Northumbria Research Link

Create Aspire Transform: How can Creative Professional Development (CPD) support Creative Cultural Learning in schools?

Figure 1. Thomas (2019) Teacher aspiration, CPD activity.

ABSTRACT

Between 2018 and 2020, eight teachers were involved in a two-year programme of visual-arts focussed Creative Professional Development (CPD), delivered in partnership by the organisation Berwick Visual Arts (BVA) and Northumbria University. The overall challenge was to increase cultural leadership; with broader aims: to engage North Northumberland schools with BVA and to identify and understand the value of cultural engagement by creating specific artist-led programmes for teaching and learning.

Contributing new insight into teacher learning, along with fresh understanding of the challenges schools face in relation to engagement with cultural learning activities, the research informing this article draws upon individual perspectives during which the provision of cultural learning within Berwick primary settings is explored. Data was collected over a two-year period, from

five CPD sessions, along with action research, a focus group and semi-structured interviews with the participating teachers.

This article includes extracts taken from the teachers' reflections; these give insight into the programme's impact and highlight the importance of confidence, along with the barriers that make cultural learning difficult to embed across schools. Their reflections reveal heightened confidence as a result of the CPD along with positive impact for pupils and wider school community.

The article concludes with recognition of the potential of the cultural sector to broker opportunities and to work closely with school leadership to develop approaches that align with curriculum and Ofsted priorities, along with suggestions for future support and best practice that can also be applied in a wider context.

Introduction

Create Aspire (CAT) is a small-scale investigation into the provision of cultural learning in four primary schools in a rural isolated location. The location and remoteness from urban centres present specific challenges for schools to engage in cultural education. Whilst the remit is only in Northumberland England, the findings may translate to other regions and countries. Current provision of arts in schools, teacher confidence in relation to cultural learning and the challenges faced share common discourse; the intention is therefore to consider these strands in relation to the direct experience of eight teachers, and suggest Creative Professional Development (CPD) can successfully support cultural learning in schools.

This article presents findings from a two-year programme of focussed CPD. The investigation seeks critical understanding of the impact of the CPD and artist-led, visual arts activity for primary teachers, to raise confidence and develop creative leadership skills.

In order to employ more experimental processes and take creative risks, the research proposes that teachers benefit from increased arts and creativity training that is directly connected to cultural providers, such as galleries and museums.

To undertake the research a mixed methods approach was taken; evidence-gathering activities consisted of action research, artist-facilitation and evaluation through participant focus group discussion and interviews. The

relationship between the different strands of activities and intended outcomes were mapped, creating an active qualitative research framework.

This study draws upon the writer's professional involvement as evaluator and facilitator for the professional development of the programme. It contributes to her ongoing pedagogical research that investigates the attitudes and approaches of the artist-facilitator. Beyond this, it draws upon background experiences of gallery learning and university-based contemporary art curriculum, where experimentation, risk taking, play and enquiry are key.

Cultural education in the primary curriculum

Although it is a decade since Darren Henley undertook a review of Cultural Education in England, and made recommendations for a 'Broad Cultural Education for all children' (2012), the challenges for schools to recognise the value of cultural learning remain complex. Across the UK, there are varying national requirements for 'cultural development': Irish primary curriculum specifies, 'language and culture in late 19th and early 20th-century Ireland'. English curriculum promotes 'spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society' (DfE 2020). Scottish and Welsh primary curriculums include requirements for 'cultural identity' and 'history' (Education Scotland 2020; Hwb 2021). Although a new Welsh curriculum will be introduced in 2022 with emphasis on creative approaches to learning (Hwb 2021), generally, across the UK, cultural learning is not a priority.

The UK's 2019 Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection framework requires provision of a 'broad and balanced curriculum', including quality standards which evaluate intent and implementation of school leadership to construct ambitious curriculum designed to give all learners the 'knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life' (Ofsted 2020). School leadership should therefore be challenged to ensure 'artistic learning' is recognised within school provision and to ensure teachers are adequately equipped to facilitate this. However, the challenges for cultural learning in primary education are influenced by several key factors: curriculum priorities favour core Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and assessment-driven agendas leaving school resources stretched for cultural learning (Henriksen 2014; Jones & Wyse 2013; Last 2017; Robinson 2006); there is intense pressure for teachers to hit core related targets and the application of teaching is consequently and typically 'outcome' focussed (DfEE 2020; Henley 2012; Manchester 2011).

Adding further challenges, in England, Primary Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) training also gives core subjects priority, resulting in restricted time for Foundation subjects. Foundation subjects include Art and Design, Citizenship, Computing and IT, Design and Technology, Languages, Geography, History, Music and P.E (DfEE 2011, 2020). Trainee teachers can receive as little as half a day of 'art' training, with an additional half to full day of cross-curricular and integrated learning (Menter 2010). The resulting impact of minimal arts' training for primary teachers can seriously

undermine teacher confidence towards embedding cultural learning approaches as standard practice; 'artistic learning' can become constrained and formulaic (Menter 2010).

In addition, in primary and lower-middle schools, it is usually the class teacher who teaches art; it is exceptional to have regular artist-led sessions. Many teachers have preconceived understanding of what 'art' is; it is therefore easy for the creative journey to become less of a priority than pre-determined, prescribed, display-led practice (Menter 2010; Wyse & Spendlove 2007).

Additionally, classrooms are busy spaces, frequently without room for three-dimensional creativity or open-ended, active group work. Too often these environments are less conducive for dynamic, messy, experimental activities. For example: classrooms often have easily damaged carpets, or there may not be an easily accessible sink. These factors can all limit access to high quality, visual arts teaching.

Cultural learning, gallery education and creative pedagogy

Three main areas of literature support the CAT theoretical framework: cultural learning, gallery education and creative pedagogy.

The literature identifies the value of cultural learning to facilitate high-quality education through unique opportunities that engage learners with memorable,

inspiring practices that enable children to learn new skills, increase knowledge and develop cultural capital (Arts Council England 2016; CLA 2019; Durham Commission 2019; Henley 2012). When considering suggestions in the government's *Culture White Paper* (2016), that the arts are in danger of becoming an unbalanced and privileged aspect of children's learning, the Fabian policy report *Primary Colours* highlights, 'lack of access to the support, resources, skills and experience', crucial elements that enable teachers to deliver high-quality arts education; it suggests lack of training could therefore imply a resulting lack of confidence (Cooper 2016). Because cultural learning varies in every school, the influence of school leadership is important, along with individual teacher awareness, enthusiasm and confidence to embed it within the curriculum (Durham Commission 2019). To help address this, recommendations within the literature suggest 'strategic use of school leaders' and closer partnerships between schools and cultural partners (Hiett & Smears 2014).

Research reveals galleries create distinctive learning environments, offering spaces for direct interaction with artworks and dialogic exchange (Pringle 2009; Taylor 2006). The benefits of learning within galleries support a specific experiential pedagogy (Pringle 2009; Taylor 2006), where the relationship of engaging with artefacts and, commonly, making art, scaffolds new knowledge and the development of transferable and critical thinking skills (Burchenal & Grohe 2007; Pringle 2009; Taylor, 2006). Contemporary gallery education (Pringle 2009) is defined by the emphasis of artist-led activities, encouraging tacit, hands-on, participatory processes that support

discovery, reflection and 'meaning making' (Harding 2005; Pringle 2009). Through questioning and experimentation, participants engage with constructivist, collaborative, open-ended processes of learning (Pringle 2009); this can stimulate curiosity, open up democratic practices that encourage positive 'ways of being and acting *together'* (Lawy et al. 2013). Significantly for CAT, the literature suggests the distinct opportunities to learn together in a gallery environment enables teachers to experience and examine directly the benefits of cultural learning.

Bruner (1977) believed in cultural learning, alongside learning from experts; supporting constructivist models his approaches also promote active questioning and 'enquiry'. Alongside integration of experience, concepts and reflection, these combined elements develop strategies that foster creative pedagogy. Selkrig & Keamy (2017) recognise the combined importance of creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning with their adapted model of Lin's 'Creative Pedagogy' (2011); they highlight the significance of teachers embedding their own creative learning as the core to ensure creative pedagogy. This is enabled through authentic, 'deep' educational experiences and social, experiential processes (Selkrig & Keamy 2017; Sefton-Green et al. 2008). The implications these present CAT include the ability for teachers to nurture and embed their own curiosity, playfulness, imagination and experimental processes (Selkrig & Keamy 2017); the CPD and artist placements create explicit space and permission to do this.

Methods and processes

For the research a qualitative mixed methods framework (Patton 2002) was implemented, with information and evidence collected and analysed from the following:

Artist-facilitation: Partly ethnographic, with the author leading the CPD, this included observations, informal discussions and creative inquiry tools. Critical reflection was modelled and creative activities purposefully devised to support peer collaboration and learning (Meziro 1997). Data took the form of artefacts, field-notes and audio-recordings, enabling opportunities to examine the development of teacher confidence over the two-year period.

Action research: Participants were encouraged to create their own bespoke research framework and self-assessment benchmark to evaluate their experiences of the artist-placements. They used this to track the impact of the project learning using approaches appropriate for their school environment; this included a mix of personal reflection on classroom practice, observation, photographic documentation, note taking, and data taken from pupil progress and attainment; the teachers presented their own reflective 'case studies' evaluating their experiences and the impact this had on their teaching and learning in the concluding CPD session, supporting shared reflection and collective evaluation.

In depth interviews: In total nineteen, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were held, seven at mid-point and eleven at the end of the programme. The interviews engaged participant teachers, placement artists

and one head teacher. Each interview, lasting between half and one hour encouraged critical reflection and self-assessment. These were recorded and transcribed, with notes taken during each session. The interview purpose was to understand provision in the schools and their aspirations for cultural engagement. The artists' interviews were used to gain insight into the impact of the activities within school from an outside perspective.

Focus group discussion: Supporting further collaborative analysis (Meziro, 1997), four teachers came together towards the end of the programme, with the writer and BVA Learning Engagement Coordinator. Recorded, and transcribed, this discourse provided useful insight that challenged assumptions of the successes and progress of the teachers' confidence, creative leadership skills and impact of the programme on the wider school communities.

Process

The CAT programme set out to challenge practice and support holistic, creative pedagogy (Lin 2011; Selkrig and Keamy 2012). The brief set out to explore routes to develop teachers' leadership and commitment towards prioritising cultural education. To support this a 'transformative' (Kennedy 2005) visual-arts focussed programme of professional development was devised. Five full-day CPD sessions were held during an eighteen-month period, described as 'creative professional development' (Thomas, 2020) rather than, the more familiar, 'continuing professional development' as this more appropriately describes the nature of the training, which had a limited number of sessions and consequently was not continuing. The content

purposefully balanced creative tasks, engaging in gallery-based activities; this modeled collaborative actions that could be adapted back in the classroom: reflective writing, material enquiry, game-play and open tasks requiring direct engagement with artworks and responding to ideas inspired by exhibition thematics. To deepen impact, reflection was embedded in each session, empowering teachers to devise and initiate partnership activity with creative practitioners and cultural venues to support cross-curricular working. In the first and last sessions, the teachers mapped their confidence using the same visual diagram and completed questionnaires that charted their perceptions of creative cultural learning and expectations of the CAT programme. This informal creative feedback supported critical analysis and interpretation.

Alongside the CPD, action research was carried out through a weeklong artist placement in each participating school. To develop ownership, the scope of each placement was determined by teachers and pupils. Alongside the placements the teachers made field trips to local and regional galleries with their pupils. A joint schools exhibition was held at the end of the programme.

The complimentary participatory nature of the arts experiences of artist-led placements and exhibition allowed the teachers to apply their learning and extend confidence and creative understanding. These elements were intrinsic to the teacher's professional development. The project design articulated the placements as 'action research' with intention to help frame this as a distinguishable area to reflect and evaluate upon. Lofthouse (2014) proposes 'action research' is one aspect of 'practitioner enquiry' suggesting this builds

a cycle of 'plan, do and review' where practitioners engage in research that enables them to innovate processes, practice, and expertise in an authentic way. The teachers were invited to reflect upon each area at the end of the programme with aim to use this as an illustration of the benefits and challenges to teacher confidence in relation to cultural working and creative practice.

Northumbria University Ethical Approval processes were appropriately followed.

Participants

The participants included seven primary teachers and one middle school, specialist art teacher. Their experiences range from recently qualified to having over twenty years of teaching within mainstream education. All teach in Berwick, an area located on the English/Scottish border; all schools have a rural catchment.

Research questions and design

Through the research process the following underpinning question emerged; this is the main question explored for the purpose of this article: *How can Creative Professional Development support Creative Cultural Learning in Schools?* To support understanding three further questions are posed:

- What is the impact of the CAT programme upon teacher confidence?
- How does this benefit classroom practice?

- What is the importance of creative cultural learning for schools?

Data analysis

The relationship between the different strands of activities and intended outcomes was mapped. Interview transcripts were analysed using reflexive Thematic Analysis (TA) (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield & Terry 2018)**.** This creative, reflexive, and subjective approach and 'theoretically flexible method' (Braun & Clarke 2019) aimed to explore the progress between the baseline and end-point data to: (a) determine if the CPD increased confidence to facilitate and prioritise creative cultural learning; (b) identify the barriers for creative cultural learning; (c) understand the wider impact of creative cultural learning for schools.

Reflexive TA, recognises researcher subjectivity 'as a resource', as opposed to 'potential threat to knowledge production', allowing processes that do not require 'correct' procedures or ''accurate' and 'reliable' coding', instead this supports the researcher's 'reflective and thoughtful engagement with their data and their reflexive and thoughtful engagement with the analytic process (Braun & Clarke 2019).

Table 1. Key findings taken from thematic analysis: CAT Then and No

Focus	Then	Now
Impact of the programme upon teacher confidence	Some teacher participants were confident but did not prioritise cultural learning Some teacher participants had low confidence to facilitate cultural learning	Confidence to facilitate cultural learning significantly increased with all teacher participants
Benefit to classroom practice	All teacher participants recognised cultural learning as a benefit to classroom practice, but some were less inclined to apply it	All teacher participants recognised cultural learning as a benefit to classroom practice, all were inclined to prioritise and apply it
Importance of creative cultural learning for schools	All teachers considered cultural learning as important, but some were less convinced to prioritise it or inclined to champion it	All teachers recognised the importance of creative cultural learning to raise standards, increase ambition and support learning outcomes The CPD and action research persuaded all teacher participants to become cultural learning ambassadors and 'champions for creativity' in schools

What is the impact of the CAT programme upon teacher confidence?

Whilst the CAT teachers were already confident individuals they did not always prioritise cultural learning in their general approach in school, they considered capacity the main challenge to their creative practice. The teachers were initially anxious when working without a known output. There were key moments where they were visibly uncomfortable with creative approaches where process and discovery were equally important as outputs. Through the CPD and visual arts focussed activities, they reflected they improved confidence towards using new materials, working more openly and making work in new ways. An emergent theme was summed up with the response

"*doing things differently*" and increased self-assurance in developing "*new skills*". The teachers talked about their enjoyment through engaging with the programme and the journey taken through working with artists. They reflected the sharing of skills was not just about new practical techniques and specific forms, most teachers were already skilled, but working with artists helped test innovative techniques and generally facilitated increased confidence to give different processes a go. The artists therefore inspired new approaches and ideas. Bringing fresh energy, innovation and an outsider's perspective into schools, the artists challenged staff and pupils to re-think what art is and what art can be.

Teacher reflections

How have I changed? Very much about developing my practice. I will now try contemporary materials. Who knew masking tape could create a masterpiece. I am invigorated to be ambitious for and challenging of my children, to embrace the process and not always worried about visually pleasing end product (Teacher reflection)

Before, everything felt so difficult but now an artist comes in and just does the print. I think I can easily do that now, so it is just basically, I probably could have always done it but I just had not seen anybody do it (Teacher reflection)

Even learning about using modroc and working with clay with Sally (artist), things I have never been taught before, and Louise (artist) with the press prints, even just knowing what inks to use, how to do it. All of those processes, those skills have made a difference to what we now go back to (Teacher reflection)

The analysis reveals creating opportunities to talk to one another was important for confidence, self-esteem and leadership; the teachers' recognised valuable dialogue occurred with immediate colleagues in ways not usually possible in busy school schedules. Together the teachers reflected upon and qualified what they were doing; interaction with colleagues from other schools enabled sharing of best practice, opportunity to vocalise challenges and explore future ways of continued working. Developing a strong relationship with the BVA Learning Engagement Coordinator facilitated access. The teachers felt empowered to ask questions, arrange further gallery visits and use the BVA galleries with increased independence and regularity.

The CPD took place in two different gallery settings; one included a visit to university undergraduate art studios. This expanded ideas around practice and open-ended creative working. These experiences, along with gallery trips with pupils, meaningfully connected the teachers to contemporary art practice, engaging new knowledge and understanding. The teachers reflected increased confidence towards making connections with gallery learning, giving value to locally available resources.

Teacher reflections

I now have an appreciation for different types of art and that might come through in my teaching […] I have got a new love for different types of art and I did really enjoy coming to the galleries, where I was moaning at the start (Teacher reflection)

It is making me more conscious of the things I am doing actually because I am trying to get everyone to do more creative activities. It is making me think, what am I doing? What am I going to make? Am I leading everyone else… (Teacher reflection)

(B)efore I did this course, I think I was a bit timid in using it (Visual arts). I was worried I could not evidence it. […] if it wasn't written down it would not be valid. Since doing this, I realise I can evidence it in different ways and be less timid of using those different ways to evidence what I have been doing (Teacher reflection)

Overall, the analysis reveals, the impact of the CAT programme significantly increased the teacher discourse of confidence and enabled greater ownership and leadership of creative cultural learning. The programme created space to focus; as a result the teacher's recognised their learning generated from varying sources: individual learning, peer-led learning, through working with creative practitioners, by engaging directly with artworks, increased reflection and through the activities and support offered by the writer and BVA Learning Engagement Coordinator. All of these elements enhanced routine activities and usual daily school experiences.

How does this benefit classroom practice?

The combination of CPD, placements, visits and exhibition initiated new approaches. The analysis reveals this raised not only teacher confidence but pupil confidence as well. The teachers commonly emphasised this increased their ability to take risks. This translated directly back into their teaching and learning, recognising, alongside their pupils, they can value mistakes.

Within their comments, the teachers gave further attention and appreciation towards the cross-curricular benefits that cultural learning can support, sharing multiple narratives to illustrate positive influence on pupils, including: improved verbal and written communication skills. Progression for special needs and pupil premium children was identified as distinct, evidencing progress through personal journeys and Arts Award participation.

Teacher reflection

The CAT programme makes a difference to pupil confidence because it pushes boundaries and gives new experiences, it allows creativity for creativity's sake and gives enjoyment in / of the arts (Teacher reflection)

Each teacher positively reflected that increasing their own creative learning and working with cultural providers significantly enhanced their learning offers. Therefore, they were independently integrating gallery learning into their activities; they identified they were employing deeper thinking skills and their knowledge improved. To summarise, the teacher's articulated their increased confidence, in relation to creative cultural learning, directly gave benefit classroom practice by introducing new approaches, skills and connections. The data suggests this can benefit pupil confidence, learning and self-expression.

What is the importance of creative cultural learning for schools?

The teachers whose schools anticipated an Ofsted inspection demonstrated higher levels of stress at the beginning of the programme. Analysis of the data suggests, across the two years, they increasingly recognised positive impacts of creative cultural learning to raise standards, increase ambition and therefore supporting stronger outcomes in an inspection context. When reflecting on the impact on pupils, examples were shared where activities positively impacted upon pupil attendance; common themes emerged, including confidence, imagination, communication, problem solving, taking pride in work, resilience, perseverance, making connections and independent thinking. For inclusion, the teachers reflected the pupils with English as Additional Language (EAL) gained opportunities to express religion and culture.

The teachers described the pupils as "*creating memories*". From a social mobility and cultural capital perspective, the analysis reveals increased cultural access to be a significant pupil outcome; supporting pupils to think "*beyond Berwick*" and benefitting from quality experiences they may not get outside of school. The teachers cited increased appreciation that galleries are places for everyone. The programme introduced pupils to potential career pathways: working in museums or galleries, working as artists or creative practitioners, becoming a student, or being employed at a university.

There was a shared appreciation about how the project became a whole school agenda, reflected through opportunities to celebrate pupil achievement, display work, and involve the wider community.

Teacher reflections

They (the pupils) gained confidence, pride in their work, a bit of resilience when they got stuck (Teacher reflection)

The impact on those with special needs and those who are low-attainers… It is their chance to shine! It is their area of expertise and some of the children who are normally top of the class were bottom of the class for a change (Teacher reflection)

A sense of pride, you know the children going back with their families on the Saturday, the pride of showing this is what we did and having to explain it, then the children were showing their families around all the other children's work (Teacher reflection)

The analysis reveals cultural learning facilitated inclusive learning and teaching that developed pupil skills and personal attributes. It identified opportunities that bring schools and community together and revealed potential to support school improvement priorities.

Challenges

CPD does not solve everything. Whilst the CAT teachers recognised their confidence and cultural leadership skills as enhanced, they identified ongoing challenges towards embedding creative cultural learning into the curriculum, describing capacity, time, and money as key.

As categorical creative cultural learning ambassadors, the teachers recognise their enthusiasm may not be shared and there are significant challenges to

engage colleagues who are "*not arty*" and therefore less willing to prioritise arts.

As previously mentioned, school leadership opinion bears influence on teacher confidence, capability, and capacity; this is because ultimately senior leadership decide on how funding is allocated. If there is little enthusiasm or support for creative cultural activities from senior leaders then inevitably the confidence, capability and capacity of teaching staff become challenged (Thomas 2020).

CAT was strategically devised as a research programme. Research-led learning with schools presents project design challenges. Framing the placements as 'action research' was possibly too much; building in enough time for discussion and development of ideas between artists and teachers was hard enough; the various dimensions of the project required intense and demanding focus. Whilst the research intended to examine teacher confidence, with playful activities built into the CPD design to help measure this, there were so many layers this was complex. Through the placements, it was hoped the teachers would develop their confidence and a persuasive case would be made for cultural learning. Meaningful data was produced but maintaining research focus proved challenging; the teachers found it easier to evaluate impact on pupils, rather than on themselves.

The overall process was collaborative but ultimately designed by BVA. The teachers were therefore participants, not co-designers or co-producers. Whilst

CAT successfully evidenced best practice, and generated qualitative data that supports metric driven targets, encouraging time stretched teachers to fully buy into and embed full understanding of research processes and methods is difficult; especially if they are also challenged to step beyond usual comfort zones. This presents useful learning for future project design.

Conclusions

So, how can Creative Professional Development support creative cultural learning in schools?

Best practice

The CAT teachers reflected the CPD purposefully made room to prioritise cultural learning; through this and by developing their own creative learning their understanding and practice changed; their perception of creative pedagogy was re-addressed; the analysis suggests through targeted CPD the teachers felt more able to collaborate with artists and take ownership of projects. The activities developed school culture and capacity, giving value to cultural interventions, evidenced through increased ongoing engagement with cultural activities. Crucially the teachers felt able to access the CAT offer easily with enthusiasm. The evaluation reveals activity with BVA galleries has increased, with greater connections made towards the local and regional cultural resources. The teachers reflected pupil engagement in the CAT programme enhanced aspiration, evidencing valuable impact upon learning and improved cultural capital.

By targeting creative ways of working with teachers (Hiett & Smears 2014), CAT presents a useful and valid model that can be applied in a wider context. Focussed CPD directly supports creative thinking, challenge, and reflection. Through exposure to artists, artworks, and innovative ideas, CPD increases teacher skills, knowledge, and discourse of confidence towards cultural learning and this in turn adds value to teaching and learning through increased creative pedagogy; all of which can have transformational influence on classroom practice and can support standards and quality (Cooper 2018; Lin 2011; Selkrig and Keamy 2017; Sefton-Green et al. 2008).

Ofsted priorities

Cooper (2018) proposes high-quality arts education is an essential requirement for 'outstanding' schools as part of 'a broad and balanced curriculum'. Changing the culture of schools to give recognition of the value of cultural activity on supporting teaching and learning is an ongoing process. This identifies the importance of the cultural sector to broker opportunities and to work closely with school leadership to develop approaches that align with curriculum and Ofsted priorities. This supports recommendations for senior leaders in schools and cultural organisations to invest in support for teacher CPD to increase confident cultural learning. To help address this, cultural organisations should explore approaches that make the arts more relevant; thematic, topic-based and cross-curricular working could generate more engagement with non-art specialist teachers.

In the long run it is hoped the CPD will enable the teachers to become more autonomous and facilitate their own programmes and cultural learning activities. Fundamental learning suggests they are more likely to have the confidence to support this if it can apply across the curriculum. The literature and analysis suggest cultural learning is important to address Ofsted targets, to raise standards and increase ambition. As this is persuasive from the teachers' and school perspective it is therefore crucial as a key focus for future CPD.

Future support and intervention

Cooper (2018) recommends, 'New support for cultural education partnerships with funding to support local, place-based, and accessible arts in every community' (2018, p5). Cooper also recommends specialist arts teachers for every school, greater investment in teacher training, specifically professional development and free annual visits to galleries and cultural venues. In relation to the national curriculum, he proposes arts and cultural education should be 'more explicit', with expanded guidance for arts and music education (Cooper 2018).

The CAT data suggests the CPD successfully strengthened key relationships with BVA; participating teachers and school leadership, who have become invaluable ambassadors and 'champions for creativity' connecting their schools' communities with BVA. What is significant here is the role of CAT as a catalyst for cultural learning; BVA is a small organisation, with limited resources and capacity, by strategically investing in partnership approaches (Arts Council England 2016) and the development of teachers' skills,

confidence and enthusiasm, the teachers are now better equipped, and more willing, to facilitate and lead creative cultural learning in schools. In the longer-term this supports ongoing commitment towards prioritising cultural education. The CPD therefore positively benefits teachers, pupils, school, and the cultural organisation. However, strategic involvement of school leaders and governors is still required to embed learning through the arts more deeply and to extend cultural learning beyond direct participants.

For BVA as a cultural organisation, CAT has raised the profile of what project activity can be and what CAT can achieve. This constructively provides evidence that the organisation contributes positively towards the region and local culture. The school engagement has generated recognition within the wider community, including audiences who may not usually connect with the organisation. By supporting cultural learning, further confidence is placed in the cultural organisation externally, placing the organisation in a stronger position to attract future funding support (this may include the local authority, Arts Council England and Trusts and Foundations etc). The CAT info graphic (BVA 2020) presents an accessible summary of the programme and gives comprehensive evidence of the programme's reach.

Figure 2. BVA (2020) CAT info graphic.

Whilst this article is specific to the CAT programme and the reflections represent the teachers thinking at the time within this activity, this identifies the benefits made available through CPD to support cultural learning and

promote teacher confidence and agency. The CAT model gives example to the importance of the cultural sector to broker opportunities and to work closely with school leadership to develop approaches that align with curriculum and Ofsted priorities. At the end of the CAT programme the participating schools have become beacons for other Northumberland schools. The teachers keenly advocate their learning and experiences. The exhibition and peer-sharing sessions have built momentum, capacity, and appetite for further engagement. The activities have created visibility and helped promote the benefits and impact of cultural learning for the schools and BVA. CPD lies at the heart of this, strengthening cultural leadership, creating more confident and committed teachers who can proactively lead and champion creative cultural learning in their respective schools.

Figures 3 and 4. Thomas (2019) Teachers assessment, comparing the start and end of the programme, CPD activity.

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Figure 5. Thomas (2019) CPD discussion.

Table 1. Key findings taken from thematic analysis: CAT Then and Now

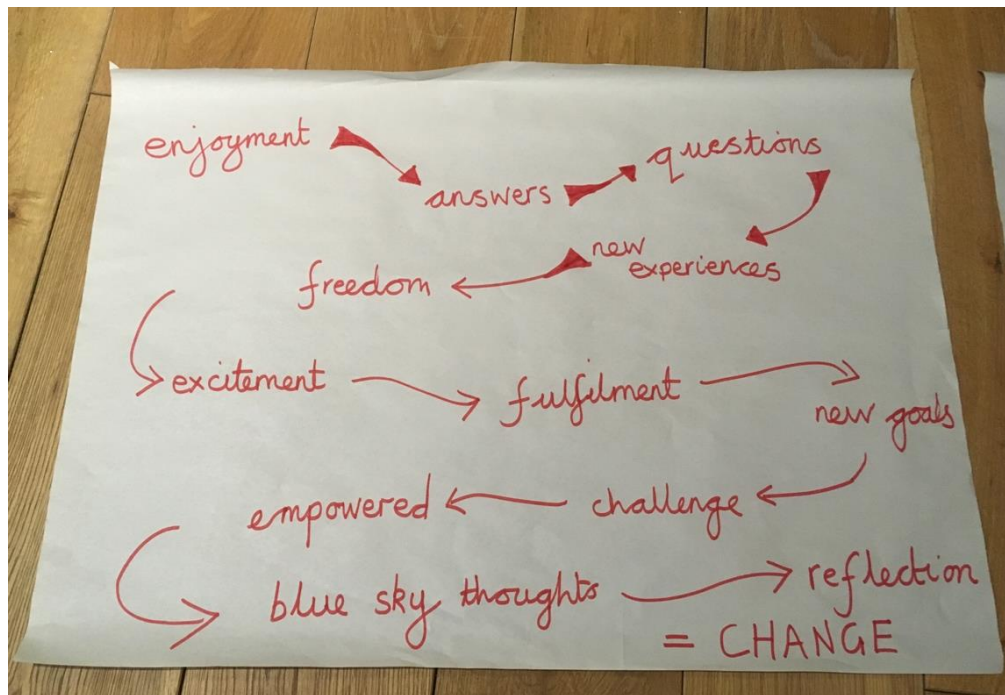| Focus	Then	Now
Impact of the programme upon teacher confidence	Some teacher participants were confident but did not prioritise cultural learning Some teacher participants had low confidence to facilitate cultural learning	Confidence to facilitate cultural learning significantly increased with all teacher participants
Benefit to classroom practice	All teacher participants recognised cultural learning as a benefit to classroom practice, but some were less inclined to apply it	All teacher participants recognised cultural learning as a benefit to classroom practice, all were inclined to prioritise and apply it
Importance of creative cultural learning for schools	All teachers considered cultural learning as important, but some were less convinced to prioritise it or inclined to champion it	All teachers recognised the importance of creative cultural learning to raise standards, increase ambition and support learning outcomes The CPD and action research persuaded all teacher participants to become cultural learning ambassadors and 'champions for creativity' in schools

Fig 1.

Fig 2.

Create Aspire Transform programme
April 2018 - Dec 2019

8 teachers   4 schools   6 artist placements

36 days of artist-led activity in schools

506 pupils participated in artist-led activity

1k 1000 pupil Go and See visits to 16 exhibitions in Newcastle, Gateshead and Berwick-upon-Tweed

122 First School pupils visit Northumbria University including 35 Year 1 pupils

5 full days of teacher CPD led by Northumbria University

2 exhibitions

6 days of artist-led exhibition installation with teachers and pupils

903 visitors to Sense of Place exhibitions in July 2018 and June 2019

196 pupils achieve Arts Award Discover

6 teachers become Arts Award Discover and Explore Advisors

Fig 3.

Fig 4.

Fig 5.