

A re-design of the KS3 art curriculum to enrich and improve student experience.

Sarah Cairns, Boldon School

A statement of Focus:

The focus of this project was to develop the art curriculum within KS3 to enable students to gain a more enriched experience. The previous curriculum covered 3 projects over the course of the year, and it was questioned whether these were engaging or exciting enough. It was also felt that they did not allow students to explore or gain an insight to a wider variety of the styles or types of art.

At Boldon School students can choose textiles, photography, or art and design as a GCSE option; however, only art & design is taught on the KS3 curriculum. Each year the number of students who have chosen photography or textiles (particularly textiles) as an option have been low. This led us question whether it was because students had not had any experience of the topic. In an attempt to overcome this and make art more engaging, my head of department and I decided I was to redesign the curriculum, focusing on the following targets:

1. To incorporate more variations of art into the curriculum.
2. To introduce a wider variety of artists and styles of working into lessons.
3. To develop short and exciting projects which interest and engage students.

A description of the development process:

I spent extensive time researching different artists, styles, and types of art, deciding which areas would be most engaging to include into the new curriculum. I also made the decision to go from 3 to 6 projects throughout the academic year, to cover a wider range of disciplines and retain student interest. I talked to other staff in the department to find out their areas of expertise so that these could be used to an advantage. I also spent time chatting to staff on areas they did not feel as confident delivering, ensuring they felt they had the resources and knowledge base to be able to carry out the projects.

An account of the benefits/ evidence of impact:

A student voice survey was carried out by a non-art teacher to investigate whether the new projects were successful in engaging students. We decided to use a non- art teacher so as to not influence student responses and gain as honest answers as possible. A range of year 7 and 8's from each art class participated in this, and the response was very positive. The feedback from year 8 students is most significant as those students completed both the previous 3 longer projects as well as the new shorter ones. Some findings of the year 8 student voice are as follows:

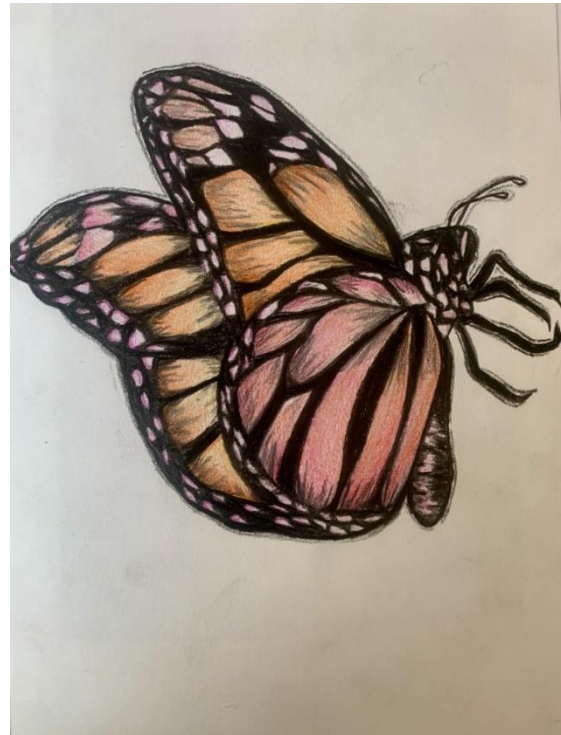
- All students agreed that they enjoyed their art lessons.

- All liked being introduced to new topics (5 out of the 8 groups asked specifically stated they enjoyed being taught textiles and photography as it was something they had not done before).
- When questioned on whether they preferred completing longer projects in year 7 as opposed to shorter ones in year 8, all students agreed that they preferred the shorter projects and liked moving on to a new skill every lesson as it made it more 'interesting'.

I also feel that evidence of impact can be seen in the student outcomes seen above & below.



Textiles Printing onto Fabric



Mixed Media Butterfly



The beautiful pieces of work created by a range of mixed ability students demonstrate their engagement in the topics studied through the high standard and amount of effort they have put in.

Although we are in the early stages of consolidating and implementing the new curriculum, it is felt that it has been successful so far and the changes are beneficial for students. It is too early to tell whether re-designing the art curriculum has had a positive impact on the number of students choosing photography or textiles as a GCSE option. This is something that my head of department & I will monitor over coming academic years.

Discussion of challenges/ barriers/ issues:

The main challenges I faced when completing this project was getting other staff members on board to make changes and try new things. The previous projects had been taught for several years and it was felt by some staff that they worked and there was no need to change them. As well as this staff did not feel confident to deliver in areas of art which were not their specialism. In order to overcome this, I had to change my approach from how I wanted to achieve the targets set out and come up with a collaborative way of working which would suit all. I feel this has been a crucial part to my own development as a leader.

I addressed issues by having many open conversations with staff members when re-designing the projects and encouraged their honest opinions on what would work for them and what would not. I spent time addressing areas where staff felt their weaknesses were, making sure resources were easy to follow and accessible for all. Furthermore, I talked through and explained the resources and schemes I had made to ensure staff felt confident using them as well as regularly checking in to make sure there were no issues.

Reflections on what has been learnt/ achieved:

My project has had a positive impact on my own professional development and relationships with colleagues. Furthermore, it has so far been beneficial in developing and enriching the learning of KS3 students at Boldon School. I have had to take responsibility and ownership for the schemes of work I have produced, take risks and experiment with a range of variables in my aim for success. This is something that has boosted my confidence and understanding of what works well and what does not.

Reflections on growth/ development as a leader:

In terms of my own professional development and growth as a leader, I have had to learn how to adapt how I want to execute something. I have learnt that part of being a successful leader is ensuring my plans are accessible and can be successfully carried out by all members of my department. This process has enabled me to strengthen working relationships, as I have spent time working closely alongside my colleagues, giving me an insight into why they may be apprehensive to try new things. I have developed a collaborative way forward so that all involved felt confident in teaching new projects and skills to students. It has been an

enjoyable process which has enabled me to strengthen working relationships as well as design and deliver something I feel passionate about.