

Study Support and Out of School Hours Learning

Overview	
Case Study Title:	Young Travellers stories from the web
Summary:	A six week pilot literacy project for Young Travellers. This project was aimed at improving literacy in Traveller Children and was undertaken by a primary school in partnership with the Library Service and the Traveller Education Service. The programme engaged with Traveller pupils by focusing on traditional story telling activities through the media of ICT.
Project	
Target group/Key stage:	Traveller children aged between 7-10 years old who resided on the local traveller site and attended a local primary school.
Reason for offering activities:	To develop the literacy skills of Traveller children through ICT and story telling.
Description of activities:	The project was designed in three phases: Phase 1 – a six week trial with six children of an after school club based in the local library. Phase2 – transferring the project to a school setting and offering it to other (targeted) schools. Phase 3 – involving the Traveller parents to celebrate the achievements of their children.



Management and Logistics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing and transport were logistical problems that could have been addressed with a longer lead in time to the project and more detailed planning.
Partnerships:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Library Service. Hertfordshire Adult & Family Learning Service. Primary schools. Traveller Education Service.
General benefits of activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A discreet, non-threatening learning environment (closed-access computer suite) provided by the library. Free access to 'Stories from the Web' via the library subscription Enhanced working partnerships with the Traveller Education Service, local primary schools, the Library service and HAFLS. Engaging with a hard to reach target group, Travellers, who had never been into a public library. Building on the library's experience of using the 'Stories from the Web' software.
Key challenges and how these were overcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing - this was a challenge because many of the Traveller Education Service staff are employed to work school hours only and two members of staff were required for the project. The senior teacher and leader of the project is contracted to work longer hours and she recruited a colleague from within the team with experience of working with young people from the Traveller community. Transport - getting the children to their local library was a problem. The two members of staff started out by transporting the children in their cars. However, the children were disruptive and this proved dangerous. They then hired a minibus but despite both members of staff being present, the children tended to distract the driver. The solution was to re-locate the project to the school. Behaviour - this was a key challenge. Coming straight from home, the children reported eating junk food and drinks and their behaviour was difficult to control. This was the first time that the children had participated in an out of school hours learning activity and needed guidance on realising acceptable standards of behaviour in shared public spaces, i.e. libraries. Moving the project to the school environment as an after school activity that takes place immediately after the school day helped to improve behaviour. The children were used to high expectations of good behaviour in the school environment and their own teachers were often still on site and knew them well.



3 tips for similar activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More detailed planning - the pilot for this project was planned but experience has shown that more detailed planning would have been helpful and might have avoided some of the staffing and transportation challenges. A longer lead in time would have enabled a more detailed briefing on the needs of children in respect of literacy and IT skills. This would have enabled sessions to be structured more effectively around the needs of the children. • Location of project - the concept of introducing Traveller children to the Library service was a good one, but logistics and behaviour were issues that proved difficult to control. Basing the project within a school environment helped to ameliorate some of the problems and behaviour and engagement improved. School is a familiar environment where there is an expectation of good behaviour. If the project is started immediately after the school day then healthy snacks can be provided. • Length of project - the project was planned for six weeks, but the children only participated in it for 5 weeks. All the children enjoyed the pilot and all have now registered with the Library service. Staff members felt that the children would have benefited from a much longer course, perhaps 10-12 weeks. A longer course would also have allowed more time to engage with Traveller parents. Although parents did not take up the opportunity to access further appropriate services they were offered, all the children did join the Library service and the parents did have to sign the joining forms in order for their children to receive a library ticket.
Next Steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School staff will cascade the provision to Year 6 pupils using Traveller children as peer mentors.
Outcomes	
Impact of project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence and self esteem for the children. • Children feeling comfortable with new adults outside their culture. • Enhanced team working skills in an informal setting. • Traveller parents encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. • Raised awareness of Traveller culture.
Impact of project on young people's learning:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved IT skills, for example, knowing how to log on and to navigate the 'Stories from the Web' website. • Increased confidence in literacy, particularly creative writing skills. • Increased confidence in using verbal feedback. • Reinforcement in skills needed to follow instructions and to achieve tasks. • Recognition by their school of participants good work. • All participants are now members of the Library Service. All have taken out books and have read them. • Head teacher has reported increased literacy skills in participants. <p><i>'I didn't know the library had so much!'</i></p>

Impact of project in terms of the Core Offer for schools:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied menu of activities - activities included literacy activities, ICT and an introduction to library facilities. • Child care - was provided in a safe place during this out of school hours learning activity, transport was provided as well as a staff pupil ratio of 1:2. • Parenting support - parents were introduced to the Library Service and were offered opportunities to take up Further Education, Skills for Life and Family Learning. • Swift and easy access - both children and parents were given information and were signposted to other specialist provision. • Community Access - the Traveller children and their parents were not aware that the Library Service was free to access and perceptions about this statutory provision were challenged. <p><i>So even I can join?'</i></p>
Evidence of Impact:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A portfolio of work developed by each of the children. • Children's work is now part of the 'Stories from the Web' national website. • All the participants were keen to repeat the experience.
Contact Details	
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