



Centre: Rose Theatre - Edge Hill University

Context

The Rose Theatre is a venue based at Edge Hill, used by university students and as a host venue for theatre companies to perform their productions to local residents. Paula Mor, a Performing Arts lecturer based at the University was the adviser for Edge Hill's first Bronze Arts Award project. Her delivery was supported by a group of undergraduate student ambassadors, using the Rose Theatre's facilities.

Approach

The project was run through a collaboration between Edge Hill University and students from five schools in Greater Lancashire (Accrington Academy, Alder Grange Community Technology School, Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School, Heysham High and Lytham St Annes Technology & Performing Arts College).

The University's Education Liaison team approached the schools and asked them to provide a small group of 'Gifted and Talented' performing arts students to take part in the project. The schools were asked to select students who they felt were enthusiastic and had the potential to pursue performing arts at degree level in the future.

The project took place over a series of seven on-campus visits culminating in a two day residential. During each visit, students took part in a variety of workshops designed to develop performance techniques through a system known as 'the viewpoints'. This was a system based upon the work of Mary Overlie, who attempted to deconstruct theatre and performance to find a set of ruling principles. The students participating in the programme used nine 'physical viewpoints' in their work and were encouraged to critically evaluate, review and participate in a showcase performance.

Chris Bayes, Education Liaison Officer, co-ordinated the project and feels that there is potential for the university to adapt the Arts Award project for other University courses, such as media, creative writing and film production.

Impact

Students worked collaboratively with university academics, current undergraduates and their peers from across the region. A number of students fed back that working with other people their age who are passionate about performing arts, was an extremely valuable aspect of the project. They also learnt about the level of professionalism required in the study of

Performing Arts disciplines at University and became more reflective performers.

A number of the schools involved in the programme were from regions where participation in Higher Education is very low. One of the benefits of the project was boosting aspirations for progression to arts-based Higher Education courses.

Highlights of the project for Chris and Paula were watching the students put into practice all the techniques that they had learnt in their showcase performance. It was encouraging to hear the participants speaking so warmly about the project when they met the moderator.

Comments

'Attaching our project to Bronze Arts Award gave it something tangible which the students could take forward into their further studies, and the fact that UCAS points are awarded to students completing Gold Award makes it extremely appealing. Arts Award may provide a mechanism for universities to collaborate with schools and colleges in the local area.'

Chris Bayes, Education Liaison Officer, Edge Hill University

'The workshops involved in the project were amazing. They were sometimes difficult to begin with, but I realise that this is the level at which university students have to be able to perform.'

Jordan, Heysham High School

'I got better and better at teaching my street piece. I saw the mistakes that I had made with one group and tried to improve it for the next group. I also had to work with the differing levels of ability within each group. So, this made me more aware of the skills a good teacher needs to have.'

Esther, Bacup & Rawtenstall Grammar School

'I have really enjoyed the whole experience and wish it wasn't ending. Every time we visited Edge Hill, we learned something completely different and it has been amazing!'

Stephanie, Lytham St Annes Technology & Performing Arts College