

# SLICE

## Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education: An Evaluation of 2014 to 2015

This report was produced on behalf of Curious Minds

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## About the author of this report

Dr Sandra Hiett has extensive experience in pedagogic practice and research in visual arts, creativity and cultural education. She has worked in partnership with schools and cultural institutions over the past 23 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 and Education. In addition, she is a co-founder of the Artist Teacher Associates, Senior Lecturer in Teacher Education at Liverpool Hope University and is Deputy Editor of the international Journal of Art and Design Education.

## Introduction

This evaluation has been prepared on behalf of Curious Minds and reports on the second year of the Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education programme from September 2014 to August 2015. This research takes a case study approach, presenting an indicative sample of six of the twenty-two SLiCE partnerships active at the time this evaluation was undertaken.

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

Curious Minds is a charity based in Preston 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](http://www.curiousminds.org.uk))

Curious Minds is one of Arts Council England's 10 Bridge organisations, charged with supporting cultural education.

The SLiCE initiative was set up as 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.

Between April 2013 and March 2015 Curious Minds have inducted 29 teachers into the SLiCE role; 28 SLiCE continue to be deployed in the role by their own alliance and Curious Minds during the academic year 2015/16. SLiCE are drawn from schools across phases and in a range of circumstance: 17 x Secondary, 8 x Primary and 4 x SEND.

Across the two-year pilot SLiCE has reached 945 schools with general information and guidance about cultural education and attendance at regional and national conferences; and have meaningfully engaged with 261 schools with CPD and direct brokerage.

The programme has enabled meaningful collaboration between schools and 40 arts and cultural organisations, including: National Portfolio Organisations, Major Partnership Museums, Library Services and Music Education Hubs.

2020 children have taken part in cultural education activity directly brokered by SLiCE (many more will have benefitted indirectly through improved partnership working as a result of teacher CPD delivered by SLiCE as part of their role).

303 Initial Teacher Education students and 50 NQTs have engaged directly with SLiCE through Schools Direct and Higher Education providers.

6 North West Universities have been involved in SLiCE. Curious Minds have written and validated a complimentary PG Cert Ed in Cultural Education in partnership with Edge Hill University.

32 individual SLiCE reports have been produced alongside 30 cultural sector case-studies. These have been disseminated at the C: Ed Talks conferences 2013 and 2014 and the School Led Conference 2014. The interim external evaluation findings were presented to international delegates at the IJade Conference in 2014; leading to calls for papers from Korea, Sweden, Portugal, Lithuania and Australia.

**The main objectives of this evaluation were to:**

- undertake a dilemma analysis of year one SLiCE data to identify barriers to participation
- identify how dilemma were impacting upon Specialist Leaders and their Cultural Partners
- generate discussion supporting resolution of emerging dilemma
- report upon areas of success
- identify areas for further development
- evidence the legacy of SLiCE for participating organisations

The primary audience for this report is Curious Minds and all those participating in the SLiCE programme including; the Curious Minds team, SLiCE fellows, participating Cultural Partners and Teaching School Alliances. In addition, these findings may be relevant to the wider education community, the cultural sector, education policy makers, curriculum leaders, experienced and beginning teachers.

## Background

The Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education (SLiCE) fellowship was 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 several recommendations. The 'summary of programmes and opportunities' of Cultural Education (DfE 2013), was closely followed by 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 as a two-year pilot programme.

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 this 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 SLiCE fellows' chosen research foci considered in later in this report.

### **Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education**

The role of the SLiCE fellow was refined in light of the first year of the programme, although the principle expectations of this post were consistent across both years. The SLiCE fellows are required to co-ordinate and manage a number of elements across the schools' alliance and with a Cultural Partner. Within the Curious Minds model specific roles of Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education are;

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

(Curious Minds 2013)

## Methodology and research methods

The SLiCE programme has a research ethos embedded within its core activity and is informed by Practitioner Enquiry Action Research methodology (Ledwith 1997). The SLiCE programme sets out to disrupt limiting orthodoxies in Cultural Education and, as such, embodies an Action Research methodology to facilitate the professional development of teachers (Elliott 1991) towards a curriculum development agenda (Stenhouse 1975). As Somekh (1995:340) states;

Action research is a methodology which is broadly defined and takes widely different forms, and that this is the right and proper consequence of action research being grounded in the values of the individuals or groups who are carrying it out; that underpinning action research there is a set of democratic values, which endow the action researcher with the right to take control of the research process.

Each SLiCE fellow was required to develop his or her own research question in collaboration with his or her Cultural Partner(s) with support and guidance from Curious Minds. This was a development from the first year of the SLiCE programme in that the Cultural Partner was consulted in the evolution of the research focus. Formerly, the SLiCE fellow developed the research question independently and in doing so was less able to take advantage of the research skills and expertise of the Cultural Partners (Hiatt & Smears 2014). Those SLiCE in their second year of the programme were required to work with two Cultural Partners including their original partner plus one other. SLiCE fellows in their first year of the programme were required to work with one Cultural Partner only, following the same pattern of the earlier cohort of SLiCE fellows. The research questions developed within the SLiCE partnerships drove the content of the SLiCE activities within each school alliance in collaboration with their Cultural Partner(s). The SLiCE fellows were required to report upon the development of their research projects through the academic year and to submit a final research report to Curious Minds in July/August 2015.

A qualitative research methodology underpins this evaluation with specific reference to Richard Winter's dilemma analysis. A dilemma analysis approach was adopted in response to the significant number of dilemmas emerging through the first year SLiCE evaluation (Hiatt & Smears 2014). Winter (1982) developed his dilemma analysis model in relation to his research practice in teacher education where sensitive issues emerged, particularly where participants worked closely together where unequal power relationships exist. Somekh (1995) clarified procedural elements of Winter's model, that were further refined by Campbell, McNamara & Gilroy (2004). In this evaluation the dilemma analysis was adapted into a five step process;

**Step one** – audio record semi-structured interviews with individual participants

**Step two** – transcribe interview audio tapes

**Step three** – code the transcripts identifying any reference to dilemma

**Step four** – present the dilemma in a neutral manner ('on the one hand'/'on the other hand')

**Step five** – share the dilemma as presented in step four to each group and audio record discussion

Used effectively, this model is designed to facilitate discussion about sensitive issues towards finding resolutions whilst protecting the identity of individuals and minimising the opportunity for conflict (Winter 1982). In this instance the dilemma analysis from the year one evaluation informed the first group interview in the second year of the SLiCE programme. These interviews, in turn, were analysed to identify existing and additional dilemmas/themes. The dilemmas identified in the year one data of the SLiCE programme are presented in the following table.

DILEMMA ANALYSIS – THEMES TO SUPPORT DISCUSSION	
On the one hand ...	On the other hand ...
1. All teachers have some training in research methods	Most SLiCE fellows lack confidence in their ability to undertake a research project
2. SLiCE fellows are experienced in developing the curriculum in and across schools	Cultural Partners are experienced in developing Cultural Education in out of school settings
3. Planning in schools and cultural organisations takes place months/years in advance	Creative and child centred learning requires flexible facilitation
4. SLiCE fellows are located in one school	SLiCE fellows have responsibility for developing Cultural Education across their alliance
5. SLiCE fellows have a commissioning role	Cultural Partners have expertise that can inform the thinking of the SLiCE
6. Primary schools implement interdisciplinary and theme-based engagement with ease	Secondary schools engage more easily in subject orientated engagement
7. SLiCE have a defined role with specific responsibilities	SLiCE are pioneering a new role and are navigating new territory
8. Working with named individuals in schools and cultural organisations greatly enhances communication	Partnerships are made vulnerable when individuals can no longer fulfil their role (illness/new post/long term leave etc)
9. Bespoke provision greatly enhanced children's educational experience and learning	Development of teaching and learning resource packs allows greater reach for the time invested in developing new activities/approaches

The group discussions took place with the SLiCE fellows and their Cultural Partner(s) in the autumn of 2014-2015 including three case studies in their first year and another three case studies from those in their second year. The group discussions were facilitated by the researcher and participants were invited to talk about any of the dilemmas identified from the previous year. In addition, the groups were offered the opportunity to consider any other dilemmas relevant to their engagement in the SLiCE programme. The discussions were audio recorded, transcribed and analysed, completing a second cycle of dilemma analysis. Findings of this analysis are presented within the six case studies in this report.

Those SLiCE fellows and Cultural Partners taking place in the group discussions in the autumn term of 2014 were subsequently invited to take part in individual interviews at the end of the academic year between June and August 2015. Participants reflected upon their experience across the year during a one-to-one semi-structured interview and were asked to identify; areas of success, areas for development and the implications for the future in light of their engagement in SLiCE.

In qualitative research, notions of validity and reliability are problematic primarily because the findings are context bound and time specific and therefore an unhelpful basis upon which to make generalised claims. In qualitative research 'trustworthiness' is acknowledged as a more meaningful line to take. Greene, Kreider & Mayer (2005) recommend triangulation through mixed methods in

determining the trustworthiness of findings, asserting that multiple methods provide different lenses with which to unearth different perspectives.

If, for example, data from a self-report instrument and data from an external observation converge, the overall results are more likely to be valid, credible and warranted.

(Greene, Kreider & Mayer 2005:274)

In the pursuit of trustworthy findings in this evaluation triangulation was developed drawing from the group discussions, one-to-one interviews and the SLiCE fellows' research reports. In addition, the Cultural Partners' reports provided further perspective on the accounts of the SLiCE fellows.



## Findings: Six Case Studies

Six case studies are presented below representing three case studies from SLiCE in their first year and another three case studies from SLiCE in their second year of the programme. The selection of case studies was made in discussion with Curious Minds and chosen as a representative sample across the SLiCE programme as a whole. The people and organisations who have contributed to the case studies have been anonymised to respect the confidentiality of participants. Whilst the findings in each case are context specific, it is understood that the emerging themes are not unique to these organisations and therefore have a wider relevance to professions working in other schools and cultural educational settings.

### Case studies from SLiCE in their first and second year of the programme

Case studies one, two and three represent Specialist Leaders who joined the SLiCE programme in September 2014. In the first and second case studies the new SLiCE fellow brought an additional school alliance to the programme. In the third case study the SLiCE role was shared by two teachers, both new to the alliance, and replaced an existing SLiCE fellow who was leaving the alliance to take up a new post in another region. These three case studies were selected from a total of twelve.

Case studies four, five and six have been drawn from a possible ten that continued with the SLiCE programme into a second year. SLiCE fellows in this cohort maintained their partnership with their original Cultural Partners whilst including an additional Cultural Partner into the programme. For clarity they are called Cultural Partner One (CP1) and Cultural Partner Two (CP2).

## Case Study One

**The SLiCE fellow:** The SLiCE fellow in case study one was an experienced teacher with a background in secondary art education and who was an active member of the lead school's Senior Leadership team. Prior to the SLiCE programme she had significant experience of working with contemporary practitioners, galleries, museums and other organisations but no prior experience of working with the particular Cultural Partner allocated through the SLiCE programme.

**The Cultural Partner:** The Cultural Partner in case study one is a small gallery. The Cultural Partner is known for its highly regarded programme of international photography exhibitions and talks. Prior to joining the SLiCE programme the photography gallery did not have a schools' education offer.

**Research question:** To what extent has a systems leadership approach supported the development of cultural education in a teaching schools alliance?

**Synopsis:** Following a number of planning meetings in the autumn term a series of workshops was developed in the gallery and at the host school during the spring and summer term for teachers and pupils from the four participating schools. A historical theme was identified, drawing upon exhibitions in the gallery, and at other venues in the city. Deciding to employ a creative writer brought a strong narrative theme to the project. The children were brought together as a mixed ability group of different ages from twelve to seventeen years of age (years 8, 9 & 12). Developing the project, the SLiCE fellow reported, took considerable time to evolve not least of all because there was a change over of key members of staff at the gallery part way through the academic year. Whilst there was an expectation that all SLiCE projects would be completed by the end of July 2015, the SLiCE fellow explained that the summer term is problematic in terms of bringing staff and children together, out of school. She commented that:

The calendar is already written and you are going to be really lucky to find a period when all the pupils can be available. The summer term is a short one and then you have the Whit holiday and depending on whether Easter is early or late, that has an impact. You have the summer exams at that time and your partner schools might have their exams at different times [so] the summer is desperately difficult.

The SLiCE fellow co-ordinated an extended time line working into the autumn term of 2015 to overcome the challenges of the summer term in schools. The plans for Autumn 2015 included a series of workshops in film and photography, a historical walking tour with an architectural guide and writing workshops to develop haiku, selecting key words from the creative writer's book. Training in the art of curation is to be provided by the gallery staff in order that the children will be able to curate their own show within the gallery in December 2015.

**Areas of Success:** From the Cultural Partners perspective:

This programme has enabled us to re-think our potential, to decide that we can develop a schools' programme despite our lack of expertise and it has made us determined to develop the expertise and funding to take this work forward.

From the SLiCE fellow's perspective one of the most successful aspects of the project so far was the vertical grouping of the children from the four schools. She explained that:

What excites me [is that] the students go off in all sorts of directions from the same starting point and then they start to feed off each other's ideas.

**Areas for development:** The SLiCE fellow stated, 'the idea of Systems Leadership is very important' and that she was aiming to focus more on teachers' CPD in 'next year's workshops' because 'then they can develop things in their own school and the structure of this project can be embedded' in the schools curricula. The Cultural Partner, however, identified an intention 'to develop a strategy for working with schools' and to 'make connections with a broader range of schools'.

**Emerging dilemma:** While a shared understanding of the generative nature of the SLiCE programme was clearly evident in the views of both parties, the first planning meeting revealed a difference of opinion about the potential for exhibiting children's work in the gallery. On the one hand the SLiCE fellow considered celebrating the children's work in the gallery to be one of the core benefits of working with a highly regarded gallery. On the other hand the Cultural Partner was concerned that the gallery maintained its rigorous selection of work for display exhibiting only 'the most remarkable set of studies we can get'. There was very little discussion in the group interview in the autumn term with the dilemma emerging from the previous year, although in considering these a discussion around the sensitive issue of displaying students work came to the fore.

From the SLiCE fellow's perspective, showing children's work in the gallery was a motivating factor for the schools and their students. They were attracted to the cultural capital (Bourdieu 1993) associated with collaborating with a highly regarded gallery; the motivational and aspirational benefits for colleagues and children. To the SLiCE fellow, committed to maximising the benefits of SLiCE for the children and the alliance, showing the children's work in the gallery was an essential part of the project. There was an assumption on behalf of the SLiCE fellow that 'Curious Minds would welcome a really high profile celebration' of the children's work. A further assumption was that the success of working in collaboration with a Cultural Partner would be undermined if the children were not able to display their work in the gallery space.

The Cultural Partner gave a number of reasons for his reservations about exhibiting children's work in the gallery. Given that the gallery is a relatively small space, the Cultural Partner said, 'I don't have an education space where I can show their work as a separate entity'. In addition to the limitations of the space to exhibit schools' work in the gallery he argued 'that could only happen if there is quite a serious injection of investment and money'. The Cultural Partner made the assumption that the reputation of the gallery could be undermined by the display of children's work in the main gallery spaces.

On one hand there was a commitment to raising the status of children's cultural production through association with a prestigious Cultural Partner, whilst on the other hand the Cultural Partner was mindful of protecting its elitist status.

A resolution to this dilemma came about as a result of a change of staffing during the project. In taking over the SLiCE liaison role, the incoming member of gallery staff had a different perspective on exhibiting young people's work in the gallery than that of her predecessor. She embraced the idea of displaying the work produced by the participating children, finding solutions to the barriers identified earlier. Firstly, she negotiated for curatorial training of the children so that they would be able to make informed decisions about the exhibition of their work. Secondly, a three-day opportunity for an exhibition of children's work was agreed giving a short but prominent exposure of work in the gallery. Thirdly, it was arranged that the school's art technician could be seconded to the gallery to support the hanging of the show, therefore offsetting some of the financial costs to the gallery. Understanding Arts Council England's goals that are embedded within the SLiCE programme, underpinned the Cultural Partner's decision to facilitate a public exhibition of children's work in the gallery.

We want to galvanise and facilitate local partnerships, and to work with the Department for Education and other partners to ensure a coherent, national approach to the provision of excellent arts and culture for all children and young people. What will success look like? More children and young people have the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries more children and young people receive a high-quality cultural education in and out of school arts organisations, museums and libraries are delivering high-quality arts and cultural experiences for children and young people.

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

**Implications for the future:** As a result of SLiCE experience the Cultural Partner made a firm commitment to developing their educational offer for schools and other educational organisations. There was a significant shift on behalf of the gallery from a reticence to engage fully with young people and schools towards a genuine and sustainable partnership with the potential for further expansion in the future. From the perspective of the SLiCE fellow, however, there was recognition that focussing upon the children's development had some limiting factors. On reflection, she decided that the focus of future SLiCE developments would be on up-skilling teachers and other school staff with the potential to extend the reach of the programme across the schools' alliance and therefore benefit more children.

## Case Study Two

**SLiCE fellow:** With twenty years experience as a theatre practitioner prior to fifteen years working in school-based creative education, the SLiCE fellow in case study two was the only one among her peers to have extensive first hand experience of working in schools and the cultural sector. In addition, the SLiCE fellow had responsibility for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) across the schools' alliance, again a unique profile among the SLiCE fellows. One of the benefits of her ITT role was that the SLiCE fellow had an established working relationship with all the alliance schools.

**Culture Partner:** The Cultural Partner was a theatre company in an area with a culturally rich population, yet an area identified to have issues of social deprivation and high unemployment. This company targets its programme at young people and whilst it has a significant portfolio of productions performed for school audiences, these are exclusively developed for young people of secondary school age and older.

**Research question:** How Can Performing Arts Techniques Impact on Teaching and Learning across the Curriculum?

**Synopsis:** There were three distinct strands to this research project: Arts Award advisor training, a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for in service teachers within the alliance and a specific provision within the alliance Schools' Direct Initial Teacher Training.

The Arts Award training focused upon the 'Discover & Explore' theme aimed at teachers of younger primary age students and was attended by representatives of thirteen partner primary schools. As the SLiCE fellow reported, 'the aims of this training were to enable partners to feel they could quantify, evidence and assess the creative work and arts projects of their young people'. She recorded that seven of the primary partners who attended the Arts Award training also took part in the CPD strand.

The CPD programme, called 'Teaching Tales' was developed in collaboration with an alternative theatre group specialising in workshops for primary education recommended by the original Cultural Partner. The intention of the 'Teaching Tales' programme was to 'explore the impact of story-telling techniques across KS1, KS2 and KS3 in many aspects of the curriculum' (SLiCE report 2015).

We felt it was important to focus on training the teachers involved in the programme to utilise, design and deliver a scheme of work which could help [teachers] implement some performing arts techniques. The aims were to improve literacy, increase understanding of language, develop better behaviour management and inspire imagination within themselves and their young people.

(SLiCE report 2015)

The Initial Teacher Training strand included a session called 'Impact, Influence and Image'. Described by the SLiCE fellow as an 'exploration of various techniques used in theatre training and

public speaking' that was of benefit to Schools Direct trainees in developing communication skills relevant to their delivery in the classroom across the curriculum. The SLiCE fellow articulated her intentions for this aspect of the initiative as follows:

Many new teachers are often poorly equipped with the personal skills needed to 'present' or 'engage' with a classroom of students. At the start of a career this can be particularly daunting. We wanted to be able to impart some of the performing art techniques and skills used by trained actors and presenters as part of our Schools Direct Training.

(SLiCE report 2015)

While the theatre company worked directly with the SLiCE fellow on the delivery of the CPD and ITT strands, the original Cultural Partner continued to make a significant contribution to the programme providing the SLiCE with a critical friend within an informal co-coaching relationship (Gillaspy 2013).

**Areas of Success:** Both of the Cultural Partners claimed that their organisation had benefitted from the SLiCE programme identifying a number of advantages including:

- Gaining an understanding of the teaching schools' model
- An enhanced awareness of the impact of ITT and CPD on teachers' performance
- An opportunity to reflect upon their core practices and cultural offers
- Participation in the evolution of a widening network of schools and Cultural Partners

For the SLiCE fellow, the most significant successes were the development of new working relationships with the Cultural Partners, increased support from Headteachers and senior management teams for the performing arts across the schools' alliance, and the students' ability to work together with their peers from other schools.

**Areas for development:** One of the general barriers to collaboration experienced by the SLiCE fellow and the Cultural Partners alike was the impact of time constraints and competing professional demands for their time. Scheduling meetings was a notable challenge for all parties. A more specific area of concern was the low attendance for the celebration event.

**Emerging dilemma:** The SLiCE fellow and the Cultural Partner developed a strong rapport and positive working relationship almost immediately after their introduction to each other providing a firm foundation for developing their research focus and collaborative programme. The SLiCE fellow liaised effectively with the schools in her alliance establishing a focus on drama in Primary education. The Cultural Partner, however, did not work with the primary sector mainly because the themes within its productions are aimed at older children and adults and unsuitable to primary school audiences. After some discussion, the SLiCE fellow and the Cultural Partner agreed that a primary school focus was incompatible with what the Cultural Partner could offer. On the one hand they recognised the potential of their emerging working relationship and both were keen to continue to collaborate, while on the other hand they were unable to meet the needs of the schools' alliance in light of its primary focus. As the SLiCE reported, 'it became clear that our partnership would work in a different way than originally planned'. Unlike other SLiCE partnerships in the 2012-2014 cohort

experiencing similar issues this partnership did not break down, instead they found an alternative way of working together.

Having identified within the Teaching School alliance the need for a Primary focus in drama we came to a mutual agreement that they would help us to identify new cultural partners who would be a better fit for this programme.

(SLiCE report 2015)

What emerged from this partnership was a mutually beneficial co-coaching relationship. From the Cultural Partner's perspective there was much to be gained from maintaining their relationship.

I think it's fantastic for us to have somebody who's a brilliant educator and understands the education system being buddied up with us [...] as a theatre organisation we haven't got the capacity to investigate the deep rooted education [...] and the changes in the curriculum. It can take a while to digest all that and then work out how to embed it into your partnership programme.

**Implications for the future:** The Cultural Partners prioritised maintaining and extending the partnership developed through the SLiCE programme as their targets for the future. The SLiCE fellow, however, was more concerned with the development of stand alone workshop events into extended and more immersive, training experiences. One of her suggestions for the future was to establish a residential training programme for trainee and experienced teachers.

## Case Study Three

**Co-SLiCE fellows:** The SLiCE role in this alliance was shared by two music teachers, both working in the lead school in the teaching school alliance. Both teachers were new to the school having started their contracts in September 2014. In addition to developing a working relationship with teachers in the alliance they were also forming their relationships with colleagues in their school as well as with each other. Both SLiCE fellows had taught in other schools since qualifying as teachers but were less experienced than many other SLiCE fellows on the programme. Neither had experience of senior management roles within their current or former posts. At the end of the academic year, one of the Co-SLiCE fellows left the school to take up a post in a school outside the alliance.

**Cultural Partner:** The Cultural Partner is an international concert venue, built to give the best possible space for music. It hosts over two hundred and fifty performances a year including classical, rock, pop, jazz and world music'. The Cultural Partner provides opportunities for schools, community groups and individuals to get involved with each aspect of its programme. Although the cultural organisation is large, the Cultural Partner revealed that they have limited capacity as to what they can offer schools within their current staffing structure. Often they employ freelance staff to deliver specific educational events when in-house staff do not have the capacity to meet the demands for educational activities.

**Research question:** How does knowledge of acoustics and audio technology improve the performance and recording experience of teachers and their students?

**Synopsis:** Developing a CPD workshop programme for teachers, including a larger number of non-specialist primary teachers, the project culminated in an all day event at the Cultural Partner's venue where groups of children from each school performed prepared pieces. The emphasis of the day was to give teachers the opportunity to use and develop their newly developed recording skills in a professional venue. The children's performances were a vehicle for the recordings to take place with the intention of producing a CD to be disseminated by each school to children and parents. The Co-SLiCE fellows described their main goal as being 'to create a unity of vision and create effective CPD for staff, which would in turn, impact on the student bodies of our individual and collective schools'. The CPD workshops were facilitated by the Co-SLiCE and delivered by specialist sound engineers provided by the Cultural Partner. The teachers learnt about sound recording including the particular merits of different microphones and the need to ensure that they were fit for purpose. The Co-SLiCE fellows reported that many of the teachers within their alliance confessed that they bought generic microphones for school that did not serve them well and often went unused because they were ineffective. Through the programme each school was given a set of appropriate recording equipment that they were trained to use. This equipment will remain in the schools, providing a legacy of improved opportunities for children.

**Successes:** The Cultural Partner reported four main areas of strengths in the programme:

- Technicians became more aware of schools' learning needs – the difference between a 'perfect' performance or recording and effective use of equipment with limited time or



resources

- Schools were able to make better use of equipment that sat redundant in their cupboards, to capture and celebrate students' music
- Around 80 students and 10 staff members attended a day at the Cultural Organisation and performed live on stage and have sound recordings of their visit
- The technical team expressed an interest in developing further CPD for schools, based on acoustics and sound recording

The Co-SLiCE fellows reported that for them:

The biggest success has been the opportunity for secondary, primary and training staff to develop their own skills in acoustic and audio technology knowledge. The skills that they have developed will be utilised by their schools with future student bodies and, we hope, will have an exponential growth pattern as they work with new students and in different schools.

(Co-SLiCE report 2015)

During the interview, however, the fellows revealed that they were especially pleased with the quality of the sound recording from the day event at the cultural venue. The Co-SLiCE celebrated the success of the recordings made by the teachers.

You can compare the recordings of the staff and the sound engineers and there isn't actually very much difference. When you listen to the recordings you couldn't say that's the engineer's and that's a teacher's sound. When you hear it, it is incredible.

Sharing the SLiCE role was considered a successful aspect of the project by both SLiCE fellows. They reported that at different times in the academic year they had each needed the other SLiCE fellow to take a lead role as they dealt with other work commitments. They enjoyed the creative opportunities in sharing ideas and developing initiatives, voicing their opinion that the project was stronger and better developed because they had been able to share the responsibilities. There was some discussion about their resistance to have clearly drawn lines between their individual SLiCE responsibilities preferring to share every aspect. At times, such as when communicating with the Cultural Partner, they acknowledged that there was some duplication in their roles but they considered that a systematic delegation of roles was potentially limiting to the flexibility they had found so beneficial. Certainly, in terms of succession, sharing this role for a year allowed the remaining SLiCE fellow to build upon the legacy of the work they had done together with a seamless transition into the next academic year.

**Areas for development:** The Co-SLiCE fellows considered the benefits of combining staff CPD and teaching the children sound recording skills so that adults and children could learn along side each other. In particular, this was discussed in relation to developing some of the children's skills so that

they could support their peers as part of the curriculum whilst gaining insights to new career opportunities.

The Co-SLiCE fellow leaving for another post, was especially keen to transfer what he had learnt from SLiCE to his next school. He spoke of his aspirations to develop something similar in his new post, although he was conscious that he would miss the resources and support of the SLiCE network and Curious Minds.

For the remaining SLiCE fellow, the emphasis for the next academic year was to build upon the CPD programme and to extend the reach of staff development across the schools' alliance.

Reflecting upon the day event at the Cultural Partner's venue one Co-SLiCE fellow described how one group of children did not get to perform at the main event and how disappointing this was for the Co-SLiCE and the children. He identified two reasons for this: firstly, the technicians that ran the CPD events were not the same as those supporting the day event. The consequence of this was that the technicians supporting the day event were unaware of what recording experiences the teachers had already had and so setting up took longer than expected. Secondly, he reflected upon his failure to communicate to the teachers bringing groups of children to the venue that the focus was on the recording of performances and not the performances themselves. As a result many of the schools took more time than they were allocated as they were determined to present all the pieces they had prepared for the day. Many of the teachers accompanying their students held more senior posts than the Co-SLiCE and he recalled how he allowed the senior colleagues to assert themselves rather than taking a stronger leadership role to keep to the schedule:

I definitely would do that day again but I would stick to my guns about how I wanted it to run. If a teacher brings too many ensembles then we still stick to our programme.

**Emerging dilemma:** Geographical distance between the alliance and the Cultural Partner was a challenge for many of the SLiCE fellows. In this case the Cultural Provider suggested that the geographical distance between her venue and the schools in the alliance was a problem when it came to sustaining their working relationship. However, she spoke enthusiastically about expanding the CPD programme to other, more local schools in the future. Negotiating times that were appropriate for the school that also worked within the busy programme of the Cultural Partner was another area that presented issues. These were compounded by the need to travel significant distances between sites. As the Co-SLiCE commented, the additional cost of providing transport had consequences for the overall budget. Getting children to and from school within the school day and avoiding delays at rush hour were particularly difficult problems to resolve.

On the one hand the North West is home to a rich and diverse range of high quality Cultural Organisations and on the other hand finding a Cultural Partner with just the right educational offer to meet the changing agenda of the schools' alliance was a challenge. To some extent this was overcome in the CPD workshops as the sound technicians travelled to the lead school providing a local venue for the teachers from across the alliance. Having experienced the benefits of the day at the cultural venue, however, the Co-SLiCE recognised that performing in a specialist environment

enhanced the children's achievements and raised the profile of cultural education across the schools. As a result they are exploring other music venues in their local area.

**Implications for the future:** At the end of the academic year one of the Co-SLiCE left the school alliance to take up a new post in another region of the North West, outside the schools' alliance. He spoke passionately about drawing upon the legacy of the SLiCE programme in his new appointment. Although he recognised he would no longer be able to benefit from the same level of collaborative support from the SLiCE programme with Curious Minds he was convinced that he could generate similar partnerships with feeder primary school and local cultural partners with the support of the headteacher in his new post. The remaining SLiCE fellow spoke about his plans to continue the work that had been initiated this year across the alliance schools, with an expectation that a programme of CPD sessions each half term would take place in the next academic year.

## Case Study Four

**The SLiCE fellow:** is an assistant Headteacher in a medium sized co-educational academy. She is an experienced teacher of art and design, and a pioneer in creative education within her alliance.

**Cultural Partner One:** displays a national collection of modern art. It is a large gallery and has a well established education programme for young people, schools and families.

**Cultural Partner Two:** Is a large theatre. They have a broad participation and learning programme, which includes work with schools, communities, young people and adults. At the point of joining the SLiCE project Cultural Partner Two (CP2) was particularly experienced at hosting school visits to performances but had no CPD provision for teachers.

**Research question:** Can engaging with a cultural organisation be used to inspire and improve literacy in schools?

**Synopsis:** The catalyst for this SLiCE project was the national 'criticism over the quality of literacy in schools'. The SLiCE fellow stated that 'the English curriculum has been under intense scrutiny' and that 'staff morale has been at an all time low'. The focus of the SLiCE project was to provide CPD for teachers working with both Cultural Partners. As the SLiCE fellow revealed:

Learning from the experiences of year one I had a good understanding of how I wanted the year two research project to develop. In year one my focus was to engage staff with a cultural organisation. This time round the focus was still to engage with a cultural organisation but also go one step further and embed the practice into the core of the curriculum. (SLiCE report 2015)

Mainly teachers with responsibility for literacy took part in the project including those from six primary schools and two secondary schools. The participating teachers were selected by their headteachers identifying those that 'would be most suitable and benefit from the project'. In this sense the project was fully supported by the Headteachers and engaged a number of teachers who would not necessarily have volunteered to take part in the programme.

The SLiCE fellow chose to spend time discussing the project with the new CP2 at the beginning of the academic year to establish their working relationship before meeting with CP1. Together they planned a series of CPD session for teachers, sharing their plans with a focus group before starting the programme. Of the participating teachers only two had previously visited a cultural organisation, and although a 'small number of staff indicated that they worked with creative practitioners in school' they 'did not take children out of school'.

CP2 reflected that her organisation was shifting the focus of their education programme from children to teachers. He believed that 'working with teachers you can reach even more students'. Through the project twenty classes of children engaged in visits to this particular cultural

organisation and many other children participated in the project as the teachers took the workshops back into their schools.

The SLiCE fellow noted that all the primary school teachers chose to work with the theatre and all the secondary school teachers chose to work with the art gallery. The reason for this division is unclear, although the feedback from teachers revealed that the primary colleagues were particularly engaged with the theatre having been shown around when they came for their CPD sessions while the secondary teachers were not.

**Successes:** From the perspective of the SLiCE fellow the impact of the CPD workshops on teachers thinking about the curriculum was particularly successful. Even those teachers who were reticent at the beginning engaged enthusiastically. She reported that feedback from all the participating teachers had been 'exceptional' and cited the comments of one to illustrate her point:

When I went back to school I ripped up my old schemes of work and started again, I have incorporated all of the new skills I developed into new schemes of work. I have already been back to [CP1] with my class (I would have never done this before) and have been to the teacher forum at [CP2]. The project had a huge impact upon my teaching but especially my year 9 boys, their writing has never been so good. (SLiCE report 2015)

Cultural Partner One identified an increase in teachers' confidence in new approaches to learning and teaching as an area of success within the SLiCE programme. Highlights of the project, she noted, were the development in teachers' capacity to engage their students in higher order thinking skills, and the contribution to new resources for secondary trainee teachers. Furthermore, CP1 revealed that 'activities developed and piloted during the project' have been 'integrated into post graduate programmes' at a local partnership university.

From the perspective of CP2 establishing a CPD programme for the first time at this venue this was a resounding success and the organisation has 'committed to offering two CPD events' in each school term. CP2 anticipates that demand for CPD events may out-strip capacity and has considered developing education resource packs for teachers as a means to manage an expansion in provision with the same work force. Working with CP1 has been a catalyst for CP2 planning to form partnerships with other cultural organisations. Liaising with other cultural partners was a new experience for CP2 but part of core business for CP1.

**Areas for development:** In direct response to staff changes and budget cuts CP1's capacity to sustain SLiCE partnerships in the immediate future is limited. CP2, however, experienced an expansion in their programme. The SLiCE fellow stated that 'the whole project [had] been designed to ensure that work is sustainable and embedded into each teacher's curriculum'.

**Emerging dilemma:** In seeking a solution to a rise in demand for teachers' CPD without the capacity to increase the delivery team Cultural Partner One proposed to create teacher resource packs. Cultural Partner Two had extensive experience of delivering CPD programmes for teachers including the development of educational resource packs. CP1 had moved away from using resource packs

because they were time consuming, expensive to produce and, if created for a specific display, had a limited shelf life. Hiett & Smears (2014) found that generic teaching and learning resources in cultural organisations were relatively unsuccessful whereas bespoke resources generated high levels of student engagement and enhanced achievement.

Having rejected the use of published education resource packs around displays in the gallery, CP1 favoured the development of a pedagogic approach that could be applied to different displays with a degree of flexibility and interpretation. Usually, however, CPD was considered a key component to preparing teachers to deliver the pedagogic approach effectively and with confidence.

On the one hand education resource packs can make a provision for schools when the capacity of the in-house team to deliver face-to-face workshops and training is limited. On the other hand, generic resource packs have proved problematic in maximising the quality of the learning experience for teachers and students.

**Implications for the future:** From the SLiCE fellow's perspective developing CPD provision with cultural partners has improved the curriculum in school, and teachers' confidence to work effectively with cultural organisations. How cultural partners will manage to meet an increased demand for their educational offer is not clear.

## Case Study Five

**The SLiCE fellow:** is an experienced primary teacher with a specialist interest in geography. In year one of the SLiCE programme the SLiCE fellow selected a small number of children from each of the participating schools and a member of their support staff to take part in workshops together. In the second year she focused on teachers' CPD, delivered by the Cultural Partner, allowing the teachers to use what they had learnt to inform their classroom practice. At the end of the year the SLiCE left the school to take up a new senior appointment in a school in another education authority.

**Culture Partner One:** Cultural Partner One (CP1) is a museum service in the North West with multiple venues and a large established education team. They provide an extensive curriculum offer with opportunities for live scenario performances with actors in period costume, children's role-play and practical workshops.

**Cultural Partner Two:** Cultural Partner Two (CP2) is a small theatre organisation. They often commission freelancers to undertake educational workshops.

**Research question:** To what extent does engaging with cultural organisations raise standards in English? Furthermore, what additional impact do parents have, if they also engage?

The SLiCE fellow differentiated the teachers' access to the CPD programme as part of her research methods giving three levels of provision;

Level one – access to the puppet making workshop for the teacher only

Level two – access to the puppet making workshop for the teacher and children only

Level three – access to the puppet making workshop for the teacher, children and their parents

**Synopsis:** The SLiCE fellow and the Cultural Partners met for a shared planning day at the start of the project, creating an integrated and cohesive programme for the months ahead. Immediately before this planning meeting they reflected as a group on the issues they had experienced in the past. CP1 talked about the misconceptions of teachers in that they often assumed museums were the same as when they were children, and that they also thought that the cultural offer was only relevant to teaching history.

CP2 was concerned that many teachers had low expectations of puppet theatre performances in schools recognising that many schools had been disappointed when other companies offered lower quality provision in the sector. She noted that schools were unwilling to allocate funding in times of austerity especially when they had low expectations of what was on offer. The SLiCE fellow spoke about the reluctance of teachers to take part in CPD. Overall, there was an understanding among the group that teachers' perceptions were particularly important for developing cultural education and it was problematic when their decisions were based on outdated or misleading experiences. Persuading teachers that this project was worthwhile was a challenge for SLiCE. As she commented:

If you're going to come out of class I think you need to be able to have something you can go back in and use, otherwise you think, I've just missed half a day [with my class] when we could have been doing something.

The schools' improvement plans across the alliance were a key factor in determining the focus of the project. Developing literacy was, and continues to be, a national area for development in primary and secondary schools and therefore provides a theme that is relevant to all teachers and their pupils. The SLiCE fellow described her thinking:

In the back of my mind all the time is what are the school improvement [targets]. If it's maths, if it's literacy; regardless of whether I think it's great that we work with a company or we work with a museum, actually it's what's the impact on school improvement that matters because at the end of the day that's what's measured.

The SLiCE programme provides for four contact days where the SLiCE fellow is released from school to go behind the scenes in the cultural organisation. In this instance, the SLiCE fellow spent time with CP2 having spent time with CP1 the previous year. In addition, CP2 visited the SLiCE fellow's school providing an informative experience for all. There was unanimous support for this aspect of the SLiCE programme and everyone found they understood more about each others' organisation as a result. What was learnt during these visits informed the project and strengthened the partnership.

Once the project was underway CP1 hosted a visit by teachers and their classes from the three participating schools. Each teacher received CPD training in shadow puppetry and in how to become an Arts Award Advisors. CP2 performed a show at each school for all pupils, teachers and parents. Following these experiences the teachers taught puppet making to their classes in school. The children developed their own stories and made their puppets whilst creating portfolios of evidence for Arts Award accreditation. At the end of the project the schools all came together at the theatre where they got to see some puppet performances by international puppeteers and they performed for each other. The children were invited to critique each others' performances with reference to the techniques they had been encouraged to use.

During the visit to the museum, and the theatre, the children took on the role of interviewer with the chance to see behind the scenes in each organisation and interview individual members of staff about their jobs. This was most successful in the theatre where the children were able to investigate all areas of the working theatre. A similar opportunity at the museum was also beneficial, where the children were based in one room and had question and answer sessions with various members of staff with different jobs.

**Successes:** The feedback on the performance in schools was especially strong with one headteacher commenting that this was 'the best performance I've ever seen in a school'. One teacher spoke about the value of the puppet workshops and how working with a specialist puppeteer made a difference to the quality of the work she did with her class.



Everyone would probably have said that they had done this before but it was just little tricks of the trade that made the performance; like how to stick the puppet on a stick. I know it sounds silly but I have been doing it wrong for years and wondered why it didn't look any good!

Another teacher found guidance about how to improve the performance by being more selective about which part of the story to tell.

It was good that he showed us how you could take a very small section of a story and sometimes I think [that] as a teacher you want to do everything. Then you come a bit of a cropper because, as he said, you don't get it finished and it's not as good as you want it to be. You've taken on too much with the best intentions.

Defining the role of the children as interviewers in the cultural organisations was a particularly successful strategy that enhanced their level of engagement and impacted upon their wider understanding of the cultural industries. As the SLiCE fellow stated:

We do trips to galleries and museums and to theatres but actually to have the chance to interview the people that work there I think gave [the children] some aspirations of what they might want to do when they leave school. Many of our children don't have those aspirations because of the unemployment out there [...] and some of them came away from the theatre saying 'I'd love to do that, I'd love to work somewhere like that'.

The SLiCE fellow reported that 'all the schools noted a rise in standards within speaking and listening' and that one teacher in particular had changed her approach to writing lessons.

Normally, children would write in a particular genre (in this case myths and legends, possibly with a play-script style) and then perform the work. However, one teacher used the project to gather children's ideas and imaginations through performance. Only after the performance work, did the children write their own piece [...]. The teacher said that children who had previously found gathering ideas and getting started on the blank paper, no longer found it such a challenge and wrote high quality pieces as an end result.

Arts Award was considered a significant success by the SLiCE fellow, the teachers and the Cultural Partners alike. The quality of the children's portfolios were identified as a strength of this project in the final interviews. The teachers spoke positively about how working alongside the SLiCE fellow, who went through the process the previous year, had made the experience much less daunting. The two teachers interviewed both commented that they felt they were now able to take other colleagues through the Arts Awards process with their classes. The moderation meetings, they said, were particularly useful to the teachers. Whilst all the adults talked enthusiastically about the content and the quality of the children's portfolios it was the SLiCE fellow who said that;

The children have really embraced it. They have become completely obsessed with those files and you can't skip through them quickly. They literally want to talk to you about every single page. They are so proud of them.

One of the teachers recalled the remarkable response of the children in bringing in additional work for their portfolio:

I have never known so many children bring in work independently without being asked to as I have found throughout this project. [They brought in] all sorts of things; pictures, models, writing and coming in [to school in the morning] saying, 'can I put this in my file?' I had to get a tray for everything they wanted to put in [their] file. The lovely thing about it is they get to take it home because they don't usually get to take their books home at the end of the year.

**Areas for development:** Having reflected upon the success of the SLiCE programme, CP1 was keen to continue 'encouraging schools to be cultural commissioners' as an area for further development. She saw a role for the museum in supporting schools to apply for funding and developing their own projects. CP2 stated that being involved with the SLiCE programme had 'renewed confidence' in their schools offer and had already received requests from partner schools to continue working together 'in some capacity'.

The SLiCE fellow noted that making a strong relationship between the schools' development plan and cultural education was a powerful argument for its inclusion in the curriculum and that Arts Awards were valued highly by the schools alliance, and therefore, an additional reason for sustaining the SLiCE partnership in the future.

As the SLiCE fellow prepared to leave the school alliance for her new post she voiced a particular concern about maintaining the relationship with Curious Minds.

People recognise me as a SLiCE and as part of Curious Minds, and while I tell them what Curious Minds is, a bridge organisation, it is still tricky vocabulary that they don't necessarily understand. I don't have the time to explain all the things that Curious Minds do [...] that is one of the things I worry about when I'm not here. Who will be able to do that?

Part of the problem, from the SLiCE fellow's perspective, was that it is difficult to summarise what Curious Minds can do for schools because it does so much. Whilst Curious Minds offers considerable support and guidance to schools, unless teachers have a better grasp of what they offer there is the potential for opportunities to be missed.

**Emerging dilemma:** The SLiCE fellow spoke candidly of how she had shifted her emphasis from providing an experience for the children in year one of the SLiCE project to teachers' Continuing Professional Development in year two. She saw the benefits as two fold, firstly that the more teachers that were actively involved the larger the number of children could benefit from the programme, and secondly, developing the teachers would continue to benefit children in years to come. However, motivating teachers to participate was not easy.

One of the Cultural Partners said that she had a similar experience working with teachers in that 'quite often teachers don't feel that connected' when the CP1 is working with their pupils. It was common, she suggested that teachers were preoccupied with 'other things they want to get on with'.

On the one hand teachers want the best for their pupils but, on the other hand, they find it difficult to fully engage with cultural opportunities that enhance their capability to extend children's learning experiences.

The SLiCE fellow spoke confidently about how the success of the SLiCE programme had persuaded headteachers and classroom teachers to get involved. Each year the enthusiasm among staff across the alliance had grown but there were still colleagues who resisted engaging with the SLiCE programme and working with cultural organisations. The SLiCE fellow was aware that she was looking to shift the culture of schools and the way they operate, acknowledging that this takes time.

**Implications for the future:** The school alliance has begun to embed cultural education and working relationships with cultural partners in its curricula, although without a successor to the SLiCE fellow the opportunities for expansion are less certain. Teachers within the alliance have become more confident in their ability to prepare children for Arts Award accreditation and are looking forward to supporting other colleagues to do the same. Both cultural partners have made strategic commitments to develop their cultural education offer to schools and have identified successful ways of working with schools' alliance and each other.

## Case Study Six

**The SLiCE fellow:** is an experienced teacher in Special Education with a background in the visual arts. He has been employed at his current school for most of his teaching career and has particular responsibility in school for working with external organisations such as the Cultural Partners in the SLiCE programme. The SLiCE fellow was not formerly a member of the senior leadership team in school and in his first year of the SLiCE programme commented on how he was now included in strategic decision making meetings. He noted that as a consequence of his role as SLiCE fellow, he had a more powerful voice in influencing policy and practice in school than ever before.

**Cultural Partner One:** Cultural Partner One (CP1) is a disability arts organisation. It delivers an annual festival and other arts events to promote high quality arts, and promoting an inclusive social understanding of disability.

**Cultural Partner Two:** Cultural Partner Two (CP2) is comprised of two distinct theatres. Both theatres are producing and receiving houses offering a wide range of theatre throughout the year and have a strong commitment to engaging with their communities through extensive education, outreach and programmes for young people.

**Synopsis:** Following a series of planning meetings the project began in April. Seven different groups of young people from local special schools including the SLiCE alliance participated in a sequence of weekly workshops at CP2. The lead contact at CP1 recruited the young people with the exception of those coming from SLiCE schools; these were recruited by the SLiCE fellow. A freelance performer/educator led the workshops and was supported in every session by a member of each CP1 and CP2. The theme 'The Forest and the Fairies' was selected to suit the group of young people once they had been established. They worked together to produce two performances in both theatre venues of CP2. These performances were included as part of the annual festival organised by CP1 and open to the general public. The young people had the opportunity to amend the script and suggest additional characters and ad lib within the ten minute pieces. This allowed emerging talents to be developed as part of an organic and developmental programme.

**Successes:** The young people surpassed expectations in their performances. CP2 commented on how professional the young people were, taking stage direction and constructive feedback particularly well. The group quickly became a cohesive group, despite coming from a variety of schools, and several demonstrated they were able to project their voices successfully, and engage an audience with natural humour. CP2 considered that two of the young people in particular 'really thrived and developed their performance skills' and that one young person had 'the potential to be part of a professional company'. CP1 reported that:

All of those who took part at the end of last Thursday were saying is it going to happen again? All the schools were very positive, the ones who put the young people forward are now saying 'is this something that is going to continue' because they'd obviously seen the benefits.

Other benefits for the schools and CP2 was the equality and diversity training provided by CP1. This was a direct response to issues emerging around different concepts of disability among the SLiCE partnership. This strengthened working relationships and as CP2 said at the end of the project 'we have to make it happen again because it's been brilliant'.

The SLiCE fellow found the project to have additional benefits as it implicitly delivered aspects of the curriculum including: Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) education, speaking and listening, and 'elements of the foundation subjects'.

**Areas for development:** The Cultural Partners agreed that, having worked with the young people, the performances could have been longer, giving opportunities to extend the roles of those individuals demonstrating new found strengths in their performing skills.

I think one of the biggest lessons has been could we have pushed them more and how could we have done that? Could we have got them doing backstage roles as well? Could we have an arm of our technical programme that is for young people who may need a bit more differentiation, a bit more support? They are perfectly capable of doing it.

CP2 reflected that this project had prompted the organisation to reconsider how much of their programme is devoted to 'people with different needs'. She stated:

Whether they are learning disabilities or physical disabilities [...] we should be producing that work as well as just getting visitors in [...] while that's brilliant it can seem quite tokenistic.

**Emerging dilemma:** In year one of the project the SLiCE fellow and CP1 worked together relatively harmoniously and the SLiCE project proved to be unproblematic. As the relationship developed into year two, and the programme became more challenging significant differences of ideology emerged that were to have a considerable impact upon the partnership.

Working in schools, the SLiCE fellow was required to work with a medical model of disability. He was keen to give children on the autistic spectrum the opportunity to engage in the project inspired by the works of Shakespeare, who is posthumously considered to have demonstrated characteristics consistent with someone on the spectrum. From the SLiCE fellow's perspective it was common practice to match educational provision to children's medically diagnosed needs and indeed he was expected to do so on a daily basis.

As a disability arts organisation CP1 works to the social model of disability and actively challenges the medical model through its ethos and practice.

The SLiCE fellow's strategy for recruiting participants in the project was to invite children with specific disabilities to take part in the SLiCE project. His intention was to provide a bespoke opportunity for young people diagnosed with Asperger's or Attention Deficit Disorder to engage in activities allowing them to celebrate their strengths and gain confidence in new skills and experiences. From a school perspective, where the medical model of disability is dominant, the

SLiCE fellow's intentions presented no challenge, rather this was in keeping with models of good practice. However, from the perspective of CP1, where a social model of disability underpins their practice, selecting participants in relation to their disability was unacceptable.

On the one hand selecting participants from a medical model of disability encourages the selection of children against their specific needs and abilities. On the other hand, a social model of disability favours self-selection of participants regardless of their specific disability.

**Implications for the future:** CP2 was enthusiastic about sustaining the partnership with schools in the future.

We need to make sure we stay in touch with [schools] and we let them know about appropriate opportunities that might be of interest to them and other projects that are coming up.

CP1 considered how the SLiCE programme had prompted the organisation to review their relationships with schools and the potential for challenging the dominant medical model of disability.

It has made us look at who we are as an organisation and what we do and how we can influence wider changes within schools.

Rather than avoiding working with schools that uncritically accept the medical model of disability dominating mainstream education, CP1 decided there was something to be gained in developing dialogue with such schools. Through the SLiCE programme, CP1 came to understand their potential to generate critical reflection upon different models of disability in education with the opportunity to impact on policy and praxis.

## Discussion of Findings

In the second year of the SLiCE programme deeper relationships between schools and cultural organisations were developed. Whereas in the first year it was possible for emerging dilemmas to be largely side stepped within short-lived working relationships, sustained contact demanded that key issues were acknowledged and discussed. Dilemma analysis provided a professional and safe method for raising and discussing emerging dilemmas towards mutually beneficial resolutions. Where appropriate, Curious Minds took on the role of mediator, respecting the multiple perspectives of all participants and leading to positive resolutions. Transformative practices transpired as a result of longer term partnerships where issues were confronted and addressed.

### Transformative practices

Transformative practices were evident across the SLiCE programme among SLiCE fellows and cultural partners in their second year of engagement. Sharing these experiences with SLiCE fellows starting with the programme through group meetings, presentations and dilemma analysis intervention, however, accelerated their ability to identify and engage with emerging issues earlier than the previous cohort. Among the SLiCE fellows, six elements of transformation were evident.

Transformative practice among SLiCE fellows
From creating projects for children → To developing staff and the curriculum
From regarding CP as a resource → To seeing CP as a co-coach
From SLiCE fellow working in isolation → To integral practices across the alliance
From Fixed term partnerships → To sustained relationships
From emphasis on logistics → To an emphasis on ideologies
From SLiCE fellow as facilitator → To SLiCE fellow as commissioner

Similar patterns of transformative practice was evident among the cultural partners.

Transformative practice among Cultural Partners
From providing a specific service → To developing a relationship
From investment because of Curious Minds → To sustaining investment with SLiCE fellow
From seeing SLiCE fellow as an outsider → To regarding SLiCE fellow as a team member
From a static cultural offer → To a dynamic and responsive cultural offer
From being external to the research development → To being integral to the research design

### Hierarchy of art and public display

Several of the cultural partners expressed concerns about the need to protect perceptions of their high standards of cultural production. In the case of the puppet theatre there were misgivings about the judgements schools were making about the value of their performances based on other, inferior, puppeteers providing educational workshops. In this instance the SLiCE fellow played a significant role in advocating for the Cultural Partner within the alliance. Coupled with the impact of the high quality workshops and performances, teachers' perceptions changed, generating a new enthusiasm for future collaboration.

In the case of one gallery there were concerns that exhibiting children's work would undermine the status of the organisation. With no prior educational offer for schools, this cultural partner required a paradigm shift in its thinking about the benefits of working with the SLiCE fellow and alliance schools. This was achieved largely as a result of a change of staff at the gallery appointing a new colleague who saw the value of a deeper engagement with schools and children. In providing workshops and resources for participants the gallery demonstrated its respect for young people's cultural production and in so doing gave them and their teachers enhanced aspirations.

### **Re-thinking the SLiCE/Cultural Partner relationship**

When the cultural partners and SLiCE fellows first came together they inhabited clearly delineated roles defined by their respective institutions. As the SLiCE programme developed, however, new ways of working together emerged. Assisted by the four contact days, SLiCE fellows gained unexpected insights into the organisations with whom they were working. Greater awareness of the organisations' internal operations and decision-making bodies opened up new ways of thinking for the SLiCE fellows. In light of this, a number of cultural partners negotiated reciprocal visits to the SLiCE fellows' school facilitating contextualised understanding of current practices and school culture. As a consequence, SLiCE fellows and cultural partners have, together, developed a range of ways of collaborating together including emerging roles as co-researchers, co-consultants and co-coaches. As these relationships developed they became more complex and a source of generative thinking.

### **Geographical location**

A number of the SLiCE fellows were paired with cultural partners some distance away from the location of their school. One of the benefits of this was the opportunity to form new positive working relationships with otherwise unlikely partners. Another benefit was the chance to disrupt established orthodoxies of practice that exist with familiar partners. A disadvantage of working with partners some distance from each other, however, was the cost of travel and the logistical challenges. In some cases, SLiCE fellows and their school alliance considered the benefits outweighed the difficulties and pledged to sustain their partnership in the future.

Other SLiCE fellows found working with the cultural partner a catalyst for positive change, yet having transformed their practice, considered working with more local organisations. As SLiCE fellows became more confident in their role as cultural commissioners they began to see possibilities for negotiating new opportunities with local partners.



### **Re-thinking education resource packs**

Education resource packs were found to be a limiting factor in cultural education of children in the first year of the SLiCE programme. Cultural partners and SLiCE fellows found that bespoke workshops developed children's engagement and achievement exponentially. Never-the-less, in the second year of the SLiCE programme, the development of generic educational resource packs continued to be considered, as a means of extending the reach of small education teams in cultural organisations where demand for educational provision from schools began to outstrip capacity.

A number of cultural partners and SLiCE fellows demonstrated a tendency towards the creation of resource packs despite their limitations. Other partnerships, however, chose to deliver CPD programmes that developed teachers' capacity to facilitate learning experiences for their pupils and in so doing extend the reach of the cultural partner to larger numbers of children. In one instance, the CPD programme in the cultural organisation prepared teachers to deliver CPD training to colleagues within their school alliance growing capacity even further.

### **Shifting the focus from child to teacher**

A recurring theme was the shift in SLiCE fellows' attention from providing opportunities for children in the first year of the programme to their colleagues in the second. The focus on children's development in schools was so strong that it took time for SLiCE fellows to gain a broader perspective on how to maximise their impact on cultural education across the schools alliance. In most instances working with the cultural partner was influential in this respect.

In the first year of their SLiCE role, the majority of SLiCE fellows concentrated on generating educational experiences for children. Liaising with colleagues and the cultural partner was predominantly about managing and facilitating the pupil experience. By the second year of the programme, most of the SLiCE fellows invested more in CPD opportunities for their peers rather than concentrating directly on the children. To some extent the achievements of children in the first year was a necessary precursor to teachers' willingness to take part in CPD and to embrace cultural education in the wider sense. In each case, where CPD was the focus of the SLiCE fellow in the second year, they reported that this had transformed attitudes across the school alliance to cultural education, influenced curriculum development and, in some cases, revolutionised pedagogic practices.

### **Disability and pedagogy**

As partnerships developed between the cultural organisations and the SLiCE fellows issues of ideology emerged. For some, it transpired, there was a comfortable synergy between the ideology of the schools alliance and the cultural partners. Attitudes towards creative education, for instance, was an area where similar values and practices aligned. For others, building more integrated working relationships revealed discord in fundamental ideologies between partners. One notable case was in the incompatibility of a cultural organisation committed to a social model of disability with a school working within a medical model of disability education. Revealing these differences in

their theoretical underpinning was an important feature of building sustainable practices. Through mediated discussion, participants gained a better understanding of their own institution and the implications of their ideology for developing partnerships. Rather than fracturing relationships evidence of systemic change began to emerge. In the case of the cultural partner they began to engage with mainstream education with a view raising awareness of disability politics and the implications for young people's empowerment and education. On the other hand, the SLiCE fellow's tacit understanding of differentiated learning developed into a more explicit awareness of the limitations of the medical model of disability that dominates mainstream education. Having identified the root cause of these underlying tensions they were better able to find meaningful ways to work with each other and for their organisations to evolve.

## Recommendations

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

1. Expand the SLiCE programme as a national initiative
2. Continue to promote teachers' and cultural partners' CPD as a primary target as a means to extend the reach of high quality, sustainable, cultural education for children
3. Promote the benefits of co-coaching and co-researching between school-based practitioners and cultural partners generated by the four contact days of the SLiCE fellow in the cultural organisation
4. Consider formalising a reciprocal programme of contact days of the cultural partner in schools
5. Promote the benefits of pairing of schools with cultural partners some distance away to positively disrupt established orthodoxies of practice and facilitate reflexive practice
6. Extend and develop the role of SLiCE fellows as champions for Arts Awards (and Artsmark which has recently been relaunched) in and beyond their schools alliance
7. Develop longitudinal partnerships in order to identify the implications of ideology, challenge limited practices and bring about systemic change in schools and cultural organisations for the development of the highest standard of cultural education

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