

# Stitch in Time - making an impact in Devon

Stitch in Time sought to engage teenagers in MLA activities, to build their confidence in working with the MLA sector and to engage teenagers in new activities to develop their skills. With the focus on textiles, and in particular the theme of 'Make do and Mend', the project was created to support teenagers' learning and creativity through engaging workshops. Successful outcomes included; encouraging engagement with historical documents, promoting social cohesion and to give teenagers a greater awareness of this important period in history.

The project covered new skills such as sewing, making, decorating and embroidering items made from cotton and calico material, for example: bags, needle-felting toys, printing and using IT to print images onto material transfer paper and embroidery.

-Students studied World War Two and the importance that recycling and 'Make do and Mend' had on the lives of people in the past. They also looked at the revival in textile reuse today and the similarities and differences between the two eras.

-Students gained access to library books; using them for inspirational ideas.

-Students and staff gained a greater understanding of the importance of the Record Office in preserving historical material for educational purposes.

-IT was used to aid learning for students who were unable to engage with materials or felt more comfortable using the computer. They were able to create their work in a digital format and print these onto fabric transfer paper and iron onto their recycled materials, as well as directly embroider these from jpegs onto their work using the sewing machine.

-The students received a fairly open brief which allowed them ownership over their final products. For example, the students could decide, under the chosen weekly topic, what item they would like to create once they had learnt the skills. This increased engagement and promoted a greater degree of responsibility amongst students.

- Students were also given the responsibility of documenting the workshops by taking photographs of their friends and the work being created throughout the process, please see attached images.

## Target Audience

Young people aged between 13 and 19 years old in the deaf community.

## Aim

One of the main aims became to use this project to increase the aspirations and enterprise skills of deaf teenagers.

The resources at the Deaf Academy are fairly limited. The students have access to a workshop and traditionally learn carpentry skills; an activity which has been undertaken at the Academy since the 1800s! This project therefore sought to broaden their skills and

introduce them to new ways of working and new materials, and to give them some new ideas for career progression.

## **Process**

The project was agreed and the aims were to deliver the same project as was agreed for the Tiverton group, that is, a cross cultural learning experience with the project theme, but instead within the Exeter area. The library service provided books to aid learning. The Devon Record Office provided historical documents focusing on 'Make do and Mend' and artists were brought in to deliver workshops around this theme.

## **Number of participants**

25 students from KS 4 had an average of 6 contacts with the project. 15 teachers and 20 adult participants also took part.

## **Impact and outcome**

'I am so far out of my comfort zone right now, it's fantastic'. Teacher, ERADE.

'I can't believe how quiet this class is, everyone is concentrating so hard!' Teacher, ERADE

'This is brilliant, your sessions are taught at just the right level, all the staff are really interested too'. Teacher ERADE.

"It's been great to see everyone in the groups, each individual, actively engage and fully developing their project art-pieces for the Stitch in Time. The teaching assistants and teachers at the College were all enthusiastic and couldn't have been more helpful. I enjoyed the relaxed and friendly atmosphere and it's been a pleasure to work on this project"  
Catherine Cartwright, Artist, Educator and Printmaker.

'I was a bit nervous about working with Deaf teenagers, as I was unsure how supportive the staff would be and if the students would engage with the archival material. I am happy to say that this opportunity to explore working with teenagers was a rewarding and exciting experience. The students produced beautiful work and the staff were enthusiastic and supportive throughout'. Katherine Weston, Heritage Outreach Officer, Devon Record Office.

## **Evaluation**

Initial planning session was very unsatisfactory with little enthusiasm from a nominated teacher. It was, therefore, decided to pursue contacts through other developing partnership with the Head of FE at Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education.

## **Tips**

A longer timescale to allow for considered development would be encouraged.

Ensure that all teachers leading pupils share the vision for the project as their enthusiasm and support is critical.

A good working relationship between staff in mlas and schools ensures future sustainability.

## **Future development**

Strong links were made with the ERADE FE College. This has resulted in the continuation of the project after January 2011 and will cumulate in an ERADE summer enterprise event in Exeter.

New links were made with artists in Devon. This will be valuable in planning future outreach work with college groups and the archive.

## **Case study record created on:**

04/04/2011

## **MLA funded:**

Yes

## **Institution:**

Devon Arts in Schools Initiative (DAISI) responsible for managing the umbrella project  
Devon Record Office managed the specific outcomes.

## **Key partners:**

Devon Record Office

FE college at the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education (ERADE)

## **Team members:**

Katherine Weston, Access and Outreach Officer, Devon Record Office

## **Start date:**

September 2010

## **End date:**

February 2011

## **Contact:**

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DAISI

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## **Programmes:**

Strategic Commissioning programme 2010-11

**Domains:**

Archives  
Arts organisations  
Libraries

**Sector developing role:**

Advice  
Liaison  
Partnerships

**Social groups:**

Children and young people

**Social outcomes:**

Celebrating local identity  
Learning & skills  
Positive outcomes for vulnerable groups  
Raising participation

**Geographical Coverage:**

South West