



Positive Creativity It Works

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Introduction

Bridging the Pedagogical Gap provided a rare opportunity to research and reflect on my workshop practice and to make connections between the theories of Positive Teaching, Positive Psychology and Inclusion. This research highlighted and clarified approaches I was using instinctively and gave me the confidence to develop and make changes to my approach.

My contribution to our online zine will feature the key concepts of Positive Teaching and their relationship to creativity and successful art activities in particular.

PROFILE

Heather Lucchesi is a visual artist based in Edinburgh, with a background in textile design and teaching in secondary and special education. In 2015 she founded a social enterprise, Light Bulb Arts, dedicated to exploring the health and wellbeing benefits of taking part in inclusive art activities.

She leads fun, welcoming and challenging projects in communities, schools and gallery settings.



Reference: *Positive Teaching the Behavioural Approach*, Kevin Wheldall and Frank Merrett



**IN PRAISE
OF PRAISE**



Positive Language

Feedback is one of the pillars of positive interactions but to be meaningful it has to be genuine, personal and specific. Just saying 'good work' does not really tell the recipient anything but an observation and an encouraging question about a piece of work, technique or idea can make a real difference to engagement and feeling valued. If you take time to notice and comment you will allow individual ideas and vocabulary to develop. It takes practice but it is worth it.

**WHAT
DO YOU
NOTICE IN
THESE
IMAGES?**



**WHAT
WOULD YOU
ASK THE
ARTISTS?**



Your Words Matter

**WAS THE
ARRIVAL
OF OTHERS
'CHALLENGING
BEHAVIOUR' OR
AN INSPIRING
IDEA?**



We tend to be really good at pointing out what's wrong and telling others what we don't want them to do instead of stating what we do want instead. Sometimes it can seem that there is no established way of exploring what is going well and we need to develop a meaningful vocabulary based around clarity and positivity.

Of course, issues around safety and respecting others in a group need to be addressed but for recurring smaller

problems; using open questions, offering choices and assessing if a different outcome to the one you planned is an inconvenience, or actually a possibility, can change the whole experience.

Was the arrival of others 'challenging behaviour' or an inspiring idea?

By embracing differences and recognising the value of the unexpected, everyone can be included.



Beware your own Negatives?

THINGS WE SAY WITHOUT THINKING	WHAT COULD WE SAY INSTEAD?
Don't smile 'till Christmas	Smile with genuine warmth and greet everyone
There's always one	I'm interested in your different ideas and ways
You're too clever for your own good (My mum's favourite)	That's a good idea, let's do it.
That's not what you were asked to do	Can you tell me about what you are doing?
Stop doing...	Good thinking, can you try...
I haven't got time for this	Speak quietly/put recycling in red box etc. Organize what you will need
Sit still and stop fidgeting	Let's have a movement break
I already told you	Check visual timetable first



What you DO matters

Setting the tone of a session has more impact than all the content and facts put together.

It goes without saying that people learn more effectively in a supportive environment than in a negative critical one. You do not know, or need to know, every individual's circumstances and some situations cannot be solved by you. However even very small gestures and words can make an impact and leave someone feeling more able to cope. Interacting with materials and feeling that you matter are more powerful than you might think.



TINY TOP TIPS TO TRY

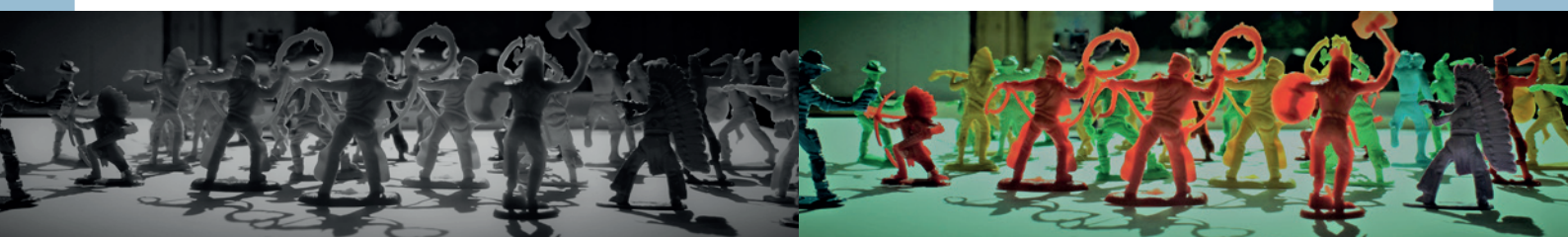
- A warm welcome and the offer of a cup of tea.
- Try activities outdoors if possible.
- Make time for the quieter people. Sometimes they are sitting with the answers.
- Allow opportunities to experiment with materials to understand their properties.
- Present an activity as a surprise to be discovered
- Have times when there is no set theme or end product in mind.



Positive Creativity – Working together and forming groups



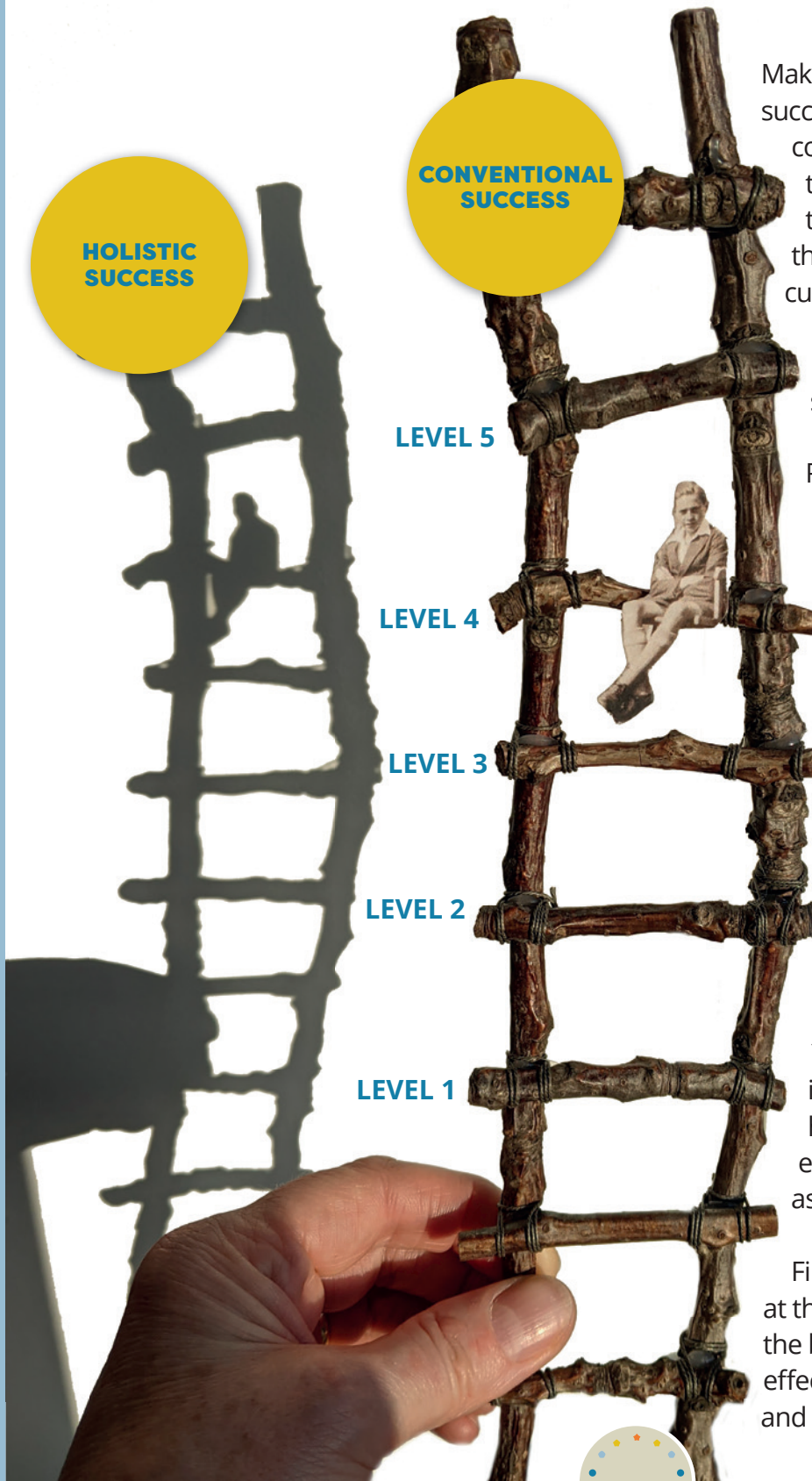
**Communal creative thinking...
providing shelter when it rains...**



...and colour to our lives.



Success!



Making room for wider definitions of success encourages and values the core concepts of confidence, critical thinking and creativity. Although they remain largely unmeasured, their impact reaches across the curriculum and lasts a lifetime. As a teaching artist, taking time to notice and listen, ultimately supports and strengthens all learning.

Positive approaches that work:

Planning that allows space for change and rules in the right places leads to success.

Plan for core concepts like mark-making and construction rather than themes or images to copy.

Provide a variety of materials and explain how to use them safely and take care of them give opportunities to experiment with their properties.

You do not have to manage all the ideas. You can enjoy noticing them happening and comment, question, encourage and introduce new skills as a result.

Finding links with artists and looking at their work later rather than at the beginning of a project is a more effective way to introduce art history and contemporary works.

Final thoughts



Since placing a value on other more holistic approaches to the planning and delivery of art workshops and actively using a positive approach, it does in fact lead to the successful outcomes we recognise as achievement.

Creativity is an area where different abilities and individual ideas can be celebrated and there is no one right answer. This is a particularly good fit with the pedagogy of Positive Teaching and can strengthen confidence, resilience and engagement across the curriculum and within communities.

It is also a positive and stimulating way of working for artists and teachers too.

Further Reference

Positive Teaching the Behavioural Approach, Kevin Wheldall and Frank Merrett.

The Art of Being Brilliant, Andy Cope & Andy Whittaker

Keep Going, Austin Kleon

