

CASE STUDY

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What benefits has winning the BeCreative competition brought to the school?

Winning the BeCreative competition in 2012 helped establish and bring Media and Film to the forefront at St Matthew Academy. Prior to last year the school ran only one media course, the GCSE Media studies offered to Year 10's. This summer we have started offering the GCSE Media studies for year 10's, BTEC Extended Certificate in Creative Media Production for year 11's and a Media option for both year 7's and year 8's. We have also given the opportunity to a former student to do an apprenticeship as the media technician whilst studying a Level 3 Diploma in Creative and Digital Media and Certificate for creative iMedia. On top of this we also have a thriving St Matthew Academy production company that meet every Monday to produce films, posters marketing campaigns, documentaries and other media projects. Initially before winning the BeCreative competition the production company had 9 regular attenders, now we are inundated by eager students keen to join. On the register we now have 30 regular attenders. The money we received from Film Education has gone into improving the facilities and equipment and offering prizes for outstanding media work.

What effect has winning the BeCreative competition had on your pupils?

Winning the BeCreative competition has had a dramatic impact on our students. It has made them realise that if they put in hard work and work as a team they can reap the rewards. They were immensely proud of their achievements as were the other teachers especially the principle. They shared their experience of the BAFTA ceremony in an assembly which they helped lead. After this assembly the numbers for the production company shot up. The students have grown in confidence, technical ability and made friends with students they may not have usually spoken to. They have become more professional and understand the mechanics and stages of the film making process. The students have become avid film fans and encouraged their peers to get involved in both the SMA production company and other school projects.

Has the programme seen an uplift in engagement with your pupils within other subjects?

In terms of uplift in other subjects, the students who were initially engaged in the project were very keen and motivated students and they have maintained this engagement in other subjects. For one lesser able Year 11 student the project offered him a brilliant opportunity to engage with a more vocational element of school life and use his skills in a positive manner. Through the project he mentored the younger students, communicated

live to a BBC London radio audience, learnt the art of camerawork, won an Ipad and has something incredible to put on his CV. His confidence improved so much throughout this project and he felt for once he had achieved something special. I remember when he found out that the team had won he ran across the school to the film suite, grabbed me and started cheering and jumping up and down (the student is about 6'4). Eventually when he had calmed down we spoke about how he felt, he said 'All my school life I felt like I was invisible, this is the first time I feel as if people know who I am and I am really proud to be able to give something back to the school". It was a humbling experience and as a teacher this is the kind of difference that you hope to make and I am very thankful for Film Education creating this opportunity.

How does the BeCreative programme engage your pupils in the classroom? Did it improve participation?

The BeCreative programme gave the students a focus to their work and gave them amazing opportunities and experiences that they would not otherwise have received. The fact that the students won a nationwide competition gave them motivation and a sense of pride. Having something to work towards with tangible outcomes provided the students with direction and excitement. The participation of the students was impressive as they knew that if they did not turn up they would be letting the crew down. As I have stated before, the SMA production company is now saturated by eager wannabe film makers to the point that we may have to create another night after school to supply demand.

What extra dimensions does participating in the BeCreative competition bring to the classroom?

The BeCreative programme brought a range of diversity to the classroom. It enabled us to tackle a serious and important subject within the parameters of creativity and collaboration. Students were able to fuse technical expertise with theoretical ideas. This is very powerful especially when there is a range of levels and abilities. One of the great things about the way in which we ran the project at SMA was the fact that there were different year groups working with one another. This enabled students to be mentors and assist the younger students.

Are there any wider issues around the curriculum or classroom that the Be Creative programme helps address?

Teamwork, copyright issues, empowerment, pride, breaking the barriers of the film industry, giving students the sense that they can make films and have it screened at BAFTA, the film competition experience, networking, speaking on radio.