basis for programme planning
- Works at a strategic level without becoming preoccupied with operational detail
- Generates school ownership of the programmes' enquiry and research focus

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Consistently models and encourages a range of attitudes and behaviours that enable a 'learning culture' to flourish across programmes that inspires others to do likewise

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Makes time to observe the activity of a school
- Asks the questions needed to gain understanding of a school's particular context
- Uses strategies and tools to develop an understanding of a school's individual characteristics, circumstances and priorities
- Uses information such as School Improvement Groups, Ofsted reports, School Improvement Plan and Self evaluation Form etc
- Develops an understanding of other school initiatives, priorities and links to the wider school communities
- Knows what type of process to use to identify the most appropriate creative partners to work with the school: open submission such as closed submission; direct approach
- Can broker relationships between the school and creative partners to ensure, whenever possible, that there are positive working relationships and mutual respect and understanding displayed amongst all the stakeholders

## → Competency 16 — Celebrating achievement

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Has an in depth understanding of the place and role of celebrating achievements within the broader programme
- Understands the psychological benefits arising from celebration and links this to programme planning

### Skills and abilities

- Is able to develop long-term programmes that take full account of the importance of working to purposeful outcomes and celebrating achievement
- Is skilled in developing shared ownership of this process among a range of partners

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Behaves at all time in ways that encourage celebration of all partners' contributions and achievements
- Works systematically across the programme to ensure this process is inclusive and fair

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- The creation of appropriate and effective formats for the celebration of achievement which are inclusive and engaging



## → Competency 17 — Advocacy

### Knowledge & Understanding

- Understands the importance of advocating for the wider use of creative learning methodologies with key partners of influence
- Knows how to use the celebration of achievement to develop wider campaign materials
- Demonstrates extensive knowledge of advocacy techniques and target audiences

### Skills and abilities

- Is skilled in the development of high quality and persuasive advocacy campaigns which maximise the active involvement of programme participants at all stages in the process
- Is skilled at advocating within networks, making full use of collaborative approaches to achieve strategic objectives

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

- Acts as a positive role model, inspiring teams to create powerful and persuasive advocacy materials

### Competence demonstrated when working with BCCP through:

- Uses “both / and” thinking rather than “either / or” thinking
- Actively seeks opportunities both within schools and the wider cultural and educational context to advocate for the value of creative learning and the principles of Creative Partnerships practice
- Can mind map future funding opportunities for creative learning programmes

## → In addition Black Country Creative Partnerships believes in the central importance of the following competencies:

### Attitudes, behaviours and values

We believe these competencies are essential to the ethos of operating in the role of Creative Agent. Whilst they can be reiterated through a Creative Partnerships programme, each potential Creative Agent will need to demonstrate an existing capacity to think and behave within these broad parameters.

| Competency   | Evidence: How this is demonstrated  |
|--|---|
| <p>The Creative Agent must demonstrate a <b>belief and trust</b> in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ The value of creative learning</li> <li>→ The value of creative practitioners and what they can bring to schools</li> <li>→ The value of schools and the power of education</li> <li>→ The rights of young people</li> <li>→ The value of a partnership based approach to working</li> </ul> | <p>Demonstrates this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ What they say about creative learning; creative practitioners; schools and education</li> <li>→ How they behave with professionals from different sectors</li> <li>→ How they behave with children and young people</li> </ul> <p>Can understand and articulate the Creative Partnerships process and the value of creative learning</p> |
| <p>Brings <b>insight and inspiration</b> into dialogues with a school and displays an 'unwarranted optimism'</p>   | <p>Displays a 'yes and...' approach to conversations rather than an 'mmm but...' and challenges cynicism at all times</p>   |
| <p>Committed to <b>building ownership</b> of the project</p>   | <p>Knows how to create the time and space for the school to think and plan and the value of talking with all members of a school community</p> <p>Creates a partnership approach to setting the focus question so that the school owns the question rather than have it dictated to them</p>  |
| <p>Ability to hold contradictions and <b>work with contradictions</b> rather than resist them in order to move forwards</p>  | <p>Respects the internal and external pressures that a school experiences e.g. the concern over standards against the desire for creativity and can help a school work with that tension to move forward</p>  |
| <p>Generous about <b>sharing practice</b> to build Creative Partnership's profile</p>  | <p>Cultivates an appropriate peer network to share practice internally and with other schools</p>   |

## → 7 — Professional Learning Programme for potential Creative Agents

The Art of Looking Sideways: How to use your creative thinking in designing and developing projects with schools



## → A. Background Thinking

The role of the Creative Agent is to support the development of creative learning in schools through:

- Articulating and sharing the vision of creative learning between all the partners
- Developing an enquiry based\* approach to Creative Partnerships work, with clear links to the school development plan
- Brokering and supporting the partnerships between schools and creative practitioners to enable creative learning projects to take place

\* An enquiry based approach is 'the process of asking about or investigating something in order to find out more about it' according to the Collins English Language Dictionary.

Creative learning, as defined by Creative Partnership is:

- Long term and collaborative in nature
- It demands a joint commitment and shared vision and a willingness to embrace open ended outcomes, challenge and risk
- It offers an opportunity to look at the world in new ways, to value difference and to experience new things
- It encourages creative, critical and reflective thinking
- It produces excited, enthusiastic and enquiry-driven learners

Any Professional Learning programme needs to develop principally a much wider pool of professionals able to deliver the role of Creative Agent across the country.

Through doing this it will also need to set some quality standards so that:

- Best practice guide lines are set so that schools, creative practitioners and other stakeholders know what to expect of a Creative Agent
- Professionals undertaking the role of Creative Agent are clear about what is expected of them and how they can best deliver this role on behalf of Creative Partnerships
- A suitable accreditation process can be put into place that will fulfill all the Quality Assurance, Moderation and Assessment processes demanded of an Awarding Body

To do this it will therefore need to enable the following to occur:

- Enable emerging and established professionals to develop an understanding and demonstration of the knowledge, skills, mindsets and behaviours demanded of a creative agent
- Provide the opportunity for very established professionals familiar with a number of the aspects of the role to 'top up' their skills and knowledge to enable them to carry out this role on behalf of Creative Partnerships
- Provide the opportunity for professionals who have been delivering this role for Creative Partnerships to accredit their prior learning and become lead Creative Agents

The Professional Learning framework will need to ensure that the competencies of required of a Creative Agent are developed. These are detailed in the draft Competency Framework currently out for consultation. The knowledge, skills and mindset / behaviours cover all four phases of the functions a Creative Agent delivers: diagnosis, planning and brokering, change management, evaluation and sustainability.

Our belief is that in order to attract sufficient numbers of people, the Professional Learning programme has to be seen by people undertaking it, to 'add value' in their own professional roles.

There is not sufficient awareness about the role, function and purpose of the Creative Agent model across the learning and creative and cultural sectors to 'sell' the Professional Learning programme simply on the basis of 'come along and learn how to be a Creative Agent'.

It also needs to appeal to professionals from a variety of backgrounds, not just the Creative and Cultural industries who have historically 'supplied' creative agents. Therefore its 'learning' appeal must be evident for a variety of potential participants.

It will also need to be flexible enough for professionals at different stages of their career to perceive a value in undertaking it and for those professionals to be able to navigate an appropriate pathway through the programme.

The Professional Learning programme needs to reflect best current pedagogical thinking and practice in how it is designed, developed and delivered.

### It needs to be practice based in that it does not tell people how to become a Creative Agent but gives them opportunity to experience:

- The very best creative learning programmes actually taking place in schools
- How Creative Agents negotiate programmes of activities with schools and then broker relationships with creative practitioners
- How to do it for themselves: set up and run creative learning projects

### What is proposed, at this early stage of thinking, is a learning matrix that allows for professionals to:

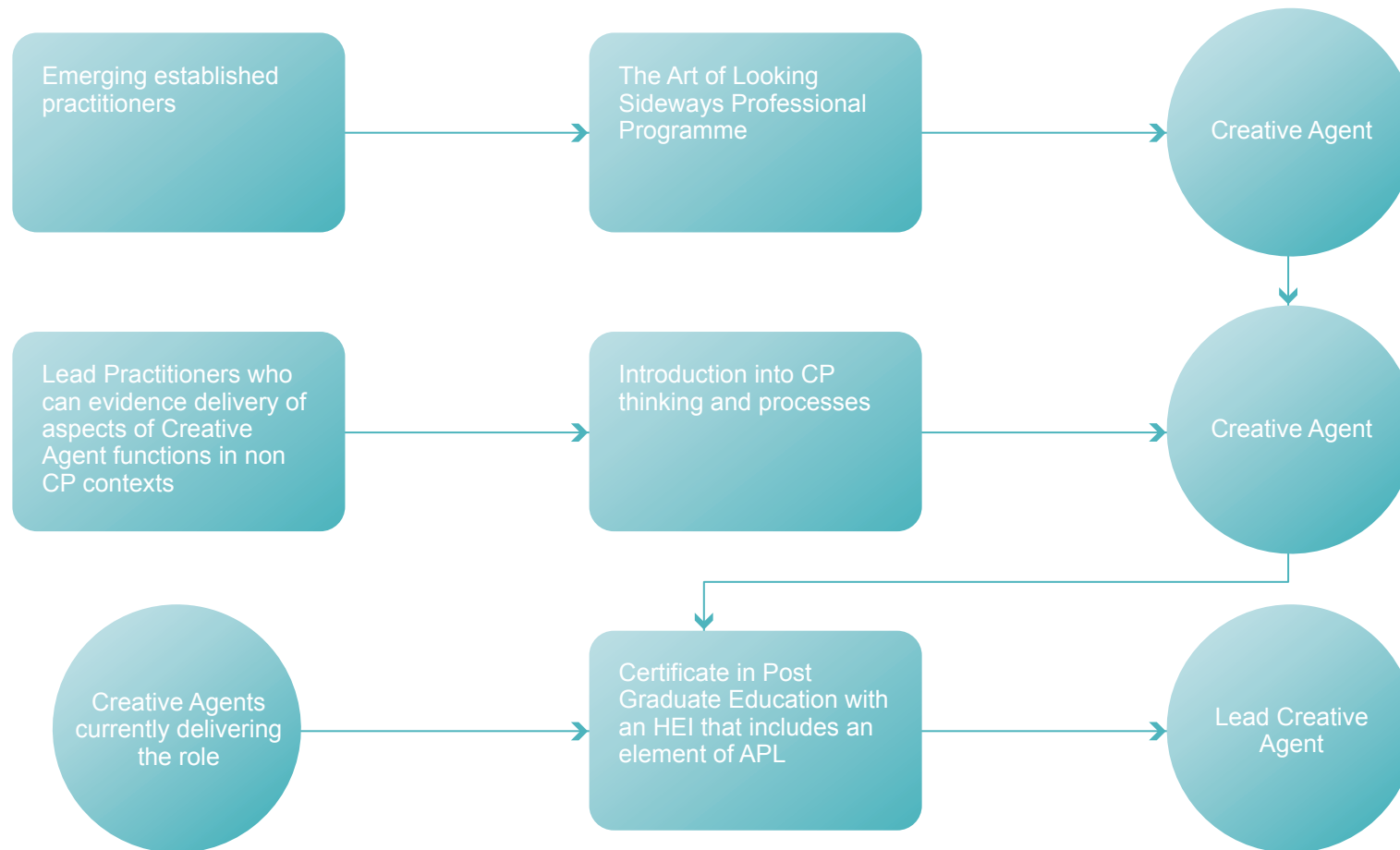
- Undertake a Training Needs Analysis at the start of the process to determine, with guidance, which Professional Learning pathway is most appropriate for them;
- To use the TNA to self assess the competencies required of a Creative Agent and is based on the competency framework currently being developed.

Phase 1 of the Professional Learning programme will start to address the knowledge and skills competencies. However, the mindset and behaviour competencies are not so readily passed on in a learning programme: to some extent people need to arrive with the propensity of these competencies already present which can be nurtured and refined through the process. These can be more thoroughly tested in a programme of 1:2:1 sessions with mentors. Mentors will then need to make a recommendation if, in their opinion, a learner is ready to move onto the next phase.

Phase 2 is where learners become Apprentice Creative Agents and deliver the function in schools. They are shadowed on a school visit by a Lead Creative Agent who will provide advice and guidance and feedback. There will be a 1:2:1 meeting where the apprentice will discuss with the Lead Creative Agent if they are ready to move onto Phase 3. In this phase they function as Creative Agents but with the additional support of three Reflective Practice Sessions to review progress and learning and share knowledge and best practice.

The Art of Looking Sideways Professional Learning programme is designed for emerging and established practitioners to investigate how to become a Creative Agent. A shorter 'induction' version will be developed for lead practitioners who can evidence that they have been delivering a similar Creative Agent function in non-Creative Partnerships contexts. A programme of Accreditation of Prior learning linked to a bespoke Certificate in Post Graduate Education is currently being developed with Institutes of Higher Education to enable current Creative Agents to deepen their learning and progress to becoming lead Creative Agents.

## ➔ B. Professional Learning Pathways for Developing Creative Agents



## → C. Professional Learning Programme: Summary Programme Matrix

1/2 day also equates to an evening session. The programme will be a mix of day, evening and weekend sessions. The programme has to be delivered by two mentors and other Creative Agents would need to agree to be shadowed as part of the practice based learning module.

LM = Lead Mentor  
SM = Support Mentor

| Competency                           | How delivered  | Time                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Phase 1</b><br>A. Knowledge       | <b>Seminar Programme</b>   |   |
|                                      | 1. Introduction to the scheme: Creative Partnerships, Creative Agents and Creativity   | 1 day x 1 LM                              |
|                                      | 2. Background and Context:<br>– What is Creative Learning<br>– The Creative and cultural context and The Education context   | 1/2 day x 1 LM<br>1/2 day x 1 LM          |
|                                      | 3. Applying Creative Partnerships thinking into schools:<br>– Diagnostic, Planning and Brokering<br>– Change Management and Evaluation, Sustainability and Change Management   | 1/2 day x 1 LM<br>1/2 day x 1 LM          |
|                                      | 4. Creative Learning theories:<br>– Multiple Intelligences and The Dimensions Framework  | 1/2 day x 1 LM<br>1/2 day x 1 LM          |
|                                      | 5. Reflective Practice and Children Voice  |   |
|                                      | <b>Time commitment</b><br>Mentors: Lead mentor: 4 days: Support mentor: 2 days (support mentor to attend sessions to get to know group)<br>Learners:   | 6 days total<br>4 days                    |
| B. Skills                            | <b>Practice based learning programme:</b><br>See page 46   |   |
|                                      | <b>Time commitment</b><br>Mentors: 4 days lead mentor; 4 days support mentor with 4 days Creative Agent time to support shadowing<br>Learners:   | 12 days total<br>3 days                   |
| <b>Total Delivery</b><br>for Phase 1 | <b>Learners</b> (contact time: self directed time will be expected in addition)<br><br><b>Mentors</b><br>Lead mentor – 8 days<br>Support mentor – 6 days<br>Creative Agent time to support shadowing – 4 days<br>Planning, Preparation & Portfolio Assessment – additional 2 days lead mentor time | <b>7 days</b><br><br><b>20 days total</b> |

| Competency                           | How delivered  | Time                                |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Phase 2</b>                       | <b>Apprentice Programme</b><br>Reflective Practice Sessions<br>3 Reflective Practice Sessions in year following Phase 1 to collectively review learning and share knowledge                                |                                     |
|                                      | <b>Time commitment</b><br>Lead Mentor: 1/2 day / action learning set + 1 1/2 days for on-going support in between ALS<br>Learners: 1/2 day / action learning set   | 3 days<br>1 1/2 days                |
|                                      | Each apprentice creative agent is shadowed on a meeting with a school and has a follow up meeting with an established Creative Agent to map learning of the role and make a recommendation of progression. |                                     |
|                                      | <b>Time commitment</b><br>Mentors: 1/2 day / apprentice creative agent lead mentor<br>Learners: 1/2 day  | 8 days<br>1/2 day                   |
| <b>Total Delivery</b><br>for Phase 1 | <b>Learners</b> (contact time: self directed time will be expected in addition)<br><br><b>Mentors</b><br>Lead mentor – 3 days<br>Creative Agent time to support shadowing and review – 8 days              | <b>2 days</b><br><br><b>11 days</b> |



## → D. Summary Programme Matrix: Competence and Evidence

The pilot programme would be delivered within an Open College Network Progression Award at Level 2. This is generic enough to be able to test the planning and content of this programme whilst a more bespoke accreditation is developed. Some of the references in the Portfolio Evidence column refer to evidence required for this award.

| Seminar Programme   | Competencies   | Portfolio evidence for accreditation   |
|---|--|--|
| Introduction: Creative Partnerships, Creative Agents and Creativity   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding of Creative Partnerships</li> <li>3. The relationships between the Creative Practitioners own creative practice and the creativity of others.</li> </ol>  | CV and Statement of Practice<br>TNA<br>Personal Creativity Mind Map<br>Learning Log  |
| What is Creative Learning   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding of Creative Partnerships</li> <li>14. Creative Learning and its place within contemporary educational theory</li> </ol>   | New Statement of Practice<br>Example Project:<br>From their own practice highlighting the creative learning within the process and outcomes of the project.<br>Learning Log  |
| The Creative and Cultural Context<br><br>The Education Context  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. The cultural contexts within which Creative partnerships operates.</li> <li>13. The educational contexts within which Creative Partnerships operates...</li> </ol>  | <b>Research Assignment</b><br>Learners research one initiative, outline the main aspects of it and apply it to their own practice. Copy and circulate to all learners.<br>Learning Log                                     |
| Applying Creative partnerships in schools;<br>Diagnostic;<br>Planning and Brokering;<br>Change Management;<br>Evaluation and Sustainability | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Developing and managing effective relationships with schools.</li> <li>5. Project planning</li> <li>9. Developing creative and collaborative pedagogy with school staff as a basis for enquiry based learning</li> <li>10. Evaluation</li> <li>15. Developing and delivering creative learning programmes in schools.</li> </ol> | <b>Reflection Assignment</b><br>SWOT analysis:<br>Using a SWOT analysis as a reflective tool, what is your understanding of the role of a Creative Agent and how it applies to your professional practice?<br>Learning Log |
| Theories of Learning  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Developing creative &amp; collaborative pedagogy with school staff as a basis for enquiry-based learning</li> <li>14. Creative learning and its place within contemporary educational theory</li> </ol>  | <b>Research Assignment</b><br>Learners research one initiative, outline the main aspects of it and apply it to their own practice. Copy and circulate to all learners.<br>Learning Log                                     |
| Reflective Practice and pupil voice   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Encouraging and developing reflective practice</li> <li>7. Children and young people as co-participants at the core of everything CP does</li> </ol>   | <b>Reflection assignment</b><br>What are the implications of pupil voice for your practice in schools?<br>Learning Log   |

| Skills: Practice based learning programme   | Competencies   | Portfolio evidence for accreditation   |
|---|--|--|
| School Visits and Shadowing: Planning Session.<br>The role of the SDP / SEF: setting the focus question | 9. Developing creative & collaborative pedagogy with school staff as a basis for enquiry-based learning<br>15. Developing and delivering creative learning programmes in schools   | Learning Log   |
| Visits with School Leadership Teams<br>Shadowing a Creative Agent<br>Presentation planning              | 2. Developing and managing effective relationships with schools<br>5. Project planning<br>9. Developing creative and collaborative pedagogy with school staff as a basis for enquiry based learning<br>10. Evaluation<br>15. Developing and delivering creative learning programmes in schools | <b>Assignment</b><br>Short report based on their observations of shadowing the Creative Agent and seeing how she / he analyses a school in terms of:<br>→ leadership<br>→ openness to new ideas<br>→ understanding of Creative Partnerships<br>→ organisational capacity |
| Presentation Session  | 6. The delivery of face to face activities   | <b>Assignment</b><br>Presentation based on the process of completing a project agreement form and drawing up a brief for a creative practitioner.<br>The presentation should be based on:<br>Problems affecting the business<br>Factors that might influence the problem |
|   |  | Potential Solutions to this problem<br>Complete Problem Solving Grid   |
| Advocacy  | 16. Celebrating Achievement<br>17. Advocacy  | Personal Career Planning Grid<br>Learning Log  |
| Review & Evaluation & Portfolio Completion  |  | Portfolio completed through a practical evaluation, including revisiting the TNA with recommendation from mentor if learner has completed programme and evidenced ability to be a creative agent.  |

\* 'Keeping Arts Safe' workshop will be run for all those who have not attended a workshop about Child Protection and Health and Safety considerations that have to be taken into account.

## → E. Practice Based Learning Programme

This model is based upon the following assumptions:  
20 participants: 2 mentors: both of whom are Creative Agents

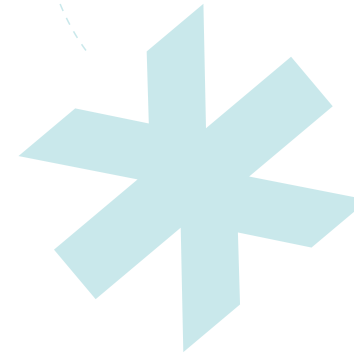
### Purpose of Practice Based Learning programme:

To develop practical experience in undertaking the role of a Creative Agent through:

- Negotiating a creative learning programme with School Leadership Teams
- Understanding how to adopt an enquiry based and question focused approach to creative learning programme development
- Drawing up a project concept and a brief for a Creative Practitioner

We would need ten schools to agree to take part in the process. The schools will know that this is a training programme and that in return for their cooperation they will receive a creative learning programme concept and brief for a Creative Practitioner that they can use in the future.

The learners would be split into two cohorts: Cohort A of five pairs will work with the Lead Mentor and Cohort B will work with the Support Mentor.





## Stage 1 — Introduction to Practice Based Learning Phase

Whole Group workshop that will cover...

- The School Development Plan and Self Evaluation Form
- Developing the focus question
- Generating creative learning programme ideas
- Organising school visits: match 10 pairs with 10 schools
- Organising shadowing: matching each pair to a Creative Agent on a live project

1/2 day participants; 1/2 day both Lead Mentor and Support Mentor

## Stage 2 — School Visits

Each pair in each cohort to undertake a two hour visit with SLT from their school with support of either the lead mentor or support mentor who will have a debrief meeting with them immediately afterwards.

Purpose of visit: discuss school improvement issues with SLT, identify key issues the school would like to explore through an action research based approach, prioritise which issue to focus on, produce key focus question, negotiate learning outcomes, generate programme concept and planning framework; produce initial ideas for brief for creative practitioners.

1/2 day for each participant and 2 1/2 days for both lead mentor and support mentor – 5 days Creative Agent time.

## Stage 3 — Production of Planning Framework and Brief for a Creative Practitioner

Participants will spend 1/2 day in their pairs producing a Creative Learning Programme Concept and Brief for a Creative Practitioner based on their conversation with the SLT from their school visit. These drafts are to be e-mailed to the schools for comments.

1/2 day participant time

## Stage 4 — Programme Presentation

Each pair to have 10 minutes to present their programme concept, practitioner brief and 3 significant learning insights from the process.

1/2 day participants; 1/2 day lead mentor and support mentors

## Stage 5 — Shadowing Experience

Each pair to spend 1/2 day shadowing a Creative Agent as they negotiate with a school

1/2 day participants: each Creative Agent to receive 1/2 day payment for meeting with learning participants – 4 days of Creative Agent time

## Stage 6 — Reflection and Review

Whole group reflection on the learning that has emerged from both the seminar and practice based learning phases.

1/2 day participant; 1/2 day lead mentor and support mentor time

## Time Totals

Participants – 3 days  
Lead Mentor – 4 days  
Support Mentor – 4 days  
Creative Agent for Shadowing – 4 days  
**= 12 CA days**