

darts



Creative classrooms

Case Study
Artist Development

Emily's Creative Classrooms Journey

What is Creative Classrooms?

Creative Classrooms is a drama programme designed for primary schools, Years 1 to 4, to support students to develop their emotional literacy, while building communication and empathy skills. The work is rooted in darts' approach which draws on over 30 years' experience of delivering creative activity in partnership with schools.

Professional theatre-makers work with a whole class for a half term, using an age-appropriate story to increasingly understand a range of emotions the characters are feeling, and in turn, we might feel too. As part of Creative Classrooms, teachers and teaching assistants receive professional Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in using drama in the classroom and supporting students in understanding their emotions.

Over the weeks of participating, class teachers reported that Creative Classrooms gave students the emotional confidence and communication skills to build stronger connections with their peers, as well as the artists leading the sessions. This equips students with the tools, emotional literacy and communication skills that are essential in coping with the challenges of exams, friendships and the move towards secondary school. This is of huge benefit to their social and individual development.

This Case Study is drawn from three years of Creative Classrooms delivery funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Artist Development– Emily's experience

Emily is an actor, singer, children's performer and facilitator who has been working with darts on Creative Classrooms over the last eight months.

Throughout the delivery of the Creative Classrooms programme, Emily felt that darts provided her with unparalleled support, which meant that she was able to respond to the needs of the students who took part. The close involvement of this collaborative way of working was beneficial to both the students' emotional wellbeing and communication skills, as well the Emily's own creative practice.

'Sarah [darts' Director of Arts & Education] came to observe one of my sessions – it was really helpful for her to see the difficulties in school and she sat down with me afterwards and we planned together and then she came to my next session... I felt really well supported''.

All artists agreed that the experience had enhanced their practice in many ways. Being able to collaborate and learn from others within their own, or a different, artform was a breath of fresh air and has had long term impact on the quality of their work.

How has co-designing and co-delivering sessions had an impact on your own creative process?

Co-delivery and co-creation of sessions during the Creatives Classrooms programme hugely impacted both Emily, and the students participating in the programme. Emily told us that planning and delivering for Creative Classrooms informed other areas of her knowledge and experience, as well as her techniques when delivering workshops in other areas of the community. darts worked with session leaders to plan workshops, building upon years of experience and enabling artists to make their own mark on Creative Classrooms – bringing together knowledge, research and creativity to produce workshops for darts' participants.

“Before working with darts, I used to deliver other people’s session plans. This has made me much more aware of my strengths...[in Creative Classrooms] we’d plan together, then I’d put my own stamp on it. Now I have a catalogue of activities to work from.”

Emily described how there was real clarity in what the objectives of the project were and what darts wanted to get out of the process, and that there was also great value in darts Project Managers being closely involved in the process throughout. This coming together of darts' research and experience, alongside the creative talent of artists produced a wealth of new ideas and led practitioners to build up their skillset and body of work for future projects going forward.