



partnerships for schools

This case study shows how cultural organisations, schools and multiple agencies can work in partnership to deliver against shared goals and targets.



Cultural organisation helps deliver statutory curriculum and extended schools activities

Background

Based in West London, The Lyric Hammersmith is one of the UK's leading producing theatres. Alongside its stage work, the Lyric has developed an innovative creative learning programme, which engages young people as audiences, participants and professionals. With a focus on individuals who are hard to reach, Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), vulnerable or at risk, the Lyric provides qualifications and career pathways to thousands of young people aged 11-19.

The Lyric has strong working relationships across a number of West London authorities and agencies, including youth offending, health, education, social work and children's services. They are a key member of the cross-borough 14-19 Partnership and are in line to act as the lead organisation in the delivery of a range of diploma lines from September 2011. This has been achieved through clear strategy development, by understanding key government legislation, policy and targets, and through the

delivery of an offer that meets the needs of young people and the workforce that surrounds them

Project description

Every year the Lyric presents nearly 1,000 performances that bring 150,000 people through its doors – people of all ages from all over London and beyond.

Alongside their stage work, the Lyric has developed a pioneering programme of creative learning activities that gives over 10,000 young people a year access to high quality arts provision to help them develop their creative and personal skills and gain qualifications. As well as delivering accredited learning, the programme has a number of complementary strands. These range from talks, workshops and teacher-training for schools and colleges throughout the capital, to participatory activities for 11 to 19 year olds who live or go to school in West London. Creative Learning participants reflect the diversity of young people in West London and the project

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provides ways for young people of different socio-economic backgrounds to come together and learn from each other.

The programme is currently being evaluated independently and early findings suggest that this pro-active and collaborative approach is worth considering by other schools, local authorities and cultural organisations.

In 2004 the Lyric underwent a major redevelopment by architect Rick Mather, with a new entrance, ticket office and café. The redesign also included extra rehearsal and workshop spaces, allowing more opportunities for the education and training department to increase their activities. The Lyric has a 20-year history of working with excluded or at risk young people and the education team were able to use these new resources to rethink their programmes and partnerships and develop a fresh approach to this work.

They felt that young people should be given the opportunity to work and learn in an alternative, vibrant arts organisation, an approach that was particularly relevant to young people who felt school had little to offer them. The demand for these activities from young people and strategic partners prompted the Lyric to further develop their staffing, policy and plans.

In 2007 they underwent a significant change in name and strategy, becoming the Creative Learning Team (see box right). This new approach to working with young people has enabled the Lyric to forge partnerships with local and national government agencies and deliver curriculum options to at risk or excluded young people aged 14-19. They have been able to build a three-year strategy which runs until 2010.

The Lyric Creative Learning programme

The Lyric has structured its programme to support young people's individual progression through engagement with the arts. They have developed a 'ladder of opportunity' – a sustained, measurable and quantifiable journey encompassing a variety of projects over time, which can be mapped to each individual.

The programme has established different types of activity, tailored for those at risk or with complex needs as well as for those in the

Lyric's explanation of Creative Learning:

- Creative Learning is an experience, a circular one.
- The word 'education' has connotations of formal learning, exams, schools and a journey from A to B. Education is a linear experience. This is everything we are not.
- Education is often 'results driven'. Learning is more of an open process, it's about connections, creating a dialogue, sourcing and sharing ideas.
- Education is primarily routed in a passing on of skills, knowledge and experience. Our work will share learning in both directions. It will be a responsive system of work that capitalises on feedback and reflects this in new ways of working.
- Our new way of working will be focused on having a deeper, long-term impact on the young people we work with. This relationship and journey will be sustained, measured and quantifiable due to a number of key opportunities we will make available to our participants.
- Creative Learning is about potential, in all its forms. It's about talent and opportunity; it's vocational and industry focused.
- We will pass on knowledge, skills and experience to our participants and they will do the same with us.

Taken from *Creative Learning at the Lyric, 2007-2010*.

mainstream. This case study focuses on a strand of activity named Lyric West, which illustrates some of the approaches they have taken and some the issues involved in delivering qualifications and an integrated programme.

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Lyric West

Lyric West is divided into two out-of-school hour strands: Lyric West: Exclusive and Lyric West: Inclusive.

Lyric West: Exclusive runs programmes for 11-19 year olds who are not in education, training or work, giving them opportunities to develop their existing skills and discover new ones. Activities include:

- singing projects with teenage mothers;
- primary transfer;
- a Saturday drama club;
- an integrated drama group for disabled and non-disabled young people; and
- projects for young carers and young people identifying themselves as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender.

Referrals come through a range of the Lyric's partners including children's services, Connexions, schools and social workers. These young people can also choose to study a wide range of courses, ensuring that the Lyric supports local and national policy in terms of 14-19 year olds gaining appropriate qualifications. The Lyric delivers on average 300 nationally recognised qualifications per year; the range is shown in the table below.

Lyric West: Inclusive is an open access programme for young people based in West London, and again supports a number of different projects, including the Young Company. This strand of work aims to address the following:

- the lack of opportunity for young people not eligible for a Lyric: Exclusive project; and
- an increasing lack of integration amongst the varying communities of young West Londoners.

For £5 a year, members can sign up for a wide range of activities including auditioning for one of two annual Lyric Young Company productions. Many activities are free, such as street dance, poetry and lyrics, drama and singing. Participants are offered the chance to study for an Arts Council England Arts Award¹.

Lyric West: Inclusive runs alongside the Lyric: Interactive programme, which is linked to the stage and main house programme. This is open to primary and secondary schools, colleges and higher education institutions across London and beyond.

The programme gives educational groups several ways to engage directly with theatre practitioners, including teacher training, pre-show workshops, backstage tours, artist talks, in-house residencies and on-stage demonstrations.

The Lyric has made this expansion work by thinking broadly about the needs of the creative industries, the career pathways that exist, and identifying targets and programmes that they can help others deliver. By aligning their offer to these agendas and describing clearly how their work meets the needs of different agencies they are an attractive partner for other organisations and funders. For example, current collaborators and partners include BBC Outreach and the Creative and Cultural Skills Council.

Relationship building

Building relationships with statutory youth and education partners has required patience and strategic thinking. The Lyric has had to be entrepreneurial and quick-thinking to take advantage of local commissioning opportunities. Members of the team have had to immerse themselves in local policy and make sure that they are able to produce robust evidence of the impact of the work they are delivering. Programmes need to be evaluated with this in mind, with a combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence building a clear case for investment.

James Blackman, Director of Strategy & Communications at the Lyric, explains how they were able to take advantage of commissioning opportunities at the local Primary Care Trust (PCT). They have devised work around obesity issues for Year 6 students in different boroughs and linked the stage production of their main house, *Spring Awakening*, to sexual health messages around chlamydia, resulting in 1,000 people going for screening.

Links with schools and children's services need to be maintained and developed and the Lyric has had to ensure that they have the right workforce in place to support the young people and the accredited learning. Staff members sit on key local authority partnerships including the Building Schools for the Future Arts and Cultural Stakeholder Group and the 14-19 Partnership.

The Lyric and the local authorities see the organisation as a statutory education provider, with departments from across children's services and

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schools investing in the work that takes place. Artists and teachers work alongside each other, and the Lyric has recently appointed a youth worker as part of the core staff team.

Factors for success

- The cultural organisation has to want to engage meaningfully with young people in order to succeed.
- Working with the public sector can optimise opportunities for income generation for a cultural organisation and offer local authorities and schools effective ways of delivering targets and outcomes.
- Engaging with public sector bodies such as health, children's and youth services, changes the relationship between the community and theatre: some will continue to know it only through staged work, others as a place where they obtained a qualification, new skills or a chance to shine through a talent they didn't know they had. Cultural organisations must be willing to manage this change.
- The cultural organisations must be persistent in finding the right people to speak to within children's services.
- This approach requires a well resourced team of professionals – expert at working with young people and children.
- The cultural organisation must be committed to constantly reassessing outcomes against goals and evaluating practice.

Potential pitfalls

- Building on existing work to expand geographically and demographically requires whole-team commitment, including resources.
- Changing an organisation's strategy is difficult. The new strategic approach has to be constantly communicated, in order to keep the vision in mind through the initial transition.
- The Lyric has acquired new knowledge and understanding of the children's sector's language, timescales, agendas, strategies, policies and frameworks over a number of years. This was a steep learning curve and other cultural organisations will need to build in time and resources to understand and familiarise themselves with new structures, hierarchies and organisational styles.
- Work in social, children's or health services brings a new set of targets and goals. Cultural organisations will need to learn how to work within these and handle the data management aspects of the associated paperwork.

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How the Lyric delivers a range of qualifications

	National Framework	Lyric Framework
Level	Example Qualification	Proposed Qualification
ENTRY 1	Entry Level Certificate in Literacy	Entry Level Certificate in Literacy; Numeracy ESOL (English for speakers of other languages)
ENTRY 2	Entry Level Certificate in Literacy	Entry Level Certificate in Literacy; Numeracy ESOL
ENTRY 3	Entry Level Certificate in Literacy	Entry Level Certificate in Literacy; Numeracy ESOL
	GCSE's Grades D-G; NVQ Level 1	Entry Level Certificate in Literacy; Numeracy ESOL
	GCSE's Grades A* – C; NVQ Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACE Arts Award (Bronze); • OCN Progression Qualification (L2); • 14–19 Diploma in Creative Industries; • BTEC First in Performing Art
	A Levels; BTEC National Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACE Arts Award (Silver); OCN Progression Qualification (L3); • 14–19 Diploma in Creative Industries; • BTECs in Performing Arts; Performing Dance; • Creative Apprenticeships in Technical Theatre; Arts Finance; Costume Design; Creative Apprenticeship in Community Arts Practice
	Certificate of Higher Education	ACE Arts Award (Gold)
	Foundation Degrees	Foundation Degree (Arts Management/Technical Theatre)

Key contact

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References

1. Arts Award is a national qualification which supports young people to develop as artists and arts leaders. Young people between 11-25 years old can achieve Arts Awards at levels 1, 2 and 3 on the national qualifications framework.