

darts



Creative classrooms

Case Study

Artist Development

Emma'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 – Emma's Experience

Emma is a professional actor and theatre-maker who has honed her drama practice over the last ten years. She has been working with darts for two years to deliver Creative Classrooms in Doncaster schools.

Working with darts as a highly-skilled drama practitioner, Emma told us she found that Creative Classrooms brought about an enriching exchange of techniques, skills and experience, between darts' expertise and years of working with communities, and her own practice as an artist. This is incredibly beneficial for darts participants, as well as for the delivering drama practitioner: the collaborative aspect of working with darts to deliver on these workshops, alongside creating a CPD course, allowed Fran to build upon her rich portfolio of theatre-making and community arts practice:

"My practice has absolutely developed... I am now much more decisive in my planning, and I can confidently categorise my choices and now my reasons why."

How has darts supported Emma throughout the process of planning and delivering Creative Classrooms?

Emma noted how, in working with Creative Classrooms, she experienced a steady flow of support when planning and delivering their sessions. For trainees and artists, darts places an important emphasis on collaboration, shadowing and co-delivery, which is of huge benefit to artists and participants as it means that programmes, ideas and delivery techniques are constantly evolving in response to the students' needs.

"I feel very supported by darts, having a space to meet other artists on the project has been absolutely invaluable...I can draw on people when I need them."

Emma felt that Creative Classrooms delivery informed other areas of her knowledge and experience, as well as the techniques she uses when delivering workshops in other areas of the community. darts worked with all 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 incredible workshops for darts' participants.

How has Emma summed up her experience as an artist working with darts to deliver Creative Classrooms?

"I was working on sessions that I do feel genuine justice to, and to the principles and research behind the project... it feels so rich and useful, and I wanted my work to reflect this."