

# SLiCE



*"I think that what identifies us as human beings above all are the powers that flow from our deep resource of imagination." Sir Ken Robinson\*.*

## 'SLiCE'

In 2016 I was awarded a research fellowship from the Arts Council's northwest bridge organisation *Curious Minds*, becoming a Specialist Leader in Cultural Education (SLiCE).

Under the supervision of lead researcher Dr. Sandra Hiett, a groups of SLiCEs from the North West of England, set about researching the following question:

**"To what extent can cultural education close the attainment gap for pupil premium pupils?"**

Our particular team's research sub-question was as follows:

**"To what extent can dance education close the attainment gap in story writing for year four and five pupil premium pupils (specifically by stimulating imagination)?"**

I worked with three education partners and one cultural organisation:

- St Bernard's R.C. Primary School (National Teaching School)
- Rossmore Primary School
- Woodlands Primary School
- Cheshire Dance

For confidentiality reasons, I cannot divulge particular results here. However, I can say overall that the whole project was extremely rewarding and the results gave some clear pointers to the way ahead in stimulating imagination in story writing through cultural education. For impact, skills need to be used in a supporting role, with multi-sensory, fast-paced, low judgment learning which keeps children curious.

\*The Dalai Lama Center (2011, November 7). Sir Ken Robinson: Educating the Heart and Mind [Video file]. Retrieved from: <http://www.dalailamacenter.org/blog-post/sir-ken-robinson-educating-heart-and-mind-video>



## Feedback:

**“I have just read your report** and found it informative, beautifully presented and thought provoking - congratulations on a robust piece of work.” *Lead Researcher, Dr. Sandra Hiatt, Artist Teacher Associates.*

**“I hope you managed to get a break eventually** and you have recovered from the mammoth effort that you put into Slice. The report is **ace** and really interesting in its findings. I love the way you've presented everything too - your own creativity made it a joy to read!” *Andy Moore, National Education Leader and OFSTED Inspector, Director, IGNITE Teaching School Alliance.*

**“I have loved working with you** during this project! You have inspired me and encouraged me to think outside the box. You have challenged my own beliefs about the role of a teacher in a classroom and convinced me of the importance of creativity in all that I do!” *Hollie Davis, Woodlands Primary School.*

**“SLiCE has supported me in a way I never could have imagined ...** The opportunity professionally has enabled me to think outside the box and approach the teaching of creative imaginary writing in a totally different way. Julie has given me confidence to see practical ways of inspiring writing ... [she] has supported and led this project with optimism, thought and passion.” *Jason MacDunne, Rossmore Primary School.*

**“You were just on it!** When you came in you moved us from having nice conversations to making decisions and setting things in stone; getting our ideas about talking for writing, which was important for relationship-building.

**I appreciated your decisiveness.** You found a good balance – listening to everyone, pinning things down, challenging us about what we would actually be doing. You trusted us.

**You had the right amount of flexibility** with the right amount of rigour, determination and direction, especially with so many people involved. You helped keep a balance amongst the relationships so everyone could keep ownership over the project.

**It helped me and Ruth step back** and think about the schools’ objectives not just thinking it was our own project. We were able to be openly reflective, keeping a check on ourselves.” *Leanne Cardill, Cheshire Dance.*