

SLICE

Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education: An Evaluation

This report was produced on behalf of Curious Minds

By Dr. Sandra Hiett & Dr. Elizabeth Smears

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About the authors of this report

Drs Hiett and Smears have extensive experience in pedagogic practice and research in creative and cultural education. Sandra Hiett and Lizzie Smears have a deep level of commitment to cultural education with an in depth understanding of policy and practice across educational settings, including special education, primary, secondary and higher education, as well as the arts and cultural sector. Both researchers are familiar with the work of Curious Minds and the important contribution this organisation continues to make to ground breaking, innovative initiatives in arts, creativity and education in the North West of England. The work of Curious Minds is particularly important in developing the educational experiences and life chances of young people. The development of the Specialist Leader in Cultural Education (SLICE) fellowship has the potential to shift educational practice in special education, primary and secondary education as well as influencing the practice and engagement of the cultural industries. Furthermore, Hiett and Smears are committed to providing rigorous, robust, comprehensive and insightful research which is accessible to all those engaged in cultural education. They intend that this report contributes towards the wider impact of the Cultural Education programme that is supportive of the aspirations of Curious Minds. To this end Sandra Hiett and Lizzie Smears are both outward facing researchers with an openness to their engagement with creative individuals and organisations bringing these sensibilities to the fore in their research practice.

As Principle Investigator of the impact evaluation of SLICE, Dr Sandra Hiett has worked in partnership with schools and cultural institutions over the past 22 years demonstrating skill and experience in building sustainable professional relationships across the sector. With a strong track record of undertaking research projects with teachers, young people, schools, galleries, archives and other cultural organisations, Sandra Hiett is an independent researcher specialising in Arts & Education, and deputy editor of the international Journal of Art and Design Education.

Dr Elizabeth Smears is a skilled and experienced educator, researcher and creative practitioner. Her expertise has developed through praxis as she engages an embodied approach to learning and development. As a researcher she is enriched and inspired by listening to those who give voice to their experience and as such has a keen and deep interest in the breadth and very breath of communication. She bears witness to the value and empowerment potential that creativity and engagement in the arts can bring to participants.

Introduction

Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education (SLiCE) is an initiative developed by the bridge organisation Curious Minds.

Curious Minds is a charity based in Burnley and serving the North West. We develop the skills and capacity of those working with children and young people to increase opportunities for their active participation in arts, culture and creative learning. We connect with schools and make sure young people know what's on offer to them and we support schools to integrate arts and culture into the delivery of their curriculum.

(www.curiousminds.org.uk)

This evaluation reports upon the first year of the SLiCE programme from September 2013-August 2014 and draws upon evidence gathered through the year. It includes the perspectives of the Curious Minds' team, all of the Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education and a broad range of Cultural Partners directly involved in this pilot phase. This initiative is a direct response to Darren Henley's independent review of Cultural Education in England (2011) and at the outset of this initiative Curious Minds (2013) made the following declaration:

To respond to Henley's recommendations, Curious Minds are embarking on a two year programme of investment and activity. This will enable Teaching School Alliances to play a key role in increasing access to and raising the standard of cultural education for children and young people in the North West of England.

The **Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education (SLiCE)** fellowship is one such initiative. This one year fellowship is focused on developing a lead teacher's capacity to strategically support cultural education in their own school and across the alliance.

This report has been prepared by Dr Hiett and Dr Smears, for Curious Minds and its findings will inform year two of the SLiCE fellowship. The contents of this report will have significance for all those participating directly in the SLiCE programme including; the Curious Minds team, SLiCE fellows, participating Cultural Partners and Teaching School Alliances. In addition, these findings have relevance to the wider education community, the cultural sector, education policy makers, curriculum leaders, experienced and beginning teachers.

The main objectives of this evaluation were to investigate:

- What has changed/improved for SLICES, teachers and pupils as a result of their engagement with the programme?
- What have been the barriers to participation?
- Which cultural organisations do schools want to invest in?
- What are the on-going needs of schools in developing cultural education?
- How are schools nurturing skills in cultural education amongst staff?
- How is cultural education being integrated into other areas of the curriculum?
- What external partnerships have schools formed to support their use of cultural education?



- Where is the most innovative and most effective work happening? Which models could be replicated?
- Which schools have the greatest potential for partnership working (both with Curious Minds and other schools and cultural organisations)?

Background

The Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education (SLiCE) fellowship has been developed as a direct result of the Henley Review (2012). The Henley Review was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education and the Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries within which he identified twenty-four recommendations. A 'summary of programmes and opportunities' of Cultural Education (DfE 2013) closely followed Henley's review to support 'universal access to high-quality cultural education' in England. Curious Minds responded to Henley's recommendations by initiating the SLiCE fellowship in 2013 as a two year pilot programme. SLiCE is particularly relevant to six of these of recommendations which can be summarised as follows;

- Provide a broad Cultural Education for all children
- Encourage children and young people to take part in the Arts Award
- Support the development of new local partnerships
- Managing closer partnerships
- Connect teachers to the cultural industries
- Support new qualifications for Specialist Leaders and cultural practitioners

In his preface for the DfE (2013:6) Cultural Education publication Henley sets out what he considers to be three elements most commonly present in the 'best examples of cultural education'. Henley describes these elements as follows;

The first is knowledge based and teaches children about the best of what has been created and is currently being created (for example great literature, art, architecture, film, music and drama). It introduces young people to a broader range of cultural thought and creativity than they would be likely to encounter in their lives outside of school.

The second element of an excellent cultural education centres on the development of children's analytical and critical faculties (which additionally have a direct relevance across other curriculum subjects outside the scope of my Review). Learning how to think both creatively and critically and to express their views articulately are important attributes for any young person. Studying cultural education subjects helps to develop a child's personality, abilities and imagination.

The third element is skills based and teaches children how to participate in and to create new culture for themselves (for example designing a product, drawing, composing music, directing a play, choreographing a dance piece, or making a short film). These skills include solo activities, such as reading books, writing stories, drawing pictures, learning crafts or making music, as well as collaborative work such as singing or acting in an ensemble that helps children to learn how to join together as a team.



These three elements have informed the development of the SLiCE initiative including the development of the Specialist Leaders' chosen focus and will be considered in more detail later in this report.

The timing of the SLiCE initiative is significant in that it takes place at a point where government education policy in England is once again undergoing change, heralding the greatest shift since the advent of the National Curriculum following the Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988. Cultural Education has been a feature of all government driven education policies although there has been some variation of what has been understood to represent 'cultural education' in each phase of the National Curriculum. The implementation of the coalition government's National Curriculum in September 2014 will be considered in relation to its own terms but will inevitably be located alongside the legacy of what has gone before it. In 2007 New Labour's 'New Curriculum' located 'culture' as one of four main strands that permeated the whole curriculum (DfCSF & QCA). In this instance cultural education was embraced through the content and delivery across and within all subject disciplines. The NACCCE report preceded the announcement of New Labour's New Curriculum by eight years and provided key findings that can be traced within the 2007 statutory requirements. In terms of culture NACCCE identified three sub-categories including; the 'sectorial', the 'elite' and the 'social' (1999:48).

As different phases of the National Curriculum in England offer various, and sometimes obfuscated ideologies of culture in education, so too have the SLiCE demonstrated a range of conceptual interpretations implicit in the design of and their reflections upon their programme this year. Therefore, we set out a brief account of dominant schools of thought around the concepts of 'culture', 'cultural education' and the 'culture of education' that will inform the analysis of specific aspects of the SLiCE programme as it concludes its first year.

Defining Culture

As a number of the key note speakers at the 'C:ED Talks' at The Light and Floral Pavilion in New Brighton on the 12th June 2014 stated, defining culture is problematic despite many attempts over several decades to do so. Raymond Williams (2014:84), whose discourse on culture is particularly noteworthy, states that;

Culture is one of two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts as several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct incompatible systems of thought.

In the pursuit of a meaningful definition many theorists have constructed a taxonomy of culture. Geertz (1975) offers eleven definitions of culture, whilst Hall and du Gay (1996) and Williams (1981) identify three;

- Culture as a way of life
- Culture as an artistic or intellectual activity and
- Culture as identity

It is not enough, however, simply to determine the meaning of culture in relation to those concepts, behaviours and values that inform it and which it in turn informs, as culture is a dynamic rather than a static entity. In the pursuit of understanding what constitutes culture it is important to remain open to the notion that specific cultures constantly re-invent themselves (Varey 1996; Lustig and Koester 1993; Porter and Samovar 1988; Eberly, Joshi and Konzal 2007).

To define culture as a way of life is to recognise the importance of a shared social belief system, attitudes, values, concepts of the universe, behaviours and rituals among a group of people. These factors will most likely be influenced by external cultures, historical alliances, war and trade, and in turn impact upon other cultures across a global dimension. A pedagogy that embraces this view of culture needs to extend far beyond the traditional subject boundaries enshrined in the English education system.

Describing culture as 'artistic or intellectual' activity is especially significant in the context of the SLiCE programme given Henley's definition of cultural education considered below. Williams (1981) articulates his understanding of culture in this respect as one of specialised knowledge and behaviour, arguing that it represents a more 'common sense' definition that is widely shared in the Western world.

Definitions of Culture and Identity are helpful in understanding how identities form, how their membership is created and why it is so difficult to articulate a clear understanding of a specific cultural identity without reducing it to simplistic and essentialised qualities. Frith (1996) articulates cultural identity as less of an entity and more of the act of community. Hall (1996:1) writes of the diversity of concepts of cultural identity arguing that contemporary theory is largely critical of an 'integral, originary and unified' notion of identity. What they do not address is the myriad of sub-cultures that exist in society at large and within the educational setting. Bruner (1996:27) hints at this when he writes of the 'underground curriculum' and its influence on the educational experience.

Determining Cultural Education

Interpretations of what constitutes an appropriate cultural education are as diverse as those of the overarching concept of culture and have a corresponding ideological relationship with notions of culture. A comparison between the taxonomy of cultural education of NACCCE (1999) Hall & du Gay (1996), and Williams (1981) leads to a consensus that there are four central roles for education in the cultural development of young people.

- a) To enable young people to recognise, explore and understand their own cultural assumptions and values.
- b) To enable young people to embrace and understand cultural diversity by bringing them into contact with the attitudes, values and traditions of other cultures,
- c) To encourage art historical perspectives by relating contemporary values to the processes and events that has shaped them.
- d) To enable young people to understand the evolutionary nature of culture and the processes and potential for change.

(NACCCE 1999:48)

Darren Henley's (2012:3) definition of cultural education favours the definition of cultural education as 'artistic practice and intellectual activity' and as such appears to exclude discourses of 'culture as identity' and 'as a way of life' when he states:

Cultural Education includes: archaeology, architecture and the built environment, archives, craft, dance, design, digital arts, drama and theatre, film and cinema, galleries, heritage, libraries, literature, live performance, museums, music, poetry and the visual arts.

There is a seductive familiarity with such recognisable subjects areas in Henley's account that, it could be argued, render it less of a definition of cultural education and more a list of subject disciplines within which cultural engagement may be located. Addison & Dash (2000) warn of the dangers of an uncritical Eurocentric arts curriculum in that it is likely to perpetuate implicit, white, middle-class values that deny the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the UK. Kress (2001) questions a Western European privileging of academic constructs in arguing for the validation of the visual arts, and Edge (1990) speaks out against the unwitting marginalisation of ethnic minority students through limited cultural content in the curriculum.

New Labour's New Curriculum (2007) positioned cultural education with a strong emphasis on 'identity' and 'a way of life' stating that 'in order to develop learners' understanding and appreciation of identity and cultural diversity' pupils should have the opportunity to;

- Discuss the origins of diversity in the UK and how different cultures and groups have shaped the UK
- Explore different racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and non-religious groups in the UK and the wider world, and the similarities and differences within and between these groups
- Develop an understanding of how diverse people, places, economies and environments in the global community are interconnected
- Develop an understanding about the consequences of racial and religious intolerance and discrimination, and how to challenge discrimination, including racism
- Develop a critical capacity to reflect on multiple identities, their own cultural transitions, and those of others
- Investigate how ideas, including those that are multiple identities, their own cultural traditions, and those of others
- Investigate how ideas, including those that are mathematical and scientific, reflect cultures and traditions
- Explore and appreciate the art, artefacts and literature and music of different cultures
- Explore how technology has transformed ways of working together to create knowledge and the sharing of ideas and information.

(DfSF & QCA 2007)

In educational rhetoric there appears to be a firm commitment to delivering a curriculum that acknowledges and respects the role of culture in the content and delivery of the curriculum in school and in relation to the outside world. The lack of clarity of what the word 'culture' signifies within the curriculum, however, threatens to undermine its potential in this respect.

Considering the Culture of Education

Institutions are bound up in their cultural practices; their power structures and the ideologies that drive them. The nature of an institution's culture influences the shaping of policy and provides the environment within which practice is nurtured or discouraged. Charland (2011) writes of how school culture can be a barrier to realising the benefits of the arts in the curriculum in the USA. While Maehr & Midgley (1996) recommend caution in arguing the case that schools are culturally different from the communities which they serve. Bruner (1996), on the other hand, makes a convincing case for schools as distinct cultural organisations.

In gaining a better understanding of our institutions Harris (2013) compares pedagogies to cultural practices; in that they are both dynamic concepts that 'seem to be proliferating in increasingly rhizomatic ways'. In the context of this programme Harris's view suggests that opportunities for developing new approaches for learning can, therefore, be generated by all those participating with educational practice including the SLiCE, Cultural Partners and participating children.

Taking account of the inevitability of perpetual change within the educational context would appear to be an important consideration for the SLiCE programme. While an environment accustomed to change may be a fertile space for developing the SLiCE initiative the challenges of establishing new approaches to education practice are not to be underestimated. Indeed, Dahlberg, Moss & Pence (2007) offer a systematic critique of the limitations of dominant educational practice because of its customs and established pedagogy. Developing cultural education has the additional complexity of navigating existing and multiple discourses of culture in a fluid yet historically bound educational context.

In relation to definitions of culture as 'identity' and 'a way of life', Bricker, Reeve and Bell (2014) consider the importance of pupils' cultural background and the belief systems to which they subscribe in relation to curriculum content and learning. Yet Lourie and Rata (2012) are concerned about the potentially limited and limiting impact of promoting socio-cultural knowledge. Farmer (2010:2) makes the case that teachers need to develop their cultural competency claiming that 'cultural sensitivity is overlooked when designing curriculum and delivery'.

Located within the definition of culture as 'artistic and intellectual activity', the SLiCE programme may, in addition, engage with issues around children's cultural identity, family and community life, and the impact of schools cultural in the evolution of this initiative. Indeed, these themes do emerge within the analysis of the first year of this programme and are considered later in this report.

Specialist Leaders

Specialist Leaders (SL) of Education were first introduced in the Department for Education's white paper 'The Importance of Teaching' (2010:24) anticipating that Specialist Leaders would be drawn from existing 'excellent professionals in leadership positions below the head teacher (such as deputies, bursars, heads of department) who will support others in similar positions in other schools'. The DfE identified the specific roles of the generic Specialist Leader to;



- Carry out diagnostic visits
- Develop action plans, identifying key priorities and SMART targets
- Provide one-to-one or group support
- Offer coaching and mentoring support
- Provide access to resources and training
(www.harristeachingschool.com 09/06/2014)

Whilst the Department of Education proposed a variety of Specialist Leaders this did not explicitly include a recommendation for Cultural Education. Curious Minds has reflected the core roles of SLs within their development of Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education with additional and more specific expectations. Within the Curious Minds model specific roles of Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education;

- They will be able to access the needs of other schools around cultural education, support them, select and commission the right cultural partner.
- They will know how to use culture appropriately in a specific curriculum area or to tackle a particular learning need.
- They will be able to support teachers to recognise quality cultural activity when they see it – in the process of the teaching and learning and in end result.
- They will be able to offer advice and signposting for schools and teachers on Artsmark and Arts Award.
- They will lead on strategic activities that will raise the profile and highlight the value of cultural education across the alliance.
- They will be able to make the case for deploying budgets for cultural education and that any investment is most appropriately targeted.
- They will be able to ensure that budgets for cultural learning and enhancement activities are suitably programmed so that they are inclusive and engage young people appropriately.
- SLiCEs will increase access to and raise the standard of cultural education for children and young people in their school, the alliance and in the North West.

(Curious Minds 2013)

In its first year the SLiCE model required its Specialist Leaders to co-ordinate and manage a number of elements across the schools' alliance and with a Cultural Partner within a clear framework of expectations (see below for details). It was up to the SLiCE, however, to decide what leadership and management style would underpin their role. Within the SLiCE role is an implicit indication that working in partnership requires a spirit of democratic practices. Bath, Barr and Haynes (2014) place an emphasis on the need for time to develop ethical and non-hierarchical partnerships. The relative merits of the emerging partnerships across the twelve SLiCE alliances is explored later within this report.

Methodology and research methods

This evaluation is underpinned by a qualitative research approach to capture and analyse the individual experiences of the SLiCE, Cultural Partners and relevant members of the Curious Minds team. In addition, Practitioner Action Research was an integral component within the SLiCE programme whereby each Specialist Leader proposed, and investigated, a research question of their own.

The SLiCE research questions included;

- How are intrinsic and extrinsic motivational approaches embedded in the teaching of the arts?
- Can delivering Cultural education through the Arts have an impact on students in terms of enjoyment and strengthen relationships between a secondary school and its primary school partners?
- How can Cultural Organisations be utilised as a resource to deliver the New National Curriculum?
- How far, and in what ways can direct engagement with professional musicians encourage young people to learn an instrument?
- What potential impact does a sustained partnership with a cultural organisation have on attitudes towards learning?
- What is the potential impact on teachers' own skills and confidence when engaging with a cultural organisation?
- How do we collaboratively develop a sustainable music manifesto with the help of a creative and cultural organisation?
- How can immersive learning engage our children with severe learning difficulties?
- How far and in what ways can a Cultural Partnership impact on Teaching and Learning for staff and pupils alike?
- Is the Artsmark fully accessible to a special needs setting?
- What needs to be in place before, during and after work with cultural practitioners in order for all parties to show impacts?

Stenhouse (1975) and Elliott (1991) have been strong advocates of Action Research for curriculum change by school-based teachers. According to Elliott (1991:54):

Action research integrates teaching and teacher development, curriculum development and evaluation, research and philosophical reflection, into a unified conception of a reflexive educational practice.

While Stenhouse considers a prerequisite of teacher development to be time for professional development he acknowledges implications for balancing of additional demands that researching and reflecting makes upon the already busy professional. Brown and Jones (2001) are advocates for Action Research as part of teachers' professional development yet draw attention to the sense of uncertainty that is often a feature of the process of practitioner enquiry arguing that clarity and insight are more likely to evident in retrospect.

McGregor (2012:322) is supportive of arts informed practices claiming that they 'provide an incredibly rich opportunity to build such identities, enhance civic and social agency' and 'broaden commitment to socially just values'. Ledwith (1997 & 2007) writes of the sense of agency that Participatory Practice can bring to grass roots initiatives although she also warns that complacency follow a period of success has the power to undermine the longer term impact of participatory projects.

The SLiCE research projects can be located within a juxtaposition of the complementary paradigms of Participatory Practitioner Action Research.

Data for this report was gathered in a variety of ways including; periodic reports from the SLiCE, semi-structured interviews, notes taken at meetings, and observations from the 'C:ED Talks' conference in New Brighton in June 2014.

Each SLiCE was required to write three reports in the first year of the programme; two progress reports and one research evaluation. Notably, many SLiCE demonstrated a level of anxiety about producing these reports confessing that they were unsure of how to go about presenting their interim perceptions and experiences despite guidance at a prior SLiCE meeting and a template to structure their writing. It is worth noting here that all of these practicing teachers would have been required to undertake some form of action research within their Initial Teacher Training. What is unclear is why some of the SLiCE found this process daunting while others were confident in creating fluid, articulate and comprehensive accounts of their research.

Semi-structured interviews are frequently used within the context of qualitative research as they offer a useful balance between initiating rich data from participants pertinent to the research focus whilst allowing the openness and flexibility that can illuminate unforeseen insights and additional themes. Interviews of SLiCE and Cultural Partners were undertaken at their place of work giving the researchers contextual insights that have informed the analysis of this data. Interviews were an average of an hour long and in each case a Dictaphone was used to record the interviews, with the interviewees' consent, and later transcribed and coded.

The interview transcripts were systematically and individually coded in relation to the key aims of this evaluation including the identification of additional issues as featured in the Analysis and Discussion section of this evaluation. The interviews with SLiCE and Cultural Partners were then compared eliciting a number of key themes which have been used here to structure the 'findings' section of this report. Interviews with members of the Curious Minds team have been informed both the findings and the analysis.

Time line

| Month | Activity | Participant |
|-------------|------------------------------------|--|
| December | 1 st Interim report | SLiCE |
| March | Observation at meeting, Manchester | All SLiCE and members of the Curious Minds team |
| March - May | Interviews | SLiCE |
| June | 'C:ED Talk' New Brighton | All participants and other members of the wider education and cultural community |
| June | Final report | SLiCE |
| June-August | Interviews | Cultural Partners Curious Minds team |

What is SLiCE?

Curious Minds developed the Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education in direct response to the Henley Review of 2012. The extracts presented in this section are taken from Curious Minds documentation released at the launch of the initiative.

Henley's report was published in February 2012 and made recommendations for the DFE to take forward. In response to his recommendations linked directly to schools, the DFE responded very proactively:

"The Department for Education is committing £15 million until 2015 to pump prime initiatives that will inspire children and young people and schools to take part in cultural activities to enrich their learning and play their part in helping the cultural arts industries to continue to flourish"

To respond to Henley's recommendations, Curious Minds are embarking on a two year programme of investment and activity. This will enable Teaching School Alliances to play a key role in increasing access to and raising the standard of cultural education for children and young people in the North West of England.

In developing the **Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education (SLiCE)** fellowship Curious Minds focused on 'developing a lead teacher's capacity to strategically support cultural education in their own school and across the alliance in year one. From the outset there were very clear expectations of what would be required of the appointed SLiCE.

The intention was to select one teacher to represent each alliance, based upon the teacher's skills and the schools capacity 'to facilitate the role and disseminate the learning across the teaching school alliance'. In setting out the the SLiCE Person Specification Curious Minds identified the qualities required to undertake this role.

The fellowship requires:

- Middle or Senior leaders in the school
- Existing champions of culture and cultural learning in the school.



- Some experience of brokering in high quality cultural practitioners and deploying them both within the curriculum and for enrichment activities
- An ability to mentor and facilitate trainees and peers' understanding on the subject of cultural learning
- An understanding of how cultural education can be used to improve learning outcomes
- Strongly developed interest of their own practice in the listed areas of culture (see 'What is Cultural Education?' paper)
- Broad-based knowledge of the current curriculum and the context surrounding it (e.g. curriculum review)
- Ability to discuss the current education landscape with external partners (e.g. The Arts Council's regularly funded organisations known as National Portfolio Organisations NPOs)
- Ability to discuss and reflect on learners needs with external partners
- Ability to influence the thinking and practice of colleagues and the stakeholders across the school community and alliance.
- Capacity to commit to a 2 day induction in the summer term June 2013
- Capacity to commit 20 days over the academic year 2013-14

The Fellowship 2013-14

The initial intention to recruit ten teachers (one per alliance) was extended to twelve following application and selection across the North West of England. Each SLiCE was required to work closely with a cultural partner to develop their capacity and to strategically support cultural education across their alliance.

Support offered by Curious Minds and other cultural partners for teachers on the fellowship were fully subsidised in 2013-2014 with £10k available to each school of the successful SLiCE fellow to cover their release from timetable for a minimum of 22 days over the academic year and membership to Creative Schools: North West.

Several benefits were anticipated for those individual teachers, and their school alliance in participating in the SLiCE initiative. Announcing these at the point of recruitment process Curious Minds identified the benefits as follows.

This one year fellowship is focused on developing a lead teacher's capacity to strategically support cultural education in their own school and across the alliance.

When they have completed the fellowship, Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education will be strategic cultural champions, with the skills to develop the capacity of other cultural champions in the alliance.



Their rich knowledge and understanding of cultural education will be very valuable to the alliance offering the capacity to be outward facing, engaging with a variety of external partners, including parents and members of the community.

They will be able to articulate, on behalf of the whole alliance, how they are working together to strategically develop a cultural offer that is varied, inclusive and engaging for pupils. They will be able to ensure that the cultural resources available to schools and the hidden gems are made more readily available across the alliance.

By having close links to Curious Minds, they will have up to date knowledge of the cultural offer across the North West as well as on their doorstep, the services that are free and the services worth investing in.

They will be able to assess the needs of other schools around cultural education, support them select and commission the right cultural partner.

They will know how to use culture appropriately in a specific curriculum area or to tackle a particular learning need.

They will be able to support teachers to recognise quality cultural activity when they see it – in the process of the teaching and learning and in end result.

They will be able to offer advice and signposting for schools and teachers on Artsmark and Arts Award

They will lead on strategic activities that will raise the profile and highlight the value of cultural education across the alliance.

They will be able to make the case for deploying budgets for cultural education and that any investment is most appropriately targeted.

They will be able to ensure that budgets for cultural learning and enhancement activities are suitably programmed so they are inclusive and engage young people appropriately

SLICEs will increase access to and raise the standard of cultural education for children and young people in their school, the alliance and in the North West

When they have completed the fellowship, SLICE's can be deployed under a traded model. An accreditation on a Masters pathway will also be linked to the fellowship.

Curious Minds had clear expectations that when they had completed the fellowship, the Specialist Leader of Cultural Education would be able to be deployed under a traded model. In addition, an accreditation on a Masters pathway at Edgehill University has been developed in partnership with the fellowship. At the time of writing this report a Post Graduate Certificate in Cultural Education providing 60 of the required 180 masters level credits had already been validated and is ready to accept applicants for September 2014, with the expectation that the remaining modules for the final 120 credits for the full Masters qualification will be developed with the SLiCE and Curious Minds as part of a negotiated process. Building a Masters programme in this way is, in itself, a creative and unusual approach recognising the benefits of drawing upon the potential students' collective requirements, aspirations and expertise within the course development process. It is not within the scope of this report to investigate this novel approach but is likely to be of interest to the wider Higher Education community an aspect worthy of further enquiry.

Findings

Nine key themes emerged through the evaluation of the SLiCE programme drawing directly upon interviews with the SLiCE, Cultural Partners and members of the Curious Minds team. In addition, SLiCE reports and notes from meetings contributed to the development of these themes set out below.

Emerging into the role of the SLiCE

Of the twelve SLiCE, eleven felt that their appointment had added a significant new dimension to their role in school and across the schools' alliance. In contrast, the one SLiCE who did not identify any specific developments of his post had already established a broad cultural provision of students over a number of years and saw his appointment as a SLiCE as a means largely to maintain, rather than, evolve this role. Of the other eleven, however, they reported a shift in how they were perceived within their professional role. For some, this shift was largely a change in how they viewed themselves within their post evident in assertions such as, 'I feel like an expert'. For others they recorded that they were aware that in becoming a SLiCE they had begun to work in different ways. One teacher noted that 'it's definitely changed the way I access cultural providers', while for another the focus was more about a shift in role stating, 'I have my expertise but I see the role very much as a broker so that I can be the link between culture and schools'. It was noted that where it might be assumed that curriculum development and team planning are a core activity for all teachers one SLiCE noted that a key development of her SLiCE role was in 'being able to think of a project with other people and make it come to life'.

An increased sense of agency was a key feature of the SLiCE experience and one which was both enjoyed and exploited. In each case, the SLiCE was aware of transferring professional attributes to a new or broader context; among the most reported was their ability to communicate, organise complex teams and raise motivation among staff teams.

All of the SLiCE spoke of the need to overcome communication barriers. These varied from difficulties in making initial contact with Cultural Partners to getting a response from other schools within their alliance. In each case, the SLiCE found that establishing a named individual in the other institution was the most fruitful and rewarding way of creating effective lines of communication. Once this link had been made barriers of communication were largely eliminated although locating that personal contact was time consuming and required persistent attempts before it was realised in most instances. Lack of communication across the alliance was often overcome through an introduction via the head teacher of the host school to other head teachers in the other schools. In relation to making contact with Cultural Organisations Curious Minds supported introductions through a 'market place' event early in the first year of the programme. This event was particularly significant for one SLiCE as she had the opportunity to meet a representative of a Cultural Partner that she would ordinarily have considered a poor match for her project needs and found, to their mutual benefit, was in fact an ideal partner.

Being strategic and inclusive in generating and developing initiatives was a consistently reported aspect of the SLiCE role. In addition, this was considered to be a challenging aspect of the SLiCE. Each alliance had different numbers of school partners, including some with more than ten school members. There was evidence that each SLiCE were keen to include all schools within their alliance in this initiative but many of them found that only a proportion of the schools chose to participate. In most instances schools with an established commitment to cultural education were most likely to participate. Conversely, those schools not opting to get involved were those without a strong ethos of cultural education. Among the twelve alliance, however, there were two instances where schools opted to take part because they wished to address limitations with their provision of Cultural Education.

The majority of the SLiCE were hopeful that non-participating schools within their alliance would take part in subsequent years having first seen the benefits for others. One SLiCE planned to disseminate the teaching materials developed by participating schools to the whole alliance as a way of drawing additional schools in to the second year of the programme, while another spoke of her plans to target specific schools within a staged programme of recruitment and inclusion.

Understanding the working context and ethos of cultural partners was one of the most rewarding aspects of the SLiCE role for four of the Specialist Leaders, while others were more interested in drawing upon the resources the Cultural Partner had to offer than gaining a deeper understanding of the organisation itself.

Becoming an effective advocate was a quality that all the SLiCE reported to be very important to the success of the scheme and one which many considered they had developed their ability to do through the first year experience. One SLiCE spoke of how the programme had helped her to overcome a prior lack of confidence in addressing the senior management team and another stated how she was now able to confidently deliver a persuasive case when recruiting reluctant teachers to become motivated participants. In this respect, becoming a SLiCE was an emancipatory experience for the majority of the Specialist Leaders.

Embracing a greater level of agency happened over time for many of the SLiCE. Several found the first three months of the programme daunting, fraught with issues in developing appropriate contacts across the alliance and with cultural partners while seeking to identify their research focus. While valuing the freedom to develop these aspects independently, many SLiCE reflected upon how anxious there were in the early stages of the year and the pressure of the high expectations they had of themselves. In hindsight some of the SLiCE could see the benefits of giving more time to ideas and relationship development in the Autumn term and a later scheduled start to the active engagement in the programme. In particular, many of the SLiCE focused on pupils' engagement and achievement as the most important indicators of success of the SLiCE initiative rather than on generating evidence of their professional development and effectiveness in this role. This point is considered in more detail later in this report.

Targeting senior teachers as potential candidates for the role of SLiCE has been successful in recruiting experienced educators with the opportunity to influence school policy and practice, allocate resources and mobilise staff within the context of this new initiative. However, not all of

those appointed as SLiCE were are in fact in senior posts. For those not members of the senior management team taking up this role created new opportunities for them to sit on decision making bodies within their alliance contributing to an increased sense of professional agency. An inverse relationship between the SLiCE's standing within their school and the level of potential flexibility in undertaking out of school activities became apparent through interviews with the SLiCEs and the Cultural Partners.

Time and timing emerged as a key theme within this evaluation, particularly in relation to the SLiCE engagement at the site of their chosen cultural organisation. Different models of time allocation developed across the SLiCE programme. Whilst a weekly, half day timetabled allocation for each SLiCE was a contractual commitment of the host school problems were reported in how this time might be spent. In terms of writing, planning and thinking time a regular weekly timetabled slot was ideal and easily programmed within the school timetable. Whereas responding to telephone calls, emails and attending site visits required a more flexible and less predictable release from teaching that was more difficult to accommodate in practice.

Leadership and management were the skills that Cultural Partners recognised as a general area of strength within the SLiCE with which they worked. Strategic management of time-line, people, resources and documentation were considered by the SLiCE and Cultural Partners to be vital to the success of the programme and among the most successful elements within the programme as a whole. There were, however, differences in the leadership styles of individual SLiCE. This varied from the more democratic and collaborative team approach to a more unilateral stance that privileged the creative autonomy of the SLiCE where plans were made prior to recruiting the support of fellow teachers. To some extent the preferred leadership style of the SLiCE was evident within the the development of their research questions although variations within these findings do not suggest that a robust correlation exists.

The Cultural Partners were interested in supporting creative pedagogies and indicated that they often encountered limiting orthodoxies in the practice of the teachers who approach them to develop workshops for students. Overall, the Cultural Partners found greater opportunities for developing creative approaches to teaching and learning with the SLiCE than they would normally expect to do with with teachers. Allied to this positive aspect of the programme, three of the SLiCE would be unable to continue their role due to a combination of maternity leave and moving to new posts. In these instances the Cultural Partners voiced concerns that these individuals would be hard to replace. As one Cultural Partner commented;

The SLiCE is leaving the school and they have struggled to find another candidate for the following year because of the amount of work the staff have seen the current SLiCE put in. There is a limited pool of potential SLiCE candidates therefore there's going to be a point where it can't go any further.

Emergent skills of the SLiCE

The SLiCE made repeated statements about developing new skills within this role although always in general terms. Phrases such as, 'I have learnt so much' were common in the interviews. The SLiCE identified several specific skills developed by their pupils within their final report (June 2014)



including; 'teamwork', 'performance', 'composition' and 'listening' yet none identified new skills that they had developed during the process with the same level of clarity.

When asked, the Cultural Partners claimed that the SLiCEs made excellent use of existing, transferable skills but that they had not witnessed new skills development through the programme. There was some variation of views on this issue. Some Cultural Partners believed that the SLiCE had all the skills needed to establish and maintain their partnership and to continue to support cultural education within the alliance. Others, however, were keen to identify additional skills sets that SLiCE could develop and extend within a supported programme. Among those skills most frequently cited for further development were;

- project management for arts based projects,
- recruiting artists,
- networking,
- working with artists (in particular the language to use with artists)
- how to set a creative brief for an artist within the structure of the curriculum,
- aspiration raising around creative outcomes
- creating a framework for creative practice (that does not predetermine the outcomes)

A recurring point was that the SLiCE was required to be 'brave enough to plan for something when they don't know what the outcome will be because it is part of the creative process'. Where this had been achieved the Cultural Partners were most positive about the development of the partnership. Another frequently made statement reported the need for continuous advocacy by the SLiCE. Both SLiCE and Cultural Partners were in agreement about the importance of this aspect of this role.

Embedding SLiCE role within the host school

SLiCE has extended and reinforced existing roles in schools where Cultural Education was strong. It has elevated the status of some of the Specialist Leaders within their school and the alliance but there is the need for succession planning to maintain levels of Cultural Education and priority of this role in school. This was particularly pertinent in partnerships where the SLiCE is leaving the alliance after the first year but also in maintaining the status of Cultural Education now that the novelty of the initial programme is no longer a key factor. For one SLiCE 'working strategically with SLT and the teaching school lead has incorporated the SLiCE role in to the fabric of the school' while others are less securely embedded.

Dedicated time for the SLiCE role has been essential and most productive when spent off site as there are 'less distractions' yet traditionally working off site has not been received favourably by schools. Given the opportunity to work off site was of great benefit to those who were able to negotiate this as reflected in the account of one SLiCE stating that, 'the afternoon when I could work at home was when I got the most done'. Those SLiCE with the role of deputy head teacher in school found working off site most difficult to achieve because of conflicting loyalties between the SLiCE role and other duties. Equally, those in the more senior roles in school found that thinking time was

essential arguing that ‘as an assistant head [...] you don’t get a minute and having that time to reflect has been really beneficial’.

Successful advocacy by the SLiCE ‘has generated greater levels of commitment’ by schools and Cultural Partners. Many of the SLiCE enjoyed this aspect of the role yet they were conscious of the need to maintain the profile of Cultural Education in the alliance and continue to generate interest and reinforce its benefits for the holistic education of children within the school/alliance. One SLiCE was given additional time by the host school, allowing one day per week to develop projects across the alliance. Reflecting upon her experience she stated that, ‘there is an awful lot to do but I wouldn’t change it, if someone wanted [to reduce] my time the project would have to become an awful lot smaller’.

Changes in funding next year was a point raised by many of the SLiCE giving rise to anxieties about its future although some reported that Cultural Education and the SLiCE role were more robustly established having embedded it within schools’ longer term planning. Given that each SLiCE took a different research focus in the first year there was evidence that the programme has had a varying impact on different host schools.

Working with the Alliance

Establishing effective lines of communication with schools in the alliance proved to be a significant challenge for many of the SLiCE. While one SLiCE reported that ‘getting in touch with the alliance was the biggest problem’ another found locating a named individual was helpful in that she found ‘it a lot easier if you have a contact teacher in the other school - they tend to pass on messages’.

Working across the alliance was a new opportunity for most of the SLiCE and many considered this a rewarding aspect of the experience. One SLiCE captured an enthusiasm shared by many when she said;

I loved it and think it is brilliant, the impact it can have and the way you can change people’s minds [and] attitudes.

From the Cultural Partnership perspective;

Its’ about reassuring teachers from other subject areas that this is meaningful and relevant [...] it’s being able to identify a real kind of synergy between different practices so for instance between language and visual arts, science and visual art, you know the understanding that experimentation and creative practices happen for lots of different disciplines.

None of the SLiCE managed to recruit all the schools within their alliance although most expected to increase the number in the second year. Schools not yet placing an emphasis on Cultural Education were most frequently identified as those they hoped to recruit in the future with an expectation that evidence and continued advocacy from year one would be influential in increasing the level of take up. Giving support to additional schools, especially those with limited prior engagement with

Cultural Education was anticipated to be more demanding than those schools that volunteered in year one.

A disparity in the number of schools in each alliance places an unequal burden upon the SLiCE with the larger alliances. Working with a sub-set of schools was a short term solution to this problem although it was noted that this would be an unhelpful strategy in driving Cultural Education forward in the future.

It became apparent that while the primary and Special Needs schools took an active part in the SLiCE programme, there was a general lack of take up from secondary schools within each alliance unless they were the host school. Two of the SLiCE speculated that this was because of the established practices of self reliance of subject specialist teachers to cover cultural education through their subjects within the secondary context. There was an expectation asserted by the SLiCE that persuading non-participating secondary schools to take part in year two was a greater challenge than encouraging primary schools to engage. What strategies SLiCE intended to use to overcome this reticence of their secondary colleagues was not yet clear.

One SLiCE was concerned that the development of Cultural Education across the alliance was likely to have to acknowledge the sensitive and difficult issues resulting through falling rolls in his authority warning that;

When you are talking about providing something that's better for the 2000 students across every year group in the schools in the local area then you meet the hard realities that schools are still in competition.

How SLiCE will resolve this and other conflicts of interest in the future was not clear. That they will be, at some point, required to do so is more certain.

Establishing research within the SLiCE role

There was consistent evidence that the SLiCE were committed to pursuing their research question and that the nature of the question had a considerable influence on how they developed their role in this programme. The SLiCE were equally confident in the project development aspect of their brief. There was, however, a high level of anxiety evident among the SLiCE at the point of producing their first interim report and a wide variation on levels of competence in writing the research reports at each stage. A third of the SLiCE produced comprehensive accounts in response to their research question, including evidence-based claims and developmental targets. These reports were able to fulfill Curious Minds' expectation, that if shared with the alliance, they might inform future practice.

Over the past twenty years Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in England has predominantly included an aspect of Action Research regardless of the beginning teacher's route into the profession. What was notable here, however, was the limited evidence of understanding of practitioner enquiry and action research methodology despite a general understanding of action research methods among the SLiCE. Assumptions that teachers would have the skills and the confidence to undertake an action

research project was not unreasonable given the emphasis this is afforded in ITT yet this evaluation found evidence that modelling the report, clarification of the methodology and frameworks to support reflexive practice may have been further developed to support this aspect of the initiative.

Two of the SLiCE expressed an interest in writing workshops to develop this element within their SLiCE role and a further three suggested that they would benefit from the provision of exemplar materials.

In particular, the emphasis on children's educational development and relationship building within the SLiCE reports demonstrated an ability to reflect upon observations and practice when it came to their students but demonstrated very little evidence of reflection upon their development within the SLiCE role.

A number of the Cultural Partners expressed a disappointment that they were not actively involved in developing the research questions with the SLiCE and two of these explicitly stated that they believed they have the capacity to support critical dialogue and reflexive analysis. One Cultural Partner felt that the research question his SLiCE was investigating was limited in scope given the potential their partnership had to offer. In addition, the Cultural Partners articulated a desire to have a more active role in the construction of the video narrative to better reflect the pedagogic approach that underpins their practice and one claimed that the construction of the video unwittingly undermined the education practice that took place. A member of the Curious Minds team was concerned to better understand 'how do we get teachers to talk about themselves'.

The Cultural Partners were unanimous in their support of the research element of the SLiCE role but so was their willingness to share this aspect of the programme with the SLiCE. Their perspective was reflected in this statement;

Like all good projects it's about learning itself. It's the drive of the stories, the narratives; the moments when the light bulbs going on and off in people's heads is exactly what it's about. And the shifts in practice, the change in practice may really only be evident in a year, two years time.

Whilst demonstrating a strong commitment to the SLiCE project was clearly evident in the accounts of all the Cultural Partners interviewed there was an underlying tension about the power dynamic between them and the SLiCE. The intentions of Curious Minds to further emphasise the role of the SLiCE as 'cultural commissioners' is likely to increase what was described by the bridge organisation as a 'healthy tension'.

Development of the Masters level programme with Edgehill was part of the Curious Minds' strategy and currently a work in progress. Opportunities for SLiCE to enrol on an accredited course is expected to be available in September 2014. Enhanced understanding of theories of cultural education and deeper levels of reflexive practice as intended outcomes of this programme with strong links between theory and praxis.

Developing Relationships with Cultural Partners



Through the interviews it became apparent that the reputation of Curious Minds was a significant factor in the level of Cultural Partners' commitment to this programme. Although all the Cultural Partners were clear about their willingness to work with the SLiCE the association with Curious Minds helped them to prioritise resources and have an enhanced level of confidence in the quality of the initiative. Many of the Cultural Partners had previous experience of working with Curious Minds as a bridge organisation or were acutely aware of its track record with cultural organisations. Developing collaborative practices with Cultural Partners through the SLiCE programme, Cultural Partners reported, made it easier for cultural organisations to commit resources to participating schools. Reasons given for the development of these enhanced relationships were that the bridge organisation brought with it an assurance that schools' commitment would be sustained and the expectations would be high in terms of quality of experience and outcome. Furthermore, smaller cultural organisations reported that they gained kudos in being associated with Curious Minds and the larger institutions associated with SLiCE.

Cultural partners spoke freely of the quality engagement they associated with Curious Minds, the bench mark of excellent practice that it stands for and how that informed their responses when approached by a SLiCE. As one Cultural Partner stated;

We do a lot of work with Curious Minds as an organisation so we know what their pedigree is and what they offer as a bridge organisation [...] there's that trust, there's that reliability, there is comfort I suppose in knowing that Curious Minds are involved.

Collectively the SLiCE found making first contact with Cultural Partners difficult for similar reasons to initiating a discourse across their alliance. Introductions made via Curious Minds were more straight forward largely because the SLiCE was given direct access to the most appropriate named contact. Equally, Cultural Partners cited contacting schools as a consistent and most significant barrier to developing partnerships and providing services for schools in general. Cultural Partners were well aware of how challenging it was to get schools to respond to their invitations to make use of the services they provide as this is, they reported, a long standing issue across the sector. For many Cultural Partners taking part in the programme was an opportunity to gain access to motivated teachers representing clusters of schools. The SLiCE were less prepared for the persistent attempts they would need to make successful contact with cultural organisations. In addition, it proved difficult for SLiCE to return calls within office hours due to the protocol when working with children that limits their ability to communicate with others during a working day.

Once contact had been made with the right person in the school and the cultural organisation both parties commented on how free flowing and productive their communication became and expectations for maintaining that contact were high. Both Cultural Partners and SLiCE described instances where appointments were not kept or communications remained unanswered and in these cases the relationship was quickly severed. In a number of cases this was the reason for the SLiCE changing their allegiance to a new Cultural Partner. This was succinctly expressed by one of the SLiCE when she stated that 'I don't want to work with someone if we're not a priority'.

In each case the partnership between the SLiCE and the Cultural Partner resulted in the development of bespoke programmes and events. There emerged an understanding that stock



workshops and activities were not the best fit for the children's educational needs. There was considerable diversity in the ways in which the SLiCE envisioned working in partnership. Some were looking for 'immersive learning', while others were interested in a drip feed engagement over time. Others chose to work with multiple Cultural Partners to create a rich programme for the children within the broader alliance, whilst others targeted certain students from across the alliance for smaller group engagement. Yet despite the variety of approaches, planning collaboratively was cited by all parties as a highly successful and rewarding experience that raised the aspirations of teachers and students within the alliances.

Often the SLiCE reported that they took on mediation and co-ordination roles in the development of Cultural Education programme for cross school provision within their alliance. As one SLiCE commented, 'I found schools in our alliance that do not use a cultural partner so I've been a conduit really, putting schools together with a cultural partner and developing relationships'.

From the Cultural Partners perspective working with the SLiCE was a positive experience. One of the key benefits was the way in which the SLiCE became an advocate for the Cultural Partner on their behalf. As one Cultural Partner stated;

One of the barriers for the museum is that teachers assume that their offer is limited to history when there is an entire [programme available] that is cross-curricular and supports a whole host of things in very different ways.

Where many of the SLiCE reported that the programme had enabled them to break new ground within their approach to Cultural Education for many Cultural Partners the experience allowed them to extend their provision to a new range of schools but it did not necessarily challenge or extend their practice. One Cultural Partner was particularly keen to say that the SLiCE programme was not a development but a 'continuation of what we do with the schools we engage with'. On the otherhand, another Cultural Partner drew attention to a shift in the relationships her organisation has with schools in recent times.

Patterns of engagement of schools with the gallery are changing. It is a very different take up to two years ago where working with primary schools was a significant part of the education team's delivery.

Changes in the curriculum and more discipline-based teaching in primary school were considered influential in the reduction of school visits and bookings for CPD provision. Many of the Cultural Partners were familiar with the powerful impact of first-hand experience on helping teachers to realise the benefits of Cultural Education and learning opportunities outside the classroom for their pupils as one explained, 'I think something real, something concrete has to happen for people to understand what the potential is'.

In the interviews and in the written reports the SLiCE demonstrated strong commitment to maintaining the partnerships developing in year one. Some of the SLiCE aspired to work with additional Cultural Partners in the second year especially where there was a strong subject bias in

what the provider had to offer. Where the cultural organisation offers multiple and inter-disciplinary engagement there was a greater indication that they were interested in maintaining a working relationship with one partner.

Three of the Cultural Partners expressed frustration at being brought in via invitations by the SLiCE, once the research question had been formed, and would have preferred to be invited by Curious Minds. In one case the Cultural Partner wanted more detailed information about the overarching initiative than the SLiCE could provide arguing that he, and his colleagues, had much to offer in supporting the Specialist Leader as experts in cultural education and creative pedagogies; sharing the perception that 'we were sort of brought in at the end'.

Many of the Cultural Partners reflected that the SLiCE had limited understanding of what 'cultural education' is as a concept and wished to have greater opportunities to discuss and debate this with the SLiCE. As one Cultural Partner said;

I think there needs to be a real understanding in terms of exactly what the SLiCE programme is trying to achieve.

Where another Cultural Partner reflected that;

The SLiCE and Cultural Partner need to share the journey. In the first year the engagement was teacher led with some input from the cultural partner but the cultural partner was not invited to contribute to the reflection upon the experience or critique that with the SLiCE. Was this a missed opportunity?

The four day placement

The four day placement was considered one of the most innovative aspects of the SLiCE programme by the Specialist Leaders and the Cultural Partners. Given the freedom to interpret this aspect of the programme themselves the participants developed a number of different ways of using this time.

I spent two days learning about their priorities for participation with the learning team and two days was about them picking my brains.

At its best, the four day placement offered the SLiCE insight into the ways in which the Cultural Partner worked, the philosophy behind their pedagogic approach and the factors that informed their decision making. Devoting two days to observing the Cultural Partner at work and the other two days critiquing and developing the educational programme was the model that had the greatest impact upon the SLiCE's practice in this phase of the programme. In this case both the Cultural Partner and the SLiCE found that they gained new perspectives on their own as well as each others practice that opened up possibilities for new ways of collaborations.

As a cultural organisation you could see the benefit of the four day placement being a more immersive experience but there are difficulties in SLiCE being released from school at the most appropriate times to work with the Cultural Partner.

The opportunities for the SLiCE to take whole days out of school was beneficial yet hard to achieve. Some of the SLiCE were limited to meeting with the Cultural Partner within their half a day a week allocation while others were able to negotiate longer blocks of time. SLiCE with the responsibilities

of senior management found that it was particularly problematic being out of school for whole days as part of their function in school was to be available to address issues quickly with pupils, colleagues and parents. Taking time out needed to be arranged to minimise the potential disruption to the day-to-day running of the school and sometimes this compromised their opportunity to engage fully with the placement.

From the Cultural Partners perspective, fragmenting the placement time into less than full day meetings was less productive reducing the opportunity to introduce the SLiCE to different aspects of the organisation. As one Cultural Partner commented, 'I was expecting whole days, kind of ten 'til five, and that isn't what we got'.

Cultural Partners recognised that 'programmes like SLiCE are an opportunity to really gain an understanding into what it's like working in a cultural organisation' declaring a 'desire to want to work collaboratively in a meaningful way'. In terms of influencing the SLiCE's understanding of alternative ways of teaching and learning around cultural education some of the Cultural Partners suggested that longer immersive places would be beneficial.

As a person in a cultural organisation you felt sometimes when or how [is the SLiCE] really going embed thinking [within their professional development] so I would say four days was probably not enough.

Many of the Cultural Partners commented that there were aspects of their organisation that the SLiCE did not get to see because of the timing of the four day placement. Several Cultural Partners spoke about the benefit of providing time in their organisation prior to the development of the research question to broaden the SLiCE's thinking and address misconceptions about what they could offer and how they worked. Synchronising the SLiCE's days with key events at the cultural organisation was an additional point that emerged from several interviews with the Cultural Partners as they were aware that some events (such as strategy planning) where attendance of the SLiCE might be most appropriate only happened at certain times in the year. One Cultural Partner went further and considered the potential of the Cultural Partner undertaking a similar placement in the schools 'to see how cultural engagement is being taught in the classroom'.

Several of the SLiCE chose to use their four day placement as time for collaborative planning. This was a productive way to use this time but less effective in shifting the SLiCE's practice and gaining deeper insights into how the cultural organisations work.

One of the SLiCE was unable to attend a placement this academic year with his chosen cultural partner due to disruption of the impact of changes in government funding and policy on the organisation. It is hoped that the placement may be able to take place at a later date.

Notably, in response to the particular interpretations among the SLiCE in how they used their four placement days in the cultural organisations has led Curious Minds to re-name these days as 'work shadowing' to better frame the intentions of this experience in year two.

Shifting cultures and sustainability



Twenty-five percent of the SLiCE were leaving their school by the end of the first year of the programme either to take up new posts elsewhere or more temporarily for maternity leave. This raised issues of succession planning among those leaving the programme.

The big question is, will this be sustained once I've stepped away [...] I'm hoping it will be sustained because I didn't do it as a one off project.

Investing in one Specialist Leader in each alliance has been a powerful strategy to develop opportunities for cultural education but leaves the schools vulnerable to changes in staff. The majority of the SLiCE have created forums for collaborative planning and discussion within their alliance. Working with named staff in schools across the alliance has provided effective avenues of communication for the SLiCE that may offer the basis for cultural education working parties or potential candidates for the transition into the SLiCE role. This was a key issue for Curious Minds, Cultural Partners and SLiCE and identified as an area for further consideration.

There is evidence that the experience of SLiCE has begun to impact on schools' practice. This was illustrated in the comment by one SLiCE that;

It's made me think that I have to work with the class teachers a lot more because I don't know every class. I suppose it's made me slow down a bit; it doesn't all have to be organised in September.

Planning the whole academic year in advance has become common practice in schools and opportunities to make changes part way through the school year has proved problematic for SLiCE. What is evident in the statement is the development of a rationale for creating spaces within the year where organic planning might take place providing a supportive structure for more fluid and responsive approaches to teaching and learning in relation to cultural education.

The launch of the coalition government's new curriculum provided a catalyst for several of the SLiCE to initiate collaborative planning around cultural education across the alliance that was a departure from existing practice and an opportunity to build deeper working relationships across schools.

I've written a new arts policy with everyone in the alliance so we're got consistency which is really good and we're all monitoring from levels 1-5.

Changes to the national curriculum have impacted upon Cultural Partners too. One Cultural Partner described how primary schools were investing in his organisation to deliver specialist curriculum planning and delivery in music as a direct consequence of the lack of detail and guidance in the new curriculum for music. In this case the cultural organisation had already doubled its work and expected this trend to continue into the following academic year heralding a new commitment among schools to fund outside partners in providing cultural education for their pupils. As he stated;

The new curriculum is coming in September and there has been a real upheaval in all kinds of ways. It's created new opportunities. I think it has created a lot of fear in your average classroom teacher or senior leadership team because the curriculum has gone from being very well specified, 57 pages to 2 pages, so it's very vague which is brilliant for me because it allows me to push things in all kinds of different directions. The new curriculum is an intimidating area for a lot of teachers.

On the other hand, the impact of austerity measures over recent years was seen to have impacted upon the larger cultural organisations.

Through the recession funding has been reduced to organisations and I think we're all experiencing it. Roles have gone, budgets have been cut in the cultural sector and people are trying to be as creative as they can about keeping these things going.

Cultural Partners articulated their commitment to developing strategic partnerships with SLiCE as a productive way to use their resources and extend their reach. Cultural Partners further away from the schools alliance found that there were geographic barriers that raised questions about how practical it was to build longer term relationships if the majority of schools were unlikely to be able to bring children into the centre. This was not true in all cases, however, with some schools able to provide efficient and cost effective transport so this is an issue that would benefit from further consideration as the programme moves into its second year.

Plans for Curious Minds to part fund the SLiCE programme in the second year with some financial commitment on behalf of schools was a concern for many of the SLiCE although, at the time of interviewing participants, a number of alliances had already had confirmed their intention to continue with this initiative. It was clear that funding in the second year would continue to protect the time table release for the Specialist Leaders and notably only one alliance did not sign up to continue with the programme in year two.

Several of the SLiCE reported that building partnerships with multiple cultural organisations was likely to provide longer term stability for their alliances, in that it offered flexibility in meeting different curriculum needs and variety of experiences. The potential danger of over saturation of working with one cultural organisation was echoed by a Cultural Partner concerned about schools seeking to develop projects around themes that were much more relevant to other local organisations. The potential for over reliance on one Cultural Partner was a concern for both the cultural organisation and the SLiCE.

Overall, there was an overwhelming body of positive feedback from all participants that indicated firm commitments to sustaining the SLiCE initiative as part of established practice in the future. As one SLiCE commented 'I envisage this being a long and fulfilling partnership'.

Cultural education in practice

There was very little evidence of the SLiCE reflecting upon their concept of 'cultural education' within the interviews or their written reports. Although opportunities for interdisciplinary

engagement featured in several of the projects all the SLiCE placed a strong emphasis on subject areas such as art, drama, music and history without any obvious critique of how this constituted a specific cultural education within the schools' curriculum. This was raised by Cultural Partners, four of whom discussed how, together with the SLiCE, they failed to create opportunities for conversations about developing a shared understanding of cultural education. One Cultural Partner suggested that this might evolve with the partnership while others were keen to recommend that this became a specific target for development of the SLiCE programme. Certainly the Cultural Partners asserted that they had much to offer in this respect that was, as yet, largely untapped potential.

SLiCE identified the benefits from giving children first-hand experiences outside the classroom as among the most beneficial aspects of cultural education within this initiative and this understanding was shared by the Cultural Partners.

It's important to be able to come and see a play, to be able to see a painting in the flesh, to be able to come and visit a cultural institution because sometimes the only opportunity children and young people get is if they come through school.

Artsmark was a particularly productive vehicle for developing the level of engagement of schools in cultural education. In preparation for making an application for Artsmark Gold one SLiCE found that many teachers in his alliance 'lacked confidence in applying' particularly in relation to the Gold award due, at least in part, to an absence of bench mark examples. Schools were reluctant to apply for an award that they were not confident they would receive and therefore were inclined to apply for the lower Artsmark award or to not apply at all. The SLiCE found the biggest barriers to schools take up of Artsmark were teachers' perceptions and the prohibitive length of the application form. Addressing teachers' concerns and clarifying the process resulted in 80% of the schools in his alliance making an application, 20% of which were completed within the 2013-2014 academic year. The issues the teachers raised in preparation for Artsmark applications, particularly in relation to a Special School settings, included; 'limited display space' within the school environment; 'providing after school clubs for pupils reliant on transport to and from school'; and 'how to support PMLD students make meaningful choices between art forms when they experience the world through a sensory dialogue'. Working with the SLiCE, a school-based teacher, was particularly valuable in being able to support colleagues through the Artsmark process and gave the SLiCE new insights that he could feedback to Artsmark in extending take up particularly in relation to inclusivity and special education settings.

Arts Award was very popular among the primary schools participating within the SLiCE programme. The SLiCE reported that they, and their colleagues, were previously unfamiliar with Arts Awards. Curious Minds were instrumental in raising awareness and facilitating Arts Awards training for teachers and the SLiCE were enthusiastic advocates for developing opportunities for children to gather evidence for submission. One of the SLiCE found the cost of submitting multiple applications for Arts Awards financially problematic but found a Cultural Partner willing to cover the cost as part of the partnership agreement. In this case the SLiCE identified this as one of the principle reasons for working with this particular Cultural Partner.

One of the challenges that the SLiCE and Cultural Partners were keen to engage with was to move away from objectives-led teaching towards a more creative learning approach. Whilst the majority of the Cultural Partners claimed to offer open ended learning and creative pedagogy there was one notable exception when offering peripatetic music services. In discussing the experience of the child centred learning generated within the SLiCE programme this Cultural Partner commented that:

It's a high risk strategy to leave things sort of free so it was nice to experience that, but I don't know whether I'd necessarily be able to bring that into school.

Consistently reported by the SLiCE was the increased level of pupil participation and sustained on-task behaviour as a direct result of working with cultural organisations to deliver cultural education. This was reflected in one Cultural Partner's interview stating; 'I think the teachers were surprised that the children were kept interested for the whole three hours'. Similar views were echoed in accounts across the SLiCE experiences.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis and discussion draws directly upon the main objectives of this evaluation as set out in the introduction and are used here to structure this section.

What has changed/improved for SLiCES, teachers and pupils as a result of their engagement with the programme?

Children's access to Cultural Education was greatly increased through the SLiCE programme. A greater emphasis on creative pedagogies emerged through engagement with cultural organisations that developed rich and immersive learning opportunities for children at school and outside the classroom. These experiences were found to raise levels of children's motivation, achievement and sustained their engagement over longer periods of time than was normally the case in standard lessons. The SLiCE facilitated strategic developments for schools within their alliance and developed significant working relationships with Cultural Partners. In building these relationships the SLiCE gained fresh insights into the ways in which cultural organisations work behind the scenes, dispelled misconceptions and raised aspirations. All the Cultural Partners contributed to the professional development of the SLiCE in their new role and in some cases the SLiCE facilitated development of the educational offer within cultural organisations.

An increased level of agency was experienced by all the SLiCE, influencing policy and practice within their schools and across the alliance. The SLiCE were successful advocates for Cultural Education eliciting high levels of commitment from schools within their alliance, contributing to curriculum development and brokering new working relationships. Many of the SLiCE formed working parties within the schools' alliance generating lines of communication that had not previously existed among teachers and pupils.

The SLiCE were proactive in supporting staff within their alliance to engage differently with Cultural Partners and work collaboratively to embrace new ways of working. Take up of Arts Award and Artsmark Gold was significantly enhanced through their intervention raising awareness of how these awards could support strategic development of Cultural Education in schools. Uncertainty and lack of understanding of the Artsmark Gold benchmarks was addressed by the SLiCE with support of Curious Minds leading to a notable increase in applications. The majority of SLiCE were unaware of Arts Award

when they first took up this post but by the end of the first year several hundred children had successfully achieved an award.

Cultural Partners developed their education programme to make more appropriate provision for individual pupils' needs. Bespoke workshops developed in partnership were seen to enhance learning and raised implicit questions about the relative value of standard packaged provision offered by cultural organisations.

The SLiCE have become strong advocates for cultural education in schools, increased inter-school planning and delivery. New initiatives have been embedded within the curriculum and in doing so have secured the potential for long term benefits for children, teachers and their Cultural Partners.

What have been the barriers to participation?

Teacher perceptions was found to be a significant factor in limiting participation and to a larger extent this was successfully addressed through the SLiCE interventions in the first year of this programme. In each alliance, however, there were schools that did not take up the opportunity to engage. Generating educational change takes time (Bruner 1996) and shifting the cultural of education is a challenging task. Many of the SLiCE plan to use the success of the first year as a persuasive tool to engage non-participating schools within their alliance.

Communication was a key issue for all the SLiCE and Cultural Partners. Introductions from the bridge organisation helped a number of partnerships overcome potential problems of making initial contact, where access to additional cultural organisations was achieved through persistent telephone and email contact. Once appropriate named individuals had formed a connection partnerships developed quickly and positively yet SLiCE continue to face similar challenges each time they set out to develop links with new cultural organisations. This was also the case for SLiCE making contact with non-participating schools within their alliance.

The school ethos and curriculum develop agenda was seen to be a limiting factor in those schools that chose not to participate in the activities developed by the SLiCE. Communication within the alliance was further hindered by the apparent lack of working relationship between schools. In many cases the SLiCE generated cross-school working parties to address this deficit.

The logistics of making time for SLiCE in releasing them from their teaching and other professional commitments was effective in protecting regular time in the working week but problematic for more flexible availability (Moss and Pence 2007). This remains an ongoing issue for SLiCE.

Cultural Partners were keen to support teachers in better understanding of pedagogies in cultural education (Harris 2013) although the SLiCE were more inclined to focus on procedural planning than critiquing their understanding of what constitutes Cultural Education and their professional development in this respect.

In addition, Cultural Partners reported that they wanted to establish more equal partnerships through the SLiCE initiative (Bath, Barr and Haynes 2014) but considered that they were positioned more in the role of service provider than collaborator in this first year.

Which cultural organisations do schools want to invest in?

In general schools wanted to work with those cultural organisations that were easy to contact, responded promptly to enquiries, were responsive to requests for bespoke activities, were able to offer additional support and resources, were affordable, gave access to a network of contacts and were positive and encouraging. Beyond these professional attributes there were clear differences between schools that sought to work with either specialist or inter-disciplinary cultural organisations.

Some of the SLiCE targeted subject specialist providers (visual arts, music and drama) to address particular curriculum needs and opportunities. The strength of these collaborations was the access

schools could gain to world class practitioners creating aspirational experiences for children in school and outside the classroom. The limitations of these specialist organisations were that often they were the most expensive and would be inappropriate partners to meet other aspects of Cultural Education for schools.

Other SLiCE opted to work with cultural organisations that offered interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary opportunities for collaborative planning and delivery of Cultural Education. Cultural Partners in these institutions differed in that some considered that they could meet any cultural education need that schools might require to those that observed the tendency for teachers to become overly reliant on one cultural organisation. The challenges facing the SLiCE in developing new partnerships (noted above) offers some explanation for why this was the case but additional indications suggested that some schools just failed to consider options elsewhere within their locale once they had established one successful partnership. The SLiCE spoke of this phenomenon in terms of loyalty while the Cultural Partners saw this more as a sign of complacency. The dangers here were that innovative programmes might quickly become stale and the benefits of bespoke provision might soon become simply an alternative set of standard workshops.

What are the on-going needs of schools in developing cultural education?

A strong correlation between Henley's (2012) definition of Cultural Education in terms of curriculum subject areas and teachers' attitudes to what constituted an appropriate cultural learning experience for pupils was clearly evident in this evaluation. Despite a discourse of inclusion, there was no evidence to suggest that SLiCE were conversant with the potentially limiting factors of an uncritical approach to Cultural Education. Beyond the significant insights shared in relation to Special Educational Needs provision and Cultural Education there was an absence of reference to the impact of children's cultural background (Edge 1990, Addison & Dash 2000), gendered, social and economic (McGregor 2012) standpoint within the wider Cultural Education debate. Neither was there any indication that any of the SLiCE had reflected upon how they were ideologically located within the development of Cultural Education provision, with and for, the schools they represent. Opportunities for developing SLiCE's 'cultural competence' (Farmer 2010) were explicitly evident in the accounts of Cultural Partners and implicit in the discourse of the SLiCE. This may be achieved through the intended Masters programme at Edgehill University or through critical dialogue with Cultural Partners (Schon 2005).

Succession planning for the SLiCE role within each alliance was a recurring theme throughout this evaluation. That the SLiCE role was valued by the Cultural Partners and the school alliance was without doubt, however, there was an understanding that this specialised role was vulnerable to the stability of the particular individuals in post. It was suggested that the named contacts in the alliance schools provide a potential pool of teachers who could be inducted further into this role and may benefit from formalising their deputy status within the SLiCE fellowship. Furthermore, it became apparent that this might provide an opportunity to delegate aspects of the role, particularly where alliances seek to develop partnerships with multiple cultural organisations and the workload becomes overly burdensome for one teacher.

Effective advocacy will continue to be a necessary function of the SLiCE role as continued change within the educational climate prioritises new initiatives and responds to competing external pressures. While the SLiCE proved to be particularly effective in this respect in year one there are strong indications that there is no room for complacency if the scheme is to fulfil its long term potential.

How are schools nurturing skills in cultural education amongst staff?

There was significant evidence that SLiCE were making provision of in service training for their colleagues in partnership with cultural organisations as needs arose. Workshops, site visits, visiting speakers and the dissemination of educational resources were particular areas of strength. This raised the status of the SLiCE among their peers and elicited requests for further support from their colleagues reinforcing positive working relationships across schools. While this was a success of the programme

there was also evidence to suggest that the lack of criticality around concepts of cultural education that raise questions over the effectiveness of this model to challenge limiting practices without the aid of external intervention (Schon 2005, Elliott 1991).

Recommendations

The following recommendations have emerged through the process of this evaluation.

1. Build succession planning into SLiCE role within the alliance
2. Consider developing deputy SLiCE in each of the alliance schools
3. Create a forum where conceptual understanding of theories of cultural education can be discussed, debated and developed
4. Encourage SLiCE to develop partnerships with more than one Cultural Partners against an agenda of wider cultural participation
5. Maximise opportunities by establishing models and guidance material for the SLiCE placement in cultural organisations
6. Consider how to engage more secondary schools within the alliance
7. Develop understanding and application of research methodologies to facilitate the value of reflexive practice
8. Consider the potential of Cultural Partners in collaborating on developing and investigating research questions and the ongoing SLiCE agenda.

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