

Paul Hamlyn
Foundation

Blended approaches to teacher professional learning in the arts

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Foreword

Round 4 of the Teacher Development Fund (TDF) had its roots in a time of crisis and unfolded in a landscape of uncertainty. All TDF Rounds recruit between September and March and the work itself takes place over the following two academic years. Therefore, the context for Round 4, which recruited in 2020, was school closures, financial challenge for arts/cultural organisations, furloughed education staff, lack of work opportunities for artist practitioners and an emerging awareness of the deep and lasting detrimental impact that the pandemic would have on learners.

It was also a time when the arts sector responded to the needs of the moment with characteristic energy and creativity. The role of the arts in supporting our children and young people's learning and wellbeing felt more important than ever. Arts organisations pivoted from live to digital in order to support home learning, there was a proliferation of online resources and ideas for teachers and families, important relationships continued over Zoom and teachers dipped into an array of arts CPD which online platforms made available in a flexible, low-cost and accessible way.

Every year the TDF holds a mirror up to the key themes or concerns of the moment. In 2020 we decided to reflect developing practice in digital and blended approaches in our Round 4 application criteria and ask that proposed CPDL models were blended. We took no view as to what a 'good' or 'right' blend would be, only that it should be bespoke to the needs of the project. Rather, we positioned PHF as a learner and hoped that the opportunity to fund

10 long-term blended CPDL projects, across different art forms and geographies, would help to gather new insights about blended practice that would be of wider benefit to the arts and education sectors.

We were delighted to partner with Chartered College of Teaching, themselves expert in digital/blended modes of teacher professional learning but also curious about the under-researched context of the arts, to carry out research during the delivery phase from September 2021 to July 2023.

Over those two years the context shifted as lockdowns and the gradual opening up of schools to visitors played out. The report captures the mood of that time and reminds us that the opportunities of blended practice were often held in tension with the desire to work in person and the joy felt when that became possible.

But this is a rich report with fascinating insight into different types of blended practice and much learning about what works. For PHF it shows us that indeed there is no one 'right' blend, rather that good blended practice is rooted in the purpose and context of the work and that choices about modes of delivery and their sequencing flow from the needs of the learner cohort and the nature of the learning content. We continue to believe that blended models offer great opportunity to develop high quality and accessible arts CPD for teachers and we hope that this report will contribute to the sector's interest and confidence in creating many more.

Catherine Sutton

Head of Programme – Education
Paul Hamlyn Foundation

September 2024

Context

Paul Hamlyn Foundation was established in 1987 and is one of the largest independent grant-making foundations in the UK. Since 2016, the Foundation has funded the Teacher Development Fund (TDF) which focuses specifically on primary phase teachers' continuous professional development and learning (CPDL) in the arts. The purpose of the Teacher Development Fund is to support delivery of effective and sustainable arts-based teaching and learning opportunities in the primary classroom, and to embed learning through the arts in the curriculum. It aims to do this through supporting teachers and school leaders to develop the necessary skills, knowledge, confidence and experience. This is so more children, especially those experiencing inequity, can benefit from an arts-rich education.

Round 4 of the programme, which ran over the academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23, funded 10 projects reaching from the Isles of Scilly to Yorkshire in England and including two projects in Scotland. A specific funding priority for this round was blended models for CPDL.¹ Having seen the pivot to blended approaches during the Covid pandemic, PHF wanted to explore the value of blended CPDL in the TDF context and included this as a priority for Round 4. Applicants responded to this priority in their proposals, incorporating elements of blended learning (i.e. combining online and face-to-face learning) in their CPDL models. Planning for a blended approach also enabled projects to mitigate potential new disruptions due to Covid. Participating projects also took part in cohort learning which ran in a blended format, combining face-to-face and online sessions for project leads, school leaders, artist practitioners and participating teachers.

Research aims

The aim of this research was to understand participants' views on blended approaches to teacher CPDL. Data stems from Round 4 of the PHF TDF and was collected between October 2021 and September 2023. While the initial aim of the research was to identify the most effective approaches to blended teacher CPDL in the arts, these aims had to be adapted as the project evolved and it became clear that the different programmes differed in too many ways to draw overarching conclusions. Not only did they differ in their approach to blended learning but also in the art form they were teaching, leading to a wide range of confounding variables. A descriptive approach was deemed more appropriate, especially given the scarcity of data on blended approaches for arts-based teachers CPDL. This study thus aims to contribute to our understanding of blended approaches to teacher CPDL by focusing specifically on their suitability for arts teaching, a hitherto understudied area.

1. 'Blended approaches' refer here to the combination of face-to-face and digital modalities.

Introduction

This report builds on a previously published literature review (Müller et al., 2023) and focuses on the empirical data that was collected from the Round 4 projects as part of this research. Where appropriate, findings from the two pieces of research are drawn together.

One important point to note is that for most projects, the blended learning aspect was not the main focus. Although projects understood blended approaches were a priority for the

Fund at the time of application and planned their CPDL models accordingly, they may have felt that this was a necessity in the context of the Covid pandemic and would not have been their preferred choice. During the two-year project, Covid restrictions began to relax and schools were able to host visitors again. This meant that projects were keen to take advantage of opportunities for face-to-face work once again. Conclusions drawn in this report should therefore be considered in this context.

If blended learning had been our focus, I think it would have been very different and I, for one, was really sick of online Zoom meetings after Covid. I developed a bit of allergy to it, partly because I find it really hard to sit still for hours. So yeah, I was resistant really to doing too much, and I really focused on relationships and in person. And the blended stuff was just supporting.

Artist practitioner, drawing

Methodology

A mixed methods approach was taken in this evaluation, combining a literature review, surveys, focus groups, interviews and project plan analyses. The literature review has been published as a separate report (Müller et al., 2023). The main focus of this report are insights gained from the empirical study.

Study participants were project leads², artist practitioners³ and teachers⁴ participating in the CPDL programmes. Data was collected between November 2021 and September 2023.

Surveys were administered twice, at the end of year one and at the end of year two. Sample and participant characteristics can be found in Table 1, which shows that unfortunately responses collected from participants were significantly lower in year two despite numerous efforts to increase the response rate. This means that second wave responses from participants should be treated with caution. Focus groups with project leads, artist practitioners and teachers complement the survey data.

Table 1: Sample characteristics for surveys of project leads and participants

	Project lead survey			Participant survey		
	Respondents	Projects	Art forms covered	Respondents	Projects	Art forms covered
Wave 1	13	9	Drama/theatre, dance, photography, print-making, painting, drawings, ceramics, storytelling, visual arts, digital gaming, filmmaking, video and digital literacy	43	5	Drama/theatre, dance, photography, print-making, painting, drawings
Wave 2	12	8	Drama, dance, photography, print-making, painting, drawing, ceramics, storytelling, visual arts and digital games	12	3	Dance, photography, print-making, painting, drawing, ceramics, visual arts

Project plan analyses were conducted at the start of the project with the aim to get a better understanding of the type of blended learning approach the projects aimed to employ. Interviews with project leads complemented the project plan analyses to ensure accuracy.

2. Project leads were responsible for the day-to-day management and design of projects.
3. Artist practitioners worked with project leads and schools to deliver CPD programmes.
4. Teachers participating in the CPDL programmes.

Study results

Projects differed vastly in their approach to blended learning

Following a coding scheme adapted from Alammery et al. (2014), projects were classified into ‘low-, mid- and high-blend’ according to the blended approach they took and their levels of reflexivity as to why they employed different modalities. According to this analysis, only one project could be classified as using a ‘high-blend’ approach.

I have never been of the view that doing stuff online is a poor alternative. I get very frustrated with media coverage over the pandemic that implies that.

Project 6

Table 2: Classification of projects according to the design approach (adapted from Alammery et al., 2014)

Project title	Art form	Low-blend	Mid-blend	High-blend
Project 1	Photography, painting, printmaking, drawing, ceramics			
Project 2	Theatre and storytelling			
Project 3	Drama			
Project 4	Drama			
Project 5	Visual arts			
Project 6	Digital gaming			
Project 7	Drama and storytelling			
Project 8	Drama			
Project 9	Filmmaking and video			
Project 10	The body in movement (kinaesthetic movement and dance)			

Satisfaction with blended learning

Average overall satisfaction with the blended learning aspect of the projects decreased slightly over time for course leaders and participants, with participants rating the blended learning aspect of the project slightly higher than project leads. Interestingly, participants' satisfaction levels did not necessarily correlate with the project's art form. While project leads from more practical art forms tended to report a lower average satisfaction rating, the same was not necessarily the case for project participants.

Face-to-face approaches dominated

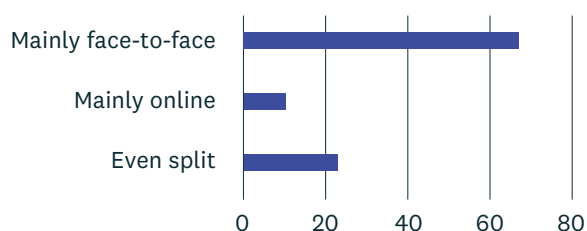
Face-to-face approaches dominated in this sample with only two projects after year one and three projects after year two reporting equal use of face-to-face and online activities.

Projects with more online activities also reported a higher level of satisfaction with blended learning, suggesting a possible relationship between project leads' and participants' confidence in and attitudes towards blended learning and its effectiveness. 65% of project leads and 55% of participants said their attitudes towards blended learning had improved as a result of participating in the programme and that online elements added value to them.

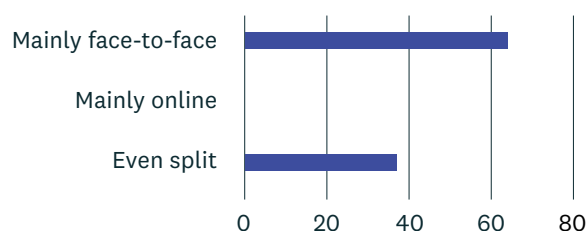
Yet 27% of project leads and 73% of participants would have preferred a fully face-to-face approach. Focus group discussions revealed that for many projects, the blended approach was necessary as a result of the Covid pandemic rather than a desired format or even the main focus of their projects, which is why many returned to mainly face-to-face modalities as soon as possible.

Fig 1: Modalities employed by the projects

Modalities Year 1



Modalities Year 2



[T]he blended learning aspect isn't the focus for what we've been doing. It's been secondary to everything, and I very much think that if it had been the focus, the sessions would have been different.

Artist practitioner, painting

Effectiveness of blended learning might depend on art form and learning aims

The effectiveness of blended approaches appears to differ according to art form with more applied, hands-on art forms apparently benefitting less from blended approaches than digital and visual art forms.

All participants thought their art form lent itself best to face-to-face approaches, compared to just 80% of project leads with the remaining 20% disagreeing that their art form was better suited to face-to-face teaching.

Printmaking, photography, ceramic and dance appear to lend themselves less well to digital approaches due to the importance of hands-on, haptic experiences and physical space. Some interesting patterns within the same art forms were also observed:

Screen printing ... no one's going to learn that purely from a video. You need to touch what you're working with, and it's not straightforward. [...] Other things are much more just procedural. [...] For example marbling. You have a tray of water. You put the marbling ink in, provided that they're the right sort of ink, they will make a pattern on the surface, then you drop a paper in. That can be all conveyed from a video.

Artist practitioner, printmaking

Digital gaming, storytelling, painting, and drawing might lend themselves more easily to a blended approach as they require less specialist equipment or even rely on digital skills and technology. However, that is not necessarily to say that artists or teachers prefer such an approach.

I can just have the camera above my hands when I'm doing the drawing.

Artist practitioner, drawing

Results were mixed for drama. While one project reported a positive experience with blended learning, another considered fully face-to-face approaches to be more effective. The importance of space and movement is important to consider here.

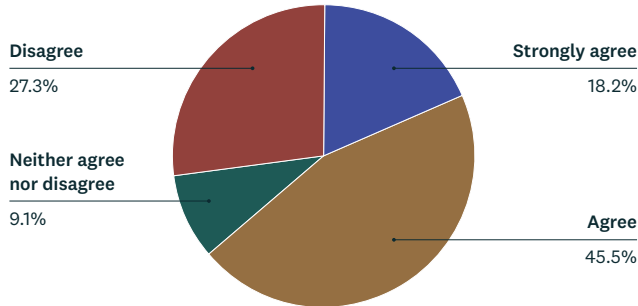
I think we have tried it with various drama techniques, but it's been so time consuming, because the videos have to be edited and then it's been extremely costly as well. So it's the reality, it's easier to bring everybody into a room and demonstrate because you've got so many artists creating this piece or demonstrating something and then they're not being watched. And the teachers in the room just being able to ask questions and see it, and then take part in it with the teachers. I think it's just far more valuable for drama.

Project lead, drama

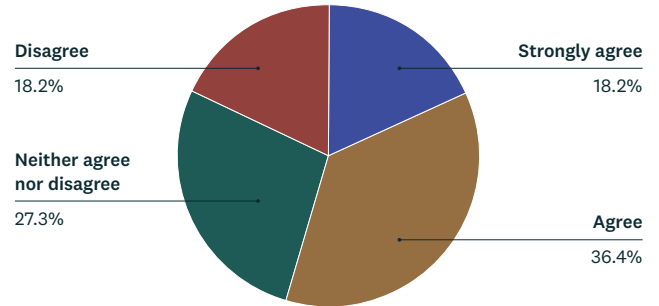
Study results

Fig 2: Attitudes towards blended learning

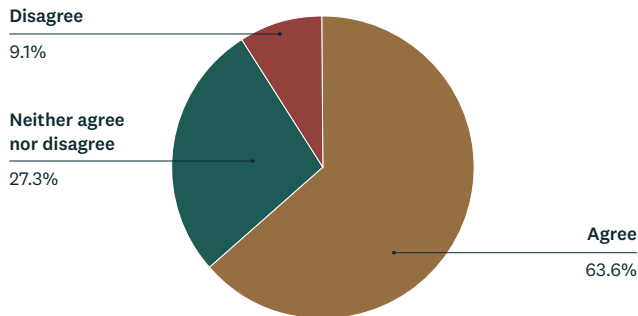
Blended learning adds value to CPDL - Project Leads



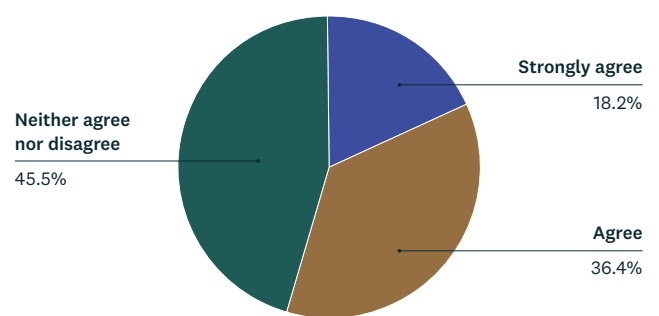
Blended learning adds value to CPDL - Participants



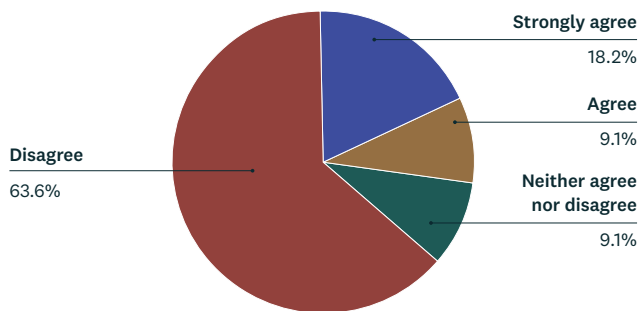
My opinion of blended learning has improved - Project leads



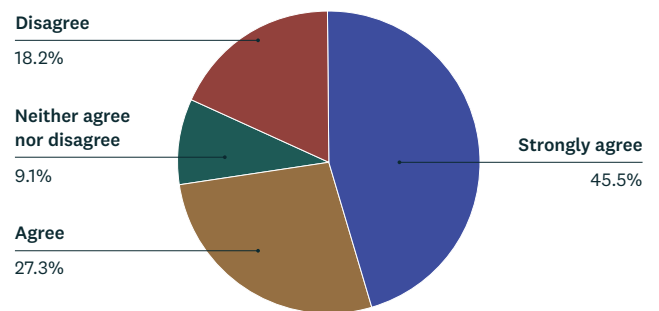
My opinion of blended learning has improved - Participants



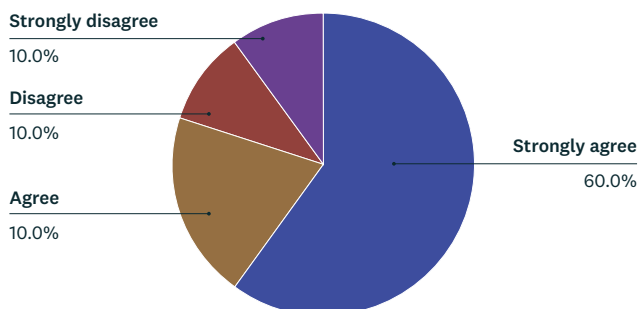
I would have preferred a face-to-face approach - Project leads



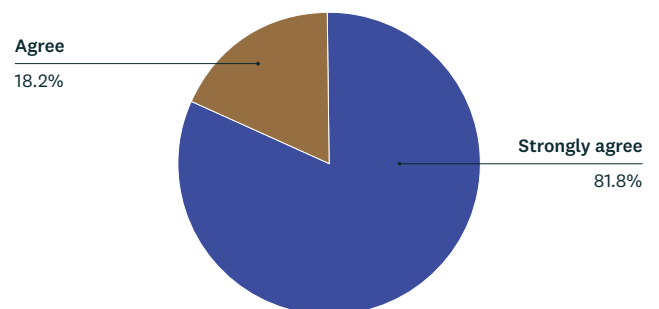
I would have preferred a face-to-face approach - Participants



Art form lends itself best to face-to-face CPD - Project leads



Art form lends itself best to face-to-face CPDL - Participants



Study results

Learning aims are also important to consider when choosing the appropriate modality. Theoretical learning and the teaching of processes, for example, appear to lend themselves relatively well to online learning while practical teaching and the use of materials is best conveyed face-to-face.

The blended learning that we've been doing has been more of the theory of the art form to do with painting. So a lot of the videos I have made are about colour theory, colour mixing and more.

Artist practitioner, painting

Online 'doing' sessions, i.e. those sessions focusing on implementing newly acquired arts pedagogy, decreased in popularity from 55% to 35% but 'input' sessions, i.e. those sessions that focused on developing a (theoretical) understanding of arts pedagogy and techniques, remained stable and were used by 45% of projects across the two years.

Many projects found a combination of face-to-face practical sessions and online reflection sessions to be effective, which confirms insights from previous research. However, the perceived effectiveness of online reflection sessions decreased over time. 70% of project leads considered them to be effective in year one but only 45% thought so in year two. This is particularly interesting given the finding that online reflection sessions remained the most popular activities in both years.

75% of projects provided opportunities for participants to exchange online throughout the duration of the project but their perceived effectiveness decreased over time.

Advantages of blended approaches

Reduction of travel time was considered the main advantage by project leads and participants throughout the duration of the projects.

The additional flexibility inherent to blended learning was considered to be an advantage by more project leads than participants (around 80% vs. roughly 50%).

One of the things about the blended learning was, it's hard to meet up with teachers and some of the follow-up sessions I've had that have been on Zoom have literally been lunch breaks with the teacher there with a sandwich, and they've come in, and they've shown me what they're doing and I've been able to respond to it because I'm online. I can quickly Google things like I said before, and show them stuff and talk about it. And actually that felt like a really better use of that time than me being there and going on their computers and trying to look for things. And also I've got my books so I can pull up a book and hold it up.

Artist practitioner, painting

Study results

It was stressed by a project lead that the additional flexibility was particularly useful in relation to asynchronous learning and the possibility for participants to study or repeat learning in their own time:

I think the positive for us has been the asynchronous element. So that people can do it in their own time, and that's that reflective learning, all the learning that just reinforces whatever was delivered during the CPDL session.

Project lead, visual arts

Ease of access to course materials was considered a substantial advantage by more participants at the end of year two than project leads (63% vs. 53%). This suggests that for teachers the main advantages of blended learning related more strongly to the sustainability of the project and the opportunity to access materials beyond the duration of the project than the possibility to access them while the projects were still ongoing.

Access to CPDL that otherwise would not be available, was considered an advantage by roughly 30% of project leads and participants with slightly more participants considering this to be an advantage in year two.

For us the blended is kind of essential, because we are working with schools that are on islands. [...] and we've done some really good things with it like kind of blended meetings and things that have worked very well, so people who can attend, and we've got the space at the gallery, where, at like a conference room where we can do that and have, you know, big monitors, and it has worked really well.

Project lead, visual arts

An additional advantage that was raised in one of the focus groups related to artists having easier access to online references to support their learning and being able to share their own resources (e.g. books) online:

[S]ome of my blended learning isn't specifically about the art form. It's about working with the teachers how to teach it. So a great example, I just had a meeting with one teacher and because we were online whilst we were discussing, I was just bringing up images of artists that I could Google as we were talking.

Artist practitioner, painting

This suggests that a wider range of resources was more easily available to projects as a result of their blended approach. A finding that was confirmed by a project lead who shared how the blended learning allowed them to invite a range of guest speakers in order to improve and diversify the programme.

The other thing that we've been able to do by having the blended approach is to be able to provide a greater amount of contact with a greater amount of artists. So we've had our core artists who have been working more deeply with schools, but we've also been able to run a bit of a guest artist kind of thing. So we have a twilight session once a month, and we're able to get guest speakers in and hear from other schools who have done interesting projects and that's given it a completely new dimension that we wouldn't have had, I think, otherwise.

Project lead, digital gaming

Study results

The development of technological skills was considered an advantage by roughly 30% of project leads and participants, a percentage that decreased to 18% for participants, suggesting that they no longer considered this to be an advantage by the end of the project.

Barriers to effective blended learning

The main barriers to effective blended learning identified in this project relate to the difficulty of establishing a feeling of connectedness online. While over 80% of projects used reflection sessions online, difficulty of creating a positive environment and connecting to others were mentioned as barriers in online interactions.

Screen fatigue was considered one of the top two barriers and selected by 90% of project leads in both years but only 60% of participants in the first year and 45% in the second year considered it to be an obstacle to engagement. This may have to do with the changing broader context where screens were used more in year one than year two.

Lack of engagement was considered to be a larger barrier in year one than in year two. It is possible that the lack of informal opportunities to exchange with colleagues over lunch or a cup of tea in an online environment are partly to blame for low levels of engagement.

Online communities seemed to address this issue with social media such as WhatsApp and online forums being particularly effective but not widely used. In contrast, email was largely considered the least effective form of communication.

Another barrier that became apparent with this particular cohort and which is likely due to the

fact that the blended approach was directed by the Fund priorities, was facilitator attitudes. While some project leads showed positive attitudes towards the blended learning aspect of the project and were keen to learn, others had difficulty seeing its benefits and therefore engaged less actively with the concept.

Interestingly, digital access, the number one barrier typically associated with online and blended learning, was not identified as a major obstacle in this sample, possibly indicating a change in digital access and skills as a result of the Covid pandemic. Only one fourth considered digital access and skills to be a barrier.

Physical space emerged as another important factor impacting the effectiveness of blended learning. Many art forms require interaction with a physical environment that cannot be replicated online (e.g. dance) and presence in a different physical environment to the one people are used to can enhance creativity and confidence. This is difficult to replicate in an online or blended environment.

How to address potential barriers

While digital skills and access were not generally considered to be an obstacle, some project leads felt that non-compulsory online skills training might benefit course leaders with less experience using online tools.

Peer learning might also be beneficial to allow participants to share their insights regarding blended approaches as in the case of drama, perceptions differed substantially depending on the project rather than the art form itself.

In the context of the ongoing teacher recruitment and retention crisis, blended

Study results

learning might be particularly important as it might improve attendance, given that it is difficult for teachers to be released from classroom duties.

Involving those teaching and participating in programmes during their development might further improve attitudes and engagement.

With the blended learning again. If it was to keep going, it would benefit from being more led by the people that are delivering it or making the content rather than being set up by someone else in advance.

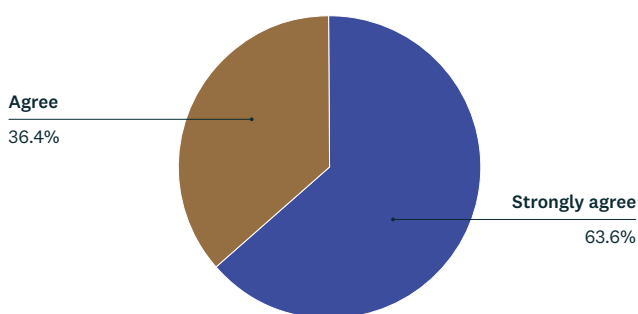
Artist practitioner, painting

What participants and project leads have learned from blended learning programmes

100% of participants felt that their understanding of arts pedagogy and their own arts-specific pedagogical skills have improved as a result of the project.

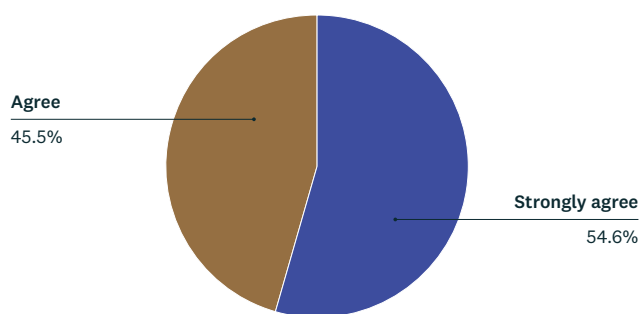
Fig 3: Impact of programmes on participants' arts pedagogy knowledge and skills

My understanding of arts pedagogy has improved



Only 27% of project leads and participants felt that their digital skills have improved as a result of the project, possibly illustrating a ceiling effect where most participants and project leads were already familiar with digital platforms and tools as a result of the Covid pandemic.

My arts-pedagogy skills have improved



45% of project leads felt that their understanding of how arts pedagogy can be taught online has improved throughout the duration of the project.

55% of project leads and 64% of participants felt that they have discovered new digital tools that they did not know before.

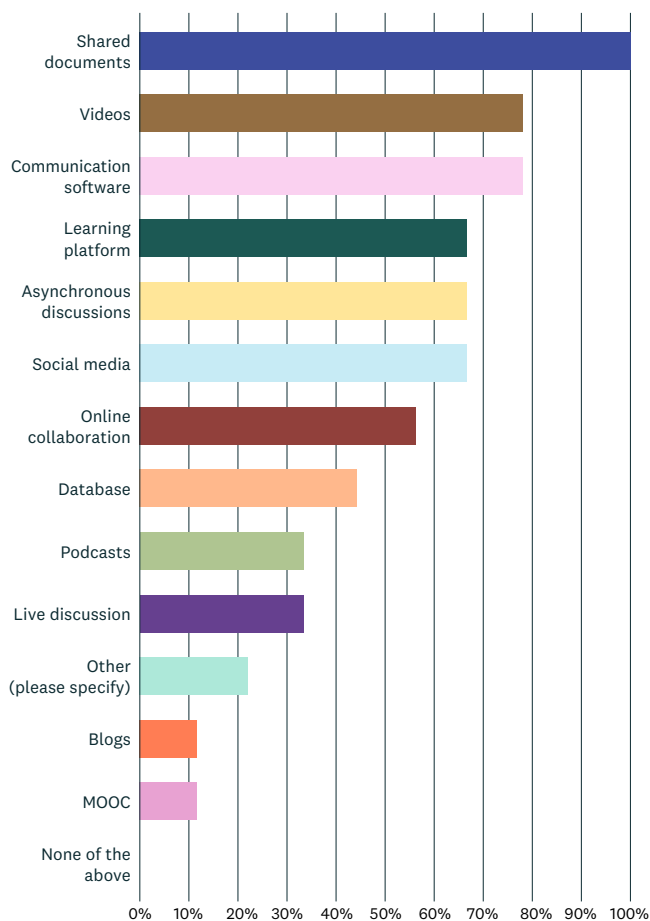
Media use

Videos were popular in both years and used by 8 out of 10 projects. They were used for consolidation, sustainability and to increase reach beyond projects' core participants. However, limited time, resources and expertise to create high-quality videos and limited engagement from participants were noted as barriers.

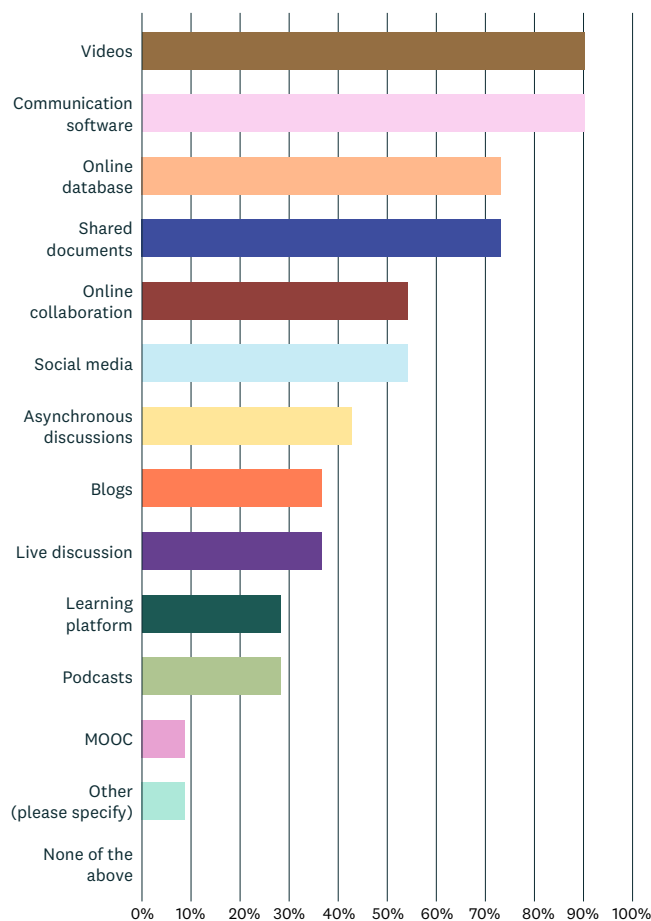
Accessing course materials online was identified as one of the major advantages of blended learning and remained important throughout the project. However, familiarity with the digital platforms and accessibility requirements should be considered to ensure user-friendliness and avoid frustration.

Fig 4: Media use across the project period

Media use Year 1



Media use Year 2



Using video for consolidation, sustainability and reach

Videos were popular in both years and used by 8 out of 10 projects. Videos were a particularly important resource for the consolidation of learning and allowed teachers to access content repeatedly beyond the limits of a face-to-face session.

The videos will always [come] after the teachers have experienced that in the haptic hands on way, so they'd have the haptic learning the physical, the sensory learning. And then it was for reinforcing. I'm not sure how well it would have worked in a different order. I don't think it would have stood alone. It was always in relation to something they had seen and felt and done.

Artist practitioner, drawing

Mostly the videos that I've been making have been reinforcing the sessions that I've had with the teachers last year. So we would cover various techniques of building out of clay, and then I would reinforce that with a video showing how that was done. And I know that they've been sharing that with other teachers in their schools. So that's, you know, worked relatively well.

Artist practitioner, ceramics (clay)

The second part of this quote highlights how some projects have been using video to increase the reach and sustainability of resources beyond the immediate project cohort.

This year is much more about legacy and finding ways to retain knowledge in the school. So I have made four full films like [another artist practitioner] in printmaking. I made four films in drawing, and I've made another one just recently. [...] and then we're looking at making a document on digital and an actual [i.e. print] as a legacy.

Artist practitioner, drawing

One practitioner provided a particularly innovative example of how recorded videos and QR codes in participating schools were used to share learning beyond the immediate project cohort.

So we had [...] videos that showed the different printmaking techniques. In the school we have QR codes on a sort of art board that link to those videos. So other teachers in the school can see the outcomes and quickly access the videos.

Artist practitioner, printmaking

However, despite the potential for videos to be used for consolidation, sustainability and to increase a project's reach, some project leads and practitioners noticed that they were not being accessed regularly by teachers. It thus seems important that the creation and storage of such resources is accompanied by a clear strategy, so time and resources are not wasted, especially as simple reminders do not seem to suffice.

I, too, have been making videos, but ... I can see they haven't been viewed many times at all, so I don't really think they're being used. I think people have forgotten about them, even though I remind them.

Artist practitioner, painting

Study results

It was also noted that videos alone were probably unlikely to increase the reach of a project beyond its duration and that interested teachers were more likely to gather information from their peers rather than videos alone.

Another important point was raised during focus groups about the ultimate goal of the projects, which was to increase teachers' confidence and therefore the importance of videos ultimately becoming obsolete as teachers become more reassured in their arts practice. Videos are ultimately just a scaffold.

One of the outcomes that we're aiming towards is that we are kind of working with these teachers to get them confidence in their abilities, to make their own decisions about creativity in their classrooms. So ultimately, I hope that they use the videos. I hope that they share them with the other teachers, but ultimately I want them to be confident to do this stuff, and not rely on things that we've recorded. [...] It's kind of a route to them taking control of their own creativity in the classroom.

Artist practitioner, ceramics

Finally, it was discussed how time-consuming the filming and editing of videos was and that the allocated time and money did not cover how long it actually took to develop decent resources.

It hence seems important to clarify from the start what the purpose of videos is in a blended learning environment and, based on these aims, when and how they are best employed to support the consolidation, sustainability or reach of a project.

We have all the lesson plans as well, which we still are working out, where to put them on the Google Drive through this tool, I think and similarly, we'll put QR codes onto a pack of cards which will be in the classrooms and they'll be able to access lesson plans through that.

Project lead, drama

Interestingly, while social media tools such as WhatsApp were generally considered helpful, their use decreased over the duration of the project.

Future plans for blended learning

82% of project leads are planning to use blended learning in their programmes going forward. However, face-to-face modalities appear to continue to represent the general preference.

In my opinion they [online modalities] are best used as a supplement rather than a replacement. They should always be an auxiliary to the face-to-face programming, which should form the body of any teaching.

Project lead, visual arts

The only exception continued to be the one project that focused on a digital art form, i.e. digital gaming. The project lead noted that blended learning held clear benefits for their CPDL programme as they had a range of freely available production tools at their disposal, which could be used during online workshops.

Teaching techniques versus teaching creativity

One topic that shone through in focus group discussions with artist practitioners was that of creating the right environment to foster creativity and to go beyond teaching teachers and students a specific set of techniques. Artists mentioned that they were concerned with some teachers' perceptions of what was considered a 'good' piece of art and the lack of variation in some of the art produced by students. They therefore stressed the importance of spending time with teachers to unpick their own understanding of the arts and how that fit in with external requirements, not least from Ofsted. The following presents some of their thoughts:

I was thinking about what you were saying about ways of teaching or teaching teachers how to teach, and all teaching them how to use the art medium. And it's something which is just coming up now this year rather than last year. We're kind of pushing out what we do to the other teachers and the other classes in the schools, and I have been supporting the teachers in delivering projects to all of the classes in the schools, and one of the schools I've been working with is focused very much on the experience of working with clay and they've had some fantastic results. So it's got it's been an absolute joy to be there. And the other school that I'm working with is, it's been very much about integrating this into a project and getting a whole load of work done in the day and I have found with this second school, that they have an awful lot of products at the

end of the day, which looks very similar. [...] We've been having a discussion about modelling and about whether modelling is the right way to be teaching what? Because if you just do something, if you say this is how you make this, then you're gonna get a whole lot of children who think, okay, that's how you make it. I'll do that rather than exploring your own creativity.

Artist practitioner, ceramics

This excerpt raises important questions about effective teaching methods in general, especially in light of an increasing interest in cognitive science teaching strategies, one of which is modelling. As always, it seems essential to clearly formulate the goal of a learning session. If it is the acquisition of technique, modelling might indeed be the right way to go. If it is for students or teachers to explore their creativity, modelling might actually hamper the process.

Another artist practitioner mentioned the importance of meeting teachers where they are at in their understanding of the arts, which will ultimately impact the appropriate teaching approach.

I've definitely found that what is best for the teachers, because most of the teachers don't have much of our experience is modelling how to be creative and how you can have the same input and multiple outputs in one class and giving them the skills or the confidence to allow for that a range of outcomes and the vocabulary for them to be able to let the children know that that's fine.

Artist practitioner, painting

Study results

Finally, the distinction between an art form as an output and an art form as a tool for learning was emphasised.

I really recognise that distinction between teaching techniques and teaching how to create an environment where there's a potential for lots of things to happen rather than a single thing to happen. And we, in drawing, even though drawing might present as quite a technical thing, I've been really resistant to that in the primary school settings. I think that's the kind of thing that should happen later. So we've been really emphasising experimenting and playfulness, and using drawing as a tool for learning rather than drawing as an output. [...]
It's about watching how teachers work, seeing them in their school, watching what the students do, and understanding all those relationships.

Artist practitioner, drawing

Conclusions and recommendations

Bringing this all back to blended learning, it seems important to highlight the need for project leads to clearly identify the aim of their programme, as appropriate methods will likely differ as a result. The teaching of theory and some techniques can likely take place online, even with some added benefits of flexibility, easier access to resources for artists and the possibility to record sessions, so they can be rewatched later. In contrast, programmes and sessions that focus on the development of creativity and a supportive environment, might require face-to-face sessions to foster the necessary relationships and break down potential barriers between artist practitioners and teachers.

In this section, we will therefore discuss some of the factors that appear important to consider when planning a CPDL project for arts teaching.

There is no one approach that is inherently better than another and each comes with its own advantages and disadvantages. A few important aspects to consider are:

- Resources you have available for the project, including rooms and finances
- Participant locations
- Your own and participants' digital skills (and willingness to develop them)
- The digital infrastructure you have available (online learning platforms, online communication software, etc.)
- The art form/s you teach and the specialist equipment you require
- The knowledge and skills you want your participants to develop
- The activities that are best suited to achieve your learning objectives and whether they work best online or offline
- Resources you want to include (videos, guest speakers, etc.)
- The activities you want to include (theoretical learning, reflection sessions, peer learning, etc.)
- If relationships with participants are already established or need developing
- Long-term sustainability of your project
- If you decide on a blended approach, consider the balance of online and face-to-face approaches you envision (low-, mid-, high-blend)

Conclusions and recommendations

The following table may help you in your deliberations.

Table 3: Advantages and disadvantages of online, face-to-face and blended approaches

Approach	Potential advantages	Potential disadvantages
Online approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Often financially more advantageous due to reduced travel, room hire and other costs ■ Logistics can be easier, especially if participants are spread across different locations ■ Long-term sustainability as resources can be accessed beyond duration of the project ■ Easier for participants to connect with each other between planned learning sessions ■ Can lend itself well to the teaching of theoretical knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participant engagement can be lower ■ Requires sophisticated digital skills from facilitators and participants ■ Some activities may work less well online (e.g. hands-on learning) ■ Screen fatigue ■ May lend itself less well to the teaching of practical/specialist skills
Face-to-face approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Focused time during sessions as teachers are out of the classroom and not distracted by screens ■ May be particularly important for art forms where space and specialist equipment is required ■ Can be easier to build a sense of community and belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Often more expensive ■ Logistics can be more challenging if people are spread across multiple locations ■ Tend to be more time-consuming as you have to account for travel time ■ Less sustainable beyond the duration of the project
Blended approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can help reduce costs due to some reduction in travel and room hire costs ■ Can be more sustainable if resources are stored and shared online ■ Can allow to choose most appropriate modality (online vs face-to-face) ■ Easier for participants to connect with each other between learning sessions ■ Likely the best approach if you want to combine practical and theoretical skills ■ Informed choices about modality and sequencing can result in an effective, efficient and inclusive CPDL model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Requires digital skills/training ■ Participant engagement during online sessions can be low ■ Requires clear communication about which meetings take place face-to-face and online ■ Requires time to plan and reflect with stakeholders in order to make informed choices about modality and sequencing

Appendix - Case studies

In this appendix, we present four case studies that took different approaches to blended learning to provide readers with practical examples of how blended learning can be put in place for arts-based teacher CPDL.

Project 1

Art forms

Five genres: photography, painting, printmaking, drawing, ceramics

Aims

1. Using art as a tool to develop children's oracy skills.
2. Bringing art into other subject areas.
3. Upskilling teachers.

Project structure

- Five art genres led by five artist practitioners and 10 schools. This equated to two schools per artist practitioner.
- Two practical CPD sessions per half term and an online planning and reflection meeting at the beginning and end of each half term.
- A remote meeting with the artist practitioners where they could share their experiences of the project with each other.

Approach to blended learning

As part of the blended approach, the practical CPD sessions were all face-to-face at each of the schools (but occasionally these had to move online due to Covid). The discussion-based reflection and planning meetings were remote sessions, which brought the schools together with the artist practitioner delivering that particular art genre.

There was also an online learning platform that had been created using Padlet, which had the benefit of being a very visual tool. The Padlet contained asynchronous resources (e.g. video, written notes/worksheets) created by the five artist practitioners, and galleries so that schools could share what they were doing. The asynchronous material on the platform had been created by the artists specifically for the purpose of repetition and revisiting teachers' skills.

Challenges

Where practical sessions have been forced online due to Covid, some art forms have worked better online than others. Generally, more practical sessions seemed to work better face-to-face, whereas discussion-based sessions worked well online. Printing was challenging due to the technicality of the medium and variations in access to materials. Photography was less successful online (e.g. seeing filters and apertures over the screen was difficult). However, painting worked equally well online and face-to-face because, compared to the other art forms, it was less practical and more theoretical and discussion-based.

It was generally preferable to have the practical sessions in-person and the reflective sessions online, extra equipment (e.g. digital drawing boards) was therefore not necessarily needed. However, it was useful to have two cameras, one on hands and one on the face, if having to deliver a practical session remotely.

Engagement with the online learning platform varied. Some people were readily sharing photos of their CPD sessions. However, this appears to have been schools where more teachers were involved in the project, which may increase the confidence of staff to contribute.

There have been a few technical issues for some people, but these were more to do with speakers and internet connection, rather than teachers' digital skills. Other than some people needing time to familiarise themselves with Padlet, digital skills did not present a big challenge, and everyone was familiar with Zoom.

Benefits

The blended format had impacted both artists' and teachers' engagement with the project. Online meetings were logistically easier to attend, giving people more flexibility to manage their time and their learning.

The asynchronous resources were an added value of the blended approach, as this was the first time such resources had been developed. These were independent resources that can be shared more widely and used with other staff who were not directly involved in the programme, both now and in the future. Furthermore, by allowing staff to revisit key ideas, they also gave teachers more flexibility and control over their learning. In turn, the artists' time in class with the teachers was also more valuable because they could reference the material online and spend their time going into more detail during the synchronous sessions.

Prior to this project, the CPD would have all been in-person and resources were shared via links on a website. However, very few people engaged with the website compared to the Padlet.

Project 3

The project used drama pedagogy and story-making to open out the curriculum in the local area, a rich multicultural area containing areas of deprivation. The focus of the project was on using drama for oracy.

Art form

Drama

Aims

1. How oracy can be developed through drama.
2. Bringing drama as a creative art into the classroom.
3. To create a knowledge exchange between artists and teachers.

Project structure

- Five different artist practitioners worked across seven schools.
- At the beginning and end of the term there were CPDL days, i.e. half a day for SLT, teachers, artists to come together face-to-face.
- Triangular model of online reflection (teacher, artists and specialist coach).
- A co-coaching specialist team sat above this.
- Legacy aspect in each school: in year two of the project, the children became part of that coaching model and the teachers that worked on the project that year became the coaching team for next year.

Approach to blended learning

There were live online CPDL sessions over the summer before the project started with SLT to create a shared ethos and a shared vision of what the project should be. All the CPD was face-to-face.

Drama pedagogy is participatory and it is an embodied experience, so it is about emotion in action and it is about embodied knowledges, it is a sense of physical, emotional space. The energy and the opportunity to respond to each other in the moment is what drives the learning and creates the energy and emotional intensity. And it's spontaneous.

The in-person CPD sessions were recorded and uploaded for people who couldn't be there. One session had to be run online because of Covid which led to engagement to be reduced by half, highlighting the importance of coming to a different space.

As part of this project, an online CPDL website was created called a Story Exchange. The artists were paid to do one stimulus and it was curated in a way that it offered an additional resource that picked up some of the themes from the CPDL. It sat across all the schools and was effective in connecting parents and schools.

Padlet was used for the termly online meetings with the artists and for the specialist coaching meetings in the triangle.

There was an action-reflection cycle for the teachers and the artists. Rather than having reflective logs, there was time for co-planning, for the teacher and artists, and co-reflection. Each of the artists and teacher recorded on their phones a 5-10 minute reflection about what they noticed about the session, in response to a series of prompt questions, and uploaded those onto a shared drive.

There were five specialist coaches running across the whole project (one artist, two SLT and two academics). Each specialist coach had two schools each, and their role was to have an

overview of the whole project and they came together and talked about the key themes that were emerging out of these reflective conversations. The coach then listened to those and arranged a 5-10 minute meeting, as soon as they could, online and they all discussed the key themes and the coach recorded a response to the meeting.

Challenges

The project moved from OneDrive to Google Drive to ensure that they were using systems that the schools used. They had some issues about uploading, and people forgetting to upload. At least with the digital reflections it was possible to monitor who was and wasn't uploading. With a journal they would not have been able to do that.

Benefits

Due to the number of stakeholders involved in the project, three specialist groups met once a term online for half an hour:

1. Meetings with project leads from SLT.
2. Meetings with the artists online for critical reflection about the emerging themes.
3. The specialist teachers' group, which was led by teachers from each school, met once a term and reflected on how that is going and what the findings are and they will feed that back in the CPD day.

Project 6

Art form

Digital gaming

Project aims

The project used the concept of world-building. The core concept was teachers supporting children to become world-builders – reimagining the world, creating a fictional space in which anything can happen.

- The key aim was to develop the autonomy and skills of teachers, their confidence, the wider experience, the critical engagement with digital technologies.
- In terms of arts, it was about self-expression and exploring ideas. In terms of literacy, it was story-telling. The project was trying to expand what teachers might think of as being a computing curriculum or a literacy curriculum, getting them to work in cross-curricular ways.

The project was very multifaceted, drawing on industry, technology, curriculum, pedagogy, arts, creativity but its focus was on having a professional development experience that enables teachers to take ownership.

Project structure

Five artists practitioners were working with six schools. The project had funding for six artists but only recruited five. With the remaining funding other artists who couldn't commit to the whole programme were brought in to run a session.

- In the first phase of the project, online sessions ran every four to six weeks for 90 minutes. After March 2022 these ran more frequently, in an opt-in way. These sessions contained both planning and creative

elements, like taster sessions of different approaches and ideas that teachers could try as they wish. They were recorded for those who could not make it.

- In addition, the project ran three face-to-face sessions.

CPDL approach

Initially the project used the 'maker-cycle', experimentation with skill-building and playing with materials and building skills, rather than focusing yet on what it was going to look like in the classroom. This happened after the first in-person session in March 2022, but even then, the aim was for teachers to encourage children to be experimental and playful, not so much about the final product.

The role of the artist practitioners was to support teachers to plan rather than deliver an activity in school. There was a cycle of activity: the teachers and artists planned an activity together, they undertook the activity (this may have been together or just the teacher, it was up to them) and then they had a feedback cycle.

Approach to blended learning

There were online sessions with the teachers and some with the artists, with some one-off specials to go into greater depth. This online livestream of events was really important.

The face-to-face for getting that trust and rapport with the different groups will be really important [...] They get that value of being in a room together, being very present in a room together with each other, so they can bond and when they are having discussions online or when they're giving feedback to an activity that they have tried in the classroom, that they feel trust and empathy with each other.

The project had an online community which was developed using tools like Padlet and Google Groups to create a dialogic space.

If you create a space where they can go and talk to each other away from the Zoom meeting, or the blackboard meeting, that is where all the interesting stuff happens [...] We have a Padlet that we call a digital playground where we put games that they might want to try [...] and they have just started to talk about these games and share experiences in there.

There were elements of the community space that could be outwards-facing and elements that were private so that teachers and artists could reflect online. Padlet was used for discussion online. After every session the aim was for teachers and artists to discuss online.

Challenges

One of the core schools dropped out because of Covid, but the project recruited a new school.

Benefits

Attendance at the online sessions was excellent, and people who were not able to come could access a recording. People were really engaged in online sessions, which were run from 4-5:30pm and teachers sat together in school.

The importance of the art form: this was a digital space so everybody was keen to try new digital tools – it had a synergy with the project. The nature of the art form may have also affected the people who signed up. People who've signed up to the project had good digital skills and were open to interactions online, possibly affecting their baseline motivation more positively.

Project 10

Art form

The body in movement (kinaesthetic movement and dance)

Project aims

- To develop primary teachers' knowledge and understanding of dance fundamentals and to enable them to teach subjects that they are exploring in the classroom through kinaesthetic movement and dance.

Project structure

There were six schools across three local authorities, 18 teachers (three or four teachers in each school) and three dance artists.

Teachers were paired with the same dance artists to collaborate for the whole two years.

Approach to blended learning

- The main strand was for the whole school: three CPDL in-person sessions. Teachers volunteered, because they needed to commit. Having the three CPDL sessions for the whole school across the year helped to boost the teachers' momentum and increase their pride in the project. Asking headteachers to be in that session is important to help them understand the project. Leadership buy-in was important to enable teachers to have time to participate, to enable the spaces to be available, but not to guide the direction of the project.
- For the participating teachers that worked alongside the dance artists, they had weekly half-hour in-person development meetings to reflect and plan, which also fed into these three CPDL sessions.

- For the dance artists, there were weekly online twilight reflection sessions for two hours, and five times a year all 18 teachers across the schools also joined. This created a community across the schools.
- Each dance artist and their teachers had their own forum. Google Drive was used as a sharing platform. All schools were able to access the full drive to share what they were working on, but there were also specific folders that only the dance artists and their teachers had access to (for privacy).
- In the online sessions, Mentimeter or Jamboard were used to record what people have said in their discussions, which stays open for the people who have not been there and they needed to add to the platform.

Challenges

The project was not about dance styles, routines or steps. Rather, it was about the creative aspect of dance.

How we are using creative movement, or dance, is very about how they connect to themselves, to their body, to the subject and to other people. So you have this inter-personal skills and intra-personal skills happening on a conversational-based or ping-pong approach within the group and within the session. When you go online, that's gone. It's hard not to go into teacher-centred⁵ approach. You direct them and they are moving in their own space. You miss the whole aspect of relationships that are built, confidence that is built, communicating with other people but also working with other people in a way that's using unspoken words. It's about the joy and the infectious or the

contagion that happens when you are around other people who are coming up with ideas. But also the energy or the joy that comes from even participating. That's both the adult in the room and the young people. So I think when we do things online they don't get to see or feel that as if they are learners in the space that they would expect their pupils to be.

On a laptop, the person who is teaching may be big on the screen and the other people who are moving may be distracting. When online, you are moving to be seen, rather than how it feels for yourself. It is flat. There is only a certain dimension that they can see.

There is a space for dance online and there is a space for dance and how it is seen on screen but that is a completely different aspect of dance that we are not trying to capture within these sessions.

People have their own preferences for different digital tools and this is a challenge to make everyone happy. We have a regular Zoom link that doesn't change each time for consistency. We are all learning together and schools are learning to troubleshoot, e.g. create a mobile hotspot to improve the internet connection for a Zoom meeting.

Benefits

Email is not a good medium of communication for teachers. Using the Google Drive skips the messy process of having to collate email responses, because it is visible on the Drive for everyone to see who has submitted what and when. A centralised space for communication.

5. In this case, 'teacher-centred' refers to being centred on the person delivering the teaching.

Appendix – Case studies

Online is good for logistics – time out of school is reduced, as is travel.

Online meetings: having all three teachers in the school in one room with the project lead on the main screen meant that they can still have those in-person conversations.

From experience elsewhere, where sessions are recorded and there was the option to catch-up, attendance fell, which negatively impacted on the development of the community. So, twilight sessions were not recorded. Also, people were less open when it was being recorded online. Having both in-person and online can lead to some miscommunication. So, the project had added an online-only approach to bring all the headteachers together across the schools. This helped to keep them focused on the aim of the project and to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

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