

Community impact evaluation: Traveller children and University of Lincoln School of Film and Media student mentors

A report to LiNCHigher

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Executive summary

Overview

This report presents the evaluation findings from a collaborative venture undertaken by the University of Lincoln (UoL), the Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative (LTI) and LiNCHigher, the local Uni Connect partnership. The project formed part of the course for the third year Media Production and Sound and Music Production degree, for the compulsory module on community engagement. The project took place weekly for approximately two hours in Semester 2 (February – May 2022). At the end of the module the UoL student mentors were required to produce two reports on the programme, one as a group and one individually, to successfully complete the module. Each student mentor group was tasked with producing a media product that was dependent on the skills and interests of the children they were working with and agreed jointly by the group at the start of the programme. The evaluation was conducted by the LiNCHigher evaluation team based in the Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute (LHERI) at the UoL.

This academic year (2021-22), for the first time, two groups of UoL student mentors worked with two groups of Traveller children between the ages of 11-16 from two different sites in the county. The project took place on Tuesdays; one group ran in the mornings (Group A) the other in the afternoons (Group B) when the LTI learning bus was scheduled to visit the sites. The project included at least one visit by each group to the UoL's recording studios. This meant the children's usual learning, including their functional skills, was put on hold for the duration of the project. A LTI member of staff was present at all sessions. Both groups chose to produce a music video and Group A also produced a radio programme.

The main aims of the programme were as follows:

- *For the Film and Media Studies students* - to work with an external client to produce a media product.
- *For the Traveller children* - to learn new skills, boost their confidence and raise aspirations.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation was qualitative, consisting of focus group interviews with both sets of student mentors and the Traveller children as well as interviews with LTI and UoL Film and Media Studies staff involved in the project. The evaluators also observed three sessions, one for Group A and two for Group B.

Key findings

Overall, the student mentors and the Traveller children enjoyed taking part in the programme. Both learnt much about themselves and working with others. All three media products were satisfactorily produced. However, there were some logistical challenges along the way including false/late starts and miscommunication on both sides as to the project's main aims and objectives.

Recommendations

There are two key recommendations from this evaluation, firstly to run the programme over a shorter period to minimise the disruption to the Traveller children's education, in particular their functional skills. Secondly, improve communication and support between (i) UoL and the student mentors and (ii) student mentors and LTI staff. This would ensure that student mentors know what is expected of them and that everybody understands the project aims, objectives and limitations from the outset.

1. Project overview

The Traveller project forms part of the University of Lincoln's (UoL) School of Film and Media Studies community engagement, third year undergraduate, module. The module, which for the first time this year was compulsory, carries 15 credits and took place once a week for approximately two hours in Semester 2 (February – May 2022). At the end of the module the student mentors were required to produce a group 4,000-word report and a 2000-word individual analysis considering the impact of the programme on their own skills and aspirations, to successfully complete the module. Each group was tasked with producing a media product that was dependent on the skills and interests of the children they were working with and agreed jointly by the group (mentors and mentees) at the start of the programme.

While the majority of the Film and Media Studies students worked with children in secondary schools, this year two groups of students, one from the Media Production course (Group A) and one from the Sound and Music Production course (Group B), were assigned to work with children aged 11-16 from the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) community from two sites in Lincolnshire. The project was supported by the LiNCHigher Partnership, as part of the Uni Connect initiative, and facilitated by the Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative (LTI) who arranged access to the two Traveller sites and the children as well as providing the teaching staff and transport in the form of the learning bus. The LiNCHigher evaluation team, based at the Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute (LHERI), UoL, were asked to carry out an impact evaluation of the programme and make recommendations for the delivery of future such initiatives.

For the Traveller children, the programme was initially intended to form part of their Trinity College London Bronze Art Award, something some of the children in Group A particularly had been working towards. The aim of the programme, from the LTI perspective, was to teach the children new skills and boost their confidence. Whilst the project was running, most of the usual educational activity delivered to the Traveller children, including their functional skills (English, maths and ICT), was put on hold.

The main aims of the programme were as follows:

- For the Film and Media Studies students - to work with an external client to produce a media product.
- For the Traveller children - to learn new skills, boost their confidence and raise aspirations.

How the programme operated

Once initial introductions had been made, the UoL Module Lead took a hands-off approach. However, all groups did have a tutor to whom they provided regular, weekly updates. Group A reported to the Module Lead, Group B to another Film and Media Studies tutor. Both sessions ran for an hour and a half on a Tuesday, the day the LTI bus visits the selected Traveller sites. Group A ran in the morning and Group B in the afternoon. Group A consisted of four student mentors' one female and three males and Group B of three student mentors, all males. There were four children in each Group: three girls and one boy in Group A and four girls in Group B.

The first few weeks were used to decide exactly what media product the Traveller children wanted to produce and to provide the children with some media skills and knowledge, such as how to compile a storyboard, the different styles of music videos that can be made and so on, to enable them to complete the task successfully. Both groups chose to make a music video with Group A also choosing to produce a short radio programme.

Two teachers, employed by LTI and who already worked with the Traveller children, attended the sessions, and made the necessary travel arrangements for the children to film off-site and visit the

recording studios at the UoL as required during the programme. The initial intention was that the teachers attended all the sessions. However, whilst this was the case for Group B, due to timetabling issues the teachers were only present at approximately half of the Group A sessions with the LTI Lead attending the sessions the teachers were unable to cover. The teachers and LTI Lead had a unique insight into how the programme had been received by, and the impact it had on, the Traveller children.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation consisted of the following qualitative activity:

- Pre-programme meetings with the UoL Film and Media Module Lead, the LTI Lead, and the student mentors.
- The student mentors provided, via email, a brief overview of their first meeting with the Traveller children which included what they wanted to gain from being part of the programme and which media output they wanted to produce.
- One visit to Group A - at the Traveller site - and two visits to Group B - one to the recording studio at the UoL and one to the local woods where they were filming - to observe how the project was progressing and the interactions between the student mentors and the Traveller children.
- At the end of the programme, focus groups were conducted with each of the student mentor and the Traveller children groups, as well interviews with the LTI Lead and the two LTI teachers. The focus group and interview schedules for each can be found in Appendix A.

The table below sets out how the student mentors and Traveller children were grouped. For the purpose of this report both the UoL students and the Traveller children's real names have been replaced by with pseudonyms.

Group	Student mentors	Traveller children	Age
Group A	Zoe	Chloe	~16
	Olly	Emma	~15
	Callum	Ellie	~12
	Adam	Finn	~12
Group B	Henry	Mia	~15
	Alex	Lilly	~12
	Zack	Summer	~12
	-	Leyla	~12

All focus groups and interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the LHERI evaluation team.

Ethical approval for the evaluation was sought and granted at the UoL prior to any evaluation activity taking place. Ethics reference 2021_0732.

Report structure

The findings from the evaluation make up the main body of this report and are presented from three perspectives: the student mentors, the Traveller children and LTI staff. These are then drawn together in the conclusions and recommendations section at the end of the report. Recommendations are made for LiNCHigher, LTI and the UoL Film and Media Module Leader.

2. Findings

The project from the perspective of the student mentors

How the project went

Both student mentor groups felt the project had gone well and that the Traveller children had been very receptive to, and enthusiastic about, being involved in the project, commenting *'they're quite open to try new things'* and *'they were just really easy going, and it was never hard to get them to engage with what we were doing and yeah, yeah, really great people to work with'* (Group A).

Group B felt that communication between themselves, the Traveller children and the teachers had gone particularly well. Group B found the help and support of the teachers, from managing the children at the beginning of the project, to keeping them focused to organising off-site sessions, invaluable commenting *'they were brilliant'...really supportive, really, responsive in terms of feedback and ideas and communication.'* They *'steadied the ship'*, especially early on when the student mentors professed not to really know what they were doing, commenting:

We just turned up and we didn't have a clue. That made us nervous because we had no idea what we were walking into. All we knew was the place. That's about it. We didn't know how many kids would be with us, we didn't know if there'd be any teachers. We didn't know if anyone was gonna meet us.

(Group B)

They admitted some of the initial uncertainty was down to a breakdown in communication on their part, both between them and the Module Leader and them and the LTI Lead and that they could have handled it better.

The Group B student mentors also felt that the older member of the Traveller group (Mia) was crucial to the success of the sessions, stating *'they do listen to her'*. The student mentors felt the project went well because both groups of children remained stable throughout enabling them to build a good relationship with the children.

Both groups found the children liked to be hands-on and were less comfortable sitting, listening, and learning about the technical or theoretical aspects of making a music video:

We did go through PowerPoints of the sort of shot types and composition, and we tried to make it educational for some of the stuff that they would encounter if they were to do Access courses and things for university...In the early weeks we did some analysis of music videos and stuff where we went through the techniques...But after giving them the basics of what you need to think about when doing them, it was then actually putting that into context and putting that into actually shooting certain things.

(Group A)

Like mood boards and the like, keeping them interested in that was quite difficult because they just want to get on with it.

(Group B)

Production tasks were assigned to the children with one of the Group B girls (Mia) designated as the Director as she did not like being in front of the camera. Some of the children in Group A did not want to be in front of the camera either and none of the children in Group B liked listening to the sound of their own voices on the music tracks. In the final music video the original soundtrack was used with the children lip syncing. None of the children in Group A were involved in the post-production / editing process, whilst in Group B they were.

Both groups of student mentors also felt that they were lucky with the Traveller children they had with neither encountering any significant difficulties with their mentees. The Traveller children were reported to have become more confident and open during the project with good relationships developing between the student mentors and the children:

It wasn't ever a sort of teacher / student kind of relationship, it felt like they were really mature. They were really eager to work and to do what we're doing.

(Group A)

They talk to us a lot more like friendly, casually. Also, they listen to us a lot, which helps.

(Group B)

The Group B student mentors described a pivotal moment in their relationship with the Traveller children:

So, we started obviously, like, they were trying to figure us out and we were trying to figure them out. And obviously there's like that almost cultural difference. Because I've never interacted with anyone from the travel community... I remember when we had the first filming session at the hub...we started talking to Mia and Mia was just telling us about the Travellers and the lifestyle and her family and stuff... we played a bit of basketball as well. Since that lesson specifically, if I was to point out one, Mia definitely became more comfortable. And that's helped us with all the kids because obviously they listen to Mia so yeah, she really kind of came out of her shell...like comfortability wise... she was a lot better since that...The interaction with them is so much easier now and they're comfortable, more comfortable now.

(Group B)

Not only did the Traveller children become increasingly comfortable with the student mentors as the project progressed, but also with the technical equipment, as the quote below illustrates:

There was one girl, Ellie, she really came out of her shell throughout the process. At the beginning she didn't want to get involved with anything. And then there was one week, you kind of saw her come out a bit, get a bit more comfortable with us. And then there was one week, it was the radio show week, and all of a sudden, you can see her bossing everyone around behind the mixing desk, which was really nice, because she seemed to really, really get into it and she wanted everything done on time and was getting quite stressed out by it...She didn't ever want to be in front of the camera or anything. But by the end of it she did a tiny little clip in the music video, where she was in it, which was I think a big thing, a big step because she always refused. And then she really got involved in the radio thing.

(Group A)

The two student mentor groups worked well, with good communication between members and each being assigned specific roles that played to their strengths. The students within each group had worked together previously on several projects during their degree. They all felt this had been a crucial factor in how well the project had gone, with one Group A student mentor commenting:

I would say that if I was with a group that I couldn't work well with, it would be particularly hard on this project...it would be incredibly embarrassing turning up and not having a group that was working well. So, I reckon you would need a group that were good to be able to do it.

The main challenge for the student mentors in Group A had been making up time lost due to the Covid-pandemic which delayed the project for a few weeks. Whilst the children in Group B did not catch Covid-19, attendance was sporadic which posed the challenge of ensuring everyone was at the same point in the programme each week. This resulted in prolonging the whole learning process.

There'd be a lot of light sessions when a lot more than one weren't there. So, it'd be like the next session when they would be back... kind of like playing catch up in the sense. Yeah, so it was like something that could have been taught over one week...it kind of prolonged the process a bit because we had to teach in chunks and like reteach it to obviously the ones that missed out.

(Group B)

The student mentors in Group B also found the actual teaching difficult, as none of them had ever taught before. Keeping the children engaged, especially with the theoretical side of the project, was a challenge:

I think it was one time I was doing a storyboard in one of the sessions. It was what you want in this shot and then they were just kind of drawing on each other.

(Group B)

However, Group B's main issues were practical and equipment-based, specifically the booking out of cameras, which proved to be a huge obstacle that was never satisfactorily resolved. One member of the group had experience of using a camera which meant they were able to bypass the camera training required before allowing them to be booked out. However, their lack of knowledge of current equipment led to them booking out a non-digital camera that they were not able to use it as they had no tape reel to go in it. Time and effort were taken up with trying to track down the correct camera models they needed to book out. The Group B student mentors felt this was because they were not Media production students, whilst Group A students, who were, reported no such difficulties.

Instead of using a camera, Group B eventually opted to record the music video on an iPad. In hindsight they felt this had worked well as it gave the children a transferable skill, was less intimidating and quicker as the director already knew how to use the iPad for filming, commenting:

I think it would have taken [the director] a bit longer to like attune to a proper big camera rather than an iPad or iPhone because she already knew how to use the phones. So that's why she was so quick, I think it's harder to be a comfortable director if you're learning how to operate a camera at the same time...it was a blessing in disguise.

(Group B)

Group B also felt that the initial communication between them and the client (the LTI Lead) had come quite late, as mentioned earlier. They also lost a key member of the group in the first week of the project. Finally, as the members of this group were not specialists in film production, they were a bit concerned when the children wanted to make a music video as they have no experience in this area, and felt they were 'learning on the fly'.

Perceived impact on the children and skills learnt

Overall, the student mentors felt that the Traveller children had learnt a lot about filming music videos and making a radio show and they had mastered the basics:

When we first showed them the camera...they looked at it and they had no idea what they were looking at. But then by the end of it, they're the ones taking control of it, using it, moving it around, setting it up themselves. Showing that progress, from not knowing what to do with it to actually controlling it themselves.

(Group A)

The student mentors in Group B felt that the project had increased the Traveller children's interest in learning. Both groups of student mentors had seen some children progress more than others. For example, Group A student mentors commented on how much Ellie's confidence had grown during

the project such that by the end of the programme she went on-camera: *'in the first couple of weeks she hardly spoke and then to go to how she was at the end of the project, is really good'*.

Sometimes the learning could be observed in a single session as this quote relating to Mia, the director of the Group B music video, highlights:

Yesterday from like the beginning of the session to the end of the session she definitely got better at the camera work. Not majorly, but you could see the progression in that single session. She started out a bit wobbly, didn't really know where to stand kind of thing. Heads were getting cut out of shots. And then on the last few shots, it just landed really well. There was no wobble, she knew where she wanted to stand and stuff. It got a lot quicker when we were filming stuff because she knew what she was doing.

The student mentors in Group B decided to edit their music video on iMovie which is readily available and freely accessible to anyone with a mobile phone or an iPad, rather than teach the Traveller children how to use an industry software such as Premiere Pro. They felt this would give the Traveller children more transferable skills that they would be able use for making their own music videos once the project finished, commenting: *'so they can carry on what we teach them in their own free time.'* This approach soon bore fruit as one of the Traveller children (Summer) made her own music video shortly afterwards which she shared with the LTI teachers and her peers.

One of the Traveller children in Group A (Chloe) had already carried out some filming work with another group and was reported to have a passion for drama, which the project helped to bring out. With one of the student mentors in the group commenting that she *'definitely has ambitions outside of the traditional Traveller community'*.

The visits to the UoL media studios proved to be a popular aspect of the project with the student mentors reporting them to be a *'big hit'* with the Traveller children, *'they just lapped it up'*. The Traveller children asked more questions during the visits and engaged more enthusiastically in the whole process. The LTI staff agreed that the visits to the university were *'very important and worthwhile'*.

How well supported the student mentors felt

Group A felt very supported by both their tutor and the LTI Lead. They liked the fact that the LTI teachers were hands-off and let them get on with the task in hand.

Group B, in contrast, felt less supported. They felt that working with the Traveller children was very different to working in schools and that all the information they were given prior to the project focused on working with children in secondary schools. They had many questions about working with Traveller children that no one appeared able to answer which was a source of frustration. They were also frustrated that their weekly university lectures were scheduled *after* their teaching sessions with the children rather than before. Whilst their designated tutor was very supportive, they felt the timings, content and structure of the module per se were not conducive to working with the Traveller children. Group B would have liked to have been better prepared and believed that the university could, and should, have done more to ensure they were ready to work with the Traveller children beforehand, commenting:

On the first day we weren't sure if we were meant to get straight on with a workshop or a practical activity. We weren't sure if equipment was there, if it was our responsibility. We were very much just unsure.

I think overall, just there could have been more done to brief us on what's expected of us and our responsibilities.

How the student mentors felt about doing the project

None of the student mentors had previously done any sort of formal teaching prior to being involved in the project. The Group B student mentors felt nervous at the start of the project as none of them had done anything like it before and were not thinking of going into teaching. However, once they had spoken to the client and ran the first session, they all felt a lot more comfortable and confident with the project, especially the teaching aspect. They learnt that they could teach, but maybe not in a formal way and they could work with children. They quickly learnt to simplify the information they needed to share with the Traveller children to ensure they understood and learnt effectively without overloading them, as they explained:

Even yesterday there were a few points when I said a few things to Mia, 'why don't you try doing this shot'. And she said, 'can you explain it to me like a normal person please? So I said, 'zoom in'.

All of the student mentors were pleased they had had the opportunity to work with the Traveller children and find out more about their culture. Group A particularly valued the expertise of the LTI Lead:

I'm glad we did it, because it hasn't been a hassle, it's been actually quite good. And quite eye opening really, the overall project. I've really enjoyed it.

(Group A)

Don't stray away from alternative options because I was definitely worried at the start that it was gonna be more complicated working with Travellers, but I wouldn't pick differently at all if I was going to do again...If that's an option again, go for it.

(Group A)

Having the LTI Leads experience helped as well. Especially in the early weeks when he was talking about it, half of us haven't really experienced it particularly, so it's nice to get a little bit of an insight before you go. Obviously, we did some research but it's not the same as talking to someone who's actually been there, seen it, done it type thing. So that was definitely helpful.

(Group A)

Lessons learnt

Both groups made suggestions for how the project could be improved as well as providing some tips for working with the Traveller children.

Improving the project:

UoL Module:

- Schedule the lectures for the module in Semester 1, before the teaching aspect of the project starts and include some that are specifically aimed at working with children outside of mainstream education.
- Reduce the time spent in Semester 1 on the DBS checks. Students in Group B felt they understood the requirement but did not need to spend so much time, and email traffic, on this aspect of the project. They would, however, have liked to have known more about the relevance of the DBS, what it means in practice, rather than it just being a legal requirement.

- Make sure the student mentors have access to the equipment they need regardless of which Film and Media Studies course they are on. Ensure students know who to contact for equipment and encourage them to book the equipment in advance.
- Provide students with more information in the initial module brief on their assigned tasks and responsibilities.
- Reduce the number of emails sent out for the module. Students in Group B felt it was very email heavy leading to many being missed. Provide more succinct information in fewer emails.
- Whilst they had conflicting priorities in the first Semester, the student mentors in Group B felt having some online meetings with the client and the Module Leader earlier would have been beneficial and would have been time well spent as they would have had a better understanding of what was expected of them: *'That would definitely have helped with introducing ourselves and getting a lesson plan done early one because we didn't know what to plan for.'*

Tips for working with the Traveller children:

The student mentors made several suggestions on how best to work with the Traveller children that might be helpful to future Film and Media students working on the project. They included:

- Do not expect to be able to run the project every week – things happen that you cannot control, you are not working in a school where it is more structured, so it is best to *'roll with the punches, be a little bit lenient, and don't feel you have to do this at this time'*.
- Less is more, do not try to put too much into what you are trying to teach the children because they will not learn everything. Keep it simple and on their level.
- Structure the project around opportunities to travel to sites to film the videos and visit the university, ideally twice – *'because I think that's what makes it not just another project for them'*.
- Ensure the student mentor group you are assigned to is already established and works well together.
- Work with small groups of students at a time so that a good, trusting, respectful relationship can be developed between student mentors and the Traveller children. The student mentors felt this was crucial to the successful delivery of the project when working with this group of children.

Finally

The student mentors all agreed it had given them an insight into the lives of the Traveller community, especially the children, with Group A commenting:

They don't seem like kids really, a lot of them seem so street smart that it's like talking to a bunch of adults. I think you need to be able to level with them a bit and get them to like you and respect you in order for it to work. Otherwise, I don't know if it would work if it was people that couldn't really get along with them.

I mean, Finn's a labourer, he's 12. So, he is treated like a grown-up so you reciprocate that.

Other final comments included:

I've had a great time. (Group A)

I was definitely worried at the start that it was gonna be more complicated working with Travellers, but I wouldn't pick differently at all if I was going to do it again.

(Group A)

I didn't really know if I'd enjoy it or not because I've never done anything like this before, but I can safely say I've enjoyed the process. I think the kids are a lovely bunch of kids, dead nice.

(Group B)

We've got to know them all. I think they view us more like friends than teachers. (Group B)

Unfortunately, there was no celebration event at the end of the project for either group due to circumstances beyond their control. Both groups ran later than the other groups of UoL student mentors who carried out similar work in schools.

The project from the perspective of the Traveller children

The two groups of Traveller children were interviewed separately. In Group A, the evaluators talked to three of the children (Chloe, Ellie and Finn) and in Group B, just one turned up on the day, Mia, the eldest member of the group who spoke for them all.

What they enjoyed

Both groups of Traveller children enjoyed taking part in the project. Group A liked that they were able to choose the media outputs they wanted to work on: a music video and a radio show. They enjoyed picking the song for the music video and they liked working with the student mentors with Chloe commenting that they *'were all really talented'*. Chloe also liked that they had the opportunity to work as a team, pointing out that, despite living on the same Traveller site, they do not usually work together. Chloe particularly enjoyed visiting the UoL campus, stating: *'I thought it was great. It was good going to a big university'*. Finn enjoyed making the music video. However, Finn, and to some extent Ellie, found the trip to the UoL campus a bit overwhelming, commenting: *'it was too much, there was too much to walk around'*. The girls enjoyed watching Finn record the music video in the studio with Ellie commenting, *'I'm not going to lie, it was the funniest bit'*.

Group A were particularly pleased with how the radio show turned out and this was Ellie's favourite part of the project which she directed. Chloe felt the radio show had *'come out better than expected'*.

In Group B, Mia who directed their music video because she did not like being in front of the camera, had never been involved in a project like this before and enjoyed taking part. She especially enjoyed laughing with, and talking to, the other Traveller children in the group and the student mentors. Her favourite activity was the filming on the iPad, followed by the visit to the university media studio. Mia enjoyed watching the other Traveller children sing to the music video when they visited the studio and being able to mute them from the other side of the glass stating *'it was one of my favourite parts'*.

Overall, both groups were pleased with their finished media products, with Mia commenting *'it turned out alright'*. Finn commented that he *'liked the radio show but I think I liked the video more'*.

What they would have changed or did not enjoy

Whilst they were happy with the music video, Group A would have liked to have chosen a different location for where it was recorded. Due to time constraints the recording took place in the studio which was a little disappointing for them, with Chloe commenting: *'if we could change some things that would have been one of the things'*. Chloe would also have liked a fuller script for the radio show to work from. Some of the children were not keen on hearing their own voices on recordings.

The children in Group A would have preferred the project to have been shorter (i.e., one day for planning and one day for filming) and to have run alongside their functional skills lessons, instead of replacing them. They had missed their functional skills lessons and recognised that they will have forgotten a lot of their learning by September 2022 when the new academic year starts.

What they learnt

Overall Group A learnt to listen to others, pay attention, that everyone should be included and that all views should be considered.

Chloe learnt that she does have the confidence to do radio if she wants to. Chloe usually concentrates on performing arts and has been involved in plays such as *Annie* and *Madagascar*. However, whilst she has considered radio, she has not, until now, had the confidence to try it commenting: *'I always said I'd be very nervous to do it, in case I messed up on the radio, but now I've had a bit of confidence from that. I think I could do that again'*.

During the project Mia learnt new transferable media skills such as how to shoot a music video from different angles and that it is important to keep moving. Group A also mentioned they learnt about camera angles when shooting music videos. It did not matter to Mia that they had not used a professional camera and she did not feel like she had missed out by using the iPad. This validated the Group B student mentors' decision to take this approach when they struggled to book out camera equipment. Mia found the iPad easy to use commenting: *'most of us here have iPads. So, we know what to do with an iPad now'*. In future she will take what she learnt about making music videos and film them on her mobile phone.

Relationships and teaching styles

The Traveller children all felt they had developed a good relationship with their student mentors. Mia reported that all the Traveller children in her group got on well with the student mentors, that they enjoyed talking to them and that they were good to work with, remarking *'they definitely knew what they were doing'*. Group A Traveller children agreed that the student mentors were good teachers, with Finn particularly liking how Olly taught, commenting: *I do think that Olly was the best teacher because he actually slowed down and listened to what you were saying'*. Chloe further commented on how well Olly and Finn got on and how Olly understood how Finn learnt which led to Finn asking lots of questions in the sessions, something he would not usually do. They felt Zoe kept things going and that she knew exactly what she was doing throughout the project.

Whilst Mia felt her student mentors were good teachers, she also felt they could have been a little stricter with them at times commenting:

Me and some of the girls on the site, we don't get on sometimes. Sometimes they needed to tell us, "Stop now. We need to stop now"...Sometimes we can back-chat each other.

The student mentors, particularly those in Group B, were fully aware that it was a challenge to keep the children engaged at all times.

Future career aspirations

Chloe wants to work in the performing arts sector, something she is passionate about and determined to pursue. The project served to enhance her repertoire and increase both her confidence and media skill set. Ellie wants to do photography, probably at Lincoln College and Finn wants to either be a boxer, a singer-song writer or to work for his father's company. Mia does not know what she would like to do in the future and being part of the project had not helped her make any decisions, except to rule out being an actress.

Finally, all the participants would endorse taking part in such a project to other Traveller children. Mia liked the way the project ran and would recommend it to others, especially if they are interested in going into media or the performing arts as a career. Group A would recommend taking part because it boosts confidence, promotes teamwork, you get to know new people and make new friends.

The project from the LTI perspective

Post-project interviews were conducted with the two LTI teachers that work with the Traveller children as well as the LTI Lead that had assisted Group A during the second half of the project.

Everyone at LTI felt it was a worthwhile project to have been involved with and that the Traveller children had gained a lot from taking part including building their confidence, *'going back to the group I observed, there was a lot of laughter. I think from a confidence building point of view, it was a good exercise'* (LTI Lead). The children also reportedly learnt new, important social skills, such as how to work with others. The LTI Lead felt the Traveller children had engaged with all the sessions, which is not always the case, commenting:

They were focused more on what they were doing than they can be in our maths or English, or IT sessions. There was less sparking off each other and more focus on what we're about. They were really interested.

However, they felt the project did not get off to a very good start and that communication between them and the student mentors was initially poor. They would have liked a pre-briefing session with the student mentors, something the students themselves would also have appreciated.

LTI staff felt the project was too long and took over too much of their allocated teaching time. One of the teachers commented:

I thought it was good. And the kids learned a lot of new skills working with other people. Obviously, the fact that they're not in school, and they're with us, their experience with other people is quite limited. So that was good for them to learn some more social skills. However, I did think it went on a bit long. I thought that perhaps they [the student mentors] were coming out, meeting the girls and having a chat about what they want to do and then maybe having a couple of days at university and wrapping it up in that way. So, for me, I'd have condensed it down a bit.

The LTI Lead further commented:

We only have a very limited time with our young people. So, we had to sacrifice to some extent on their functional skills, maths and English, some of their Princes Trust etc. It kind of put us completely on hold.

LTI staff also felt the project needed clearer learning objectives and that sessions needed to be much more structured and student mentor-led, especially in the case of Group B.

Some students are very good at coming up with ideas and other students aren't. So perhaps be a bit more of the university student-led and have "right, this is a set of ideas". I think you guys [Group B children], you found it really difficult, didn't you, coming up with ideas?

(LTI Teacher).

The LTI teachers, particularly, felt there was too much time wasted in each session and that the project needed to move faster to maintain the children's interest:

It didn't move on. Where they could have said, right, this week we're gonna film whatever, and we're gonna do it like this, or we're gonna have lights or we're gonna work on, I don't know...adding some new skills every time rather than just having three weeks of just filming.

Some weeks they'd come and they'd ask the girls what they were going to be doing and we'd sit and not do an awful lot for half an hour.

The LTI Lead echoed this stating: *'it sometimes felt as if the students turned up and went into a talk session'*.

The LTI teachers felt the project was *'product driven'* rather than skills focused. Ideally, from the LTI perspective, the Traveller children would have learnt new skills every week and these would have been evidenced via handouts from the student mentors and notes or tasks undertaken by the Traveller children. These could then have been put together into a portfolio as evidence for their Bronze Art Award. Whilst the LTI staff all recognised that the student mentors were not trained teachers, the need for lesson plans, in some format, was stressed at the start of the project, however, none materialised:

I didn't ever see any evidence of lesson plans. I know they're not teachers. But I had pointed out that this experience was going to be part of an Arts Award and therefore I'd need a record of what was being taught, what the aims and objectives were of each session and so on and so forth. That sadly, was not forthcoming.

(LTI Lead).

From the perspective of the teachers, the student mentors needed much more support with developing lesson plans and session aims and objectives, with one of the teachers making the following comment about Group B's approach:

I think they just needed to sort of think a little bit more about what they wanted to get out of each session and drive it a little bit. I mean, they're not teachers, are they? So, it's difficult for them. I think they needed some more support from tutors. A little bit more direction of what to get out of it.

The Group B student mentors, particularly, were aware that they lacked experience and knowledge in this area and would have welcomed some direction prior to starting the project. In contrast the LTI teachers, but not necessarily the LTI Lead, felt the Group A student mentors took a more structured and focused approach:

Teacher 1: *I have to admit, the first ones [Group A] they were a little bit more structured. They did listen to the students, but they did have a bit more structure there with it.*

Teacher 2: *Yeah, like they looked at different music videos and analysed different music videos and took ideas out of other ones... And they were asking them about their experience with radio shows. And what do you like about it? What don't you like about it? Right. Let's put that in...that sort of thing. They got them to really analyse existing ones.*

Differences between Group A and B

The LTI teachers felt that the dynamics between the two groups of student mentors and the Traveller children were very different; the LTI Lead could not really comment on this as he only really saw Group A in operation. The Traveller children in Group A had participated in similar projects before whilst the children from Group B had not. Group A built a portfolio towards their Bronze Art Award, and some had been working on their Pauline Quirke Academy (PQA), in musical theatre, with one of the LTI teachers noting: *'They came in it with a lot more experience, but the girls here [Group B] didn't, and I think they needed a bit more direction'*. The children in Group A therefore had a head start on Group B as well as plenty of ideas for the project.

Summary of the LTI staff views:

- The LTI Lead and teachers agreed that should they be involved in the project again they would need to run it very differently to minimise the disruption caused to the children's education.

- All teaching, including functional skills, was put on hold for 10-12 weeks to accommodate the project. This was seen as detrimental to the children's learning. Unfortunately, the LTI teachers were not able to give the children homework as they are not at a high enough level, even with their functional skills, to self-learn. As a result, the Traveller children were said to have fallen behind in their studies, especially with their phonics. The LTI teachers pointed out that one school day of learning is the equivalent to a whole term for the Traveller children.
- The Traveller children had a lot of catching up to do after the project finished- not only was it exam time, but the LTI teachers felt it would be difficult to get the children back onto the learning bus to concentrate and refocus so close to the end of the school year.
- The project could have easily contributed towards the children's Bronze Art Award if photographs and a portfolio of the children's learning journey had been included.
- The Traveller children's motivation waned by the end of the project because it was too long. They felt that the project would be better had it been shorter and snappier.
- LTI staff felt there needed to be more collaboration between them and the student mentors before the project started, a point echoed by the Group B student mentors. The LTI teachers could then have assessed what help and support, on the teaching and lesson planning side, the student mentors might need to effectively work with the children and deliver the project. They would have liked to have '*talk[ed] to them about the teaching side, the structure of a session and what their outcomes needed to be and what our outcomes are*'. They may also have been able to determine which student mentor group would work best with which group of Traveller children.
- The teachers felt that the project's aims, objectives and outcomes needed to be clearer to everyone from the outset.
- Whilst the project had been beneficial to the Traveller children, overall, LTI staff felt the project had '*been very disruptive*'.

Despite all the issues raised above the by LTI staff, they still felt the Traveller children had benefited a lot from taking part in the project, particularly the visits to the university:

I think going into the university and being accepted so readily. I know Emma has spoken positively about how it was good to just be able to be us and to be accepted as us. Yes, self-worth, aspiration probably, to go on further into education.

(LTI Lead)

The Traveller children had also learnt a raft of new transferable skills that they were already putting into practice as evidenced by the music video one of the Group B Traveller children recently made and shared. Comments on the impact of the project on the Traveller children included:

They have got a lot out of it. And I mean even in Group B, they haven't done radio shows and I don't think they had actually done a music video... And Chloe hadn't done any editing... And she hadn't used a big camera like that before.

(LTI Teacher)

Seeing Finn whilst he's being filmed [on the music video] to see him, I thought crikey, they really brought him out of himself. I mean, they are quite a confident group but nonetheless, I thought there was a real achievement there on the part of the students and I've only heard half of the radio programme.

(LTI Lead)

3. Conclusions and recommendations

There appeared to be a miscommunication between the UoL Module Leader and the LTI Lead at the start of the project as to the media capabilities of the student mentors. Whilst both groups sat in the Film and Media Studies Department, they had very different specialisms within the discipline. Group A's focus was on media production whilst Group B's area of expertise was sound and music. Therefore, the student mentors in Group B did not necessarily have the skill set required to make music videos, which was the main interest of the Traveller children in their group.

Whilst the project met its initial aims and objectives from the LTI perspective of helping the Traveller children to develop new skills and boosting their confidence levels, it did not appear to raise their aspirations in terms of going on to higher education per se. However, it fully met the aims and objectives for the student mentors; both groups worked with an external client and produced a media product; in fact, Group A produced two. Whilst the Traveller children enjoyed taking part in the project, their motivation waned toward the end because it was too long and thin; a shorter project would have held their attention more.

Group A seemed to be the most effective/successful, for both the student mentors and the Traveller children. There appears to be two reasons for this: firstly, the Traveller children in Group A were more familiar with artistic projects, having worked towards their Bronze Art Award, and had lots of ideas about what they would like to do. Secondly, the Group A student mentors appeared to be much more confident, they had no difficulties accessing equipment nor working with or managing the children. In addition, they had the Module Leader as their contact tutor and during the second half of the project, the LTI Lead for support.

Using non-professional equipment, such as iPads and freely available editing software, provided the Traveller children in Group B with the transferable technical skills they need to create a music video in a real-life context.

A good relationship developed between both sets of student mentors and their respective Traveller children. This led to respect and trust on both sides and ultimately resulted in a good media product. Unfortunately, the lack of evidence of skills learnt will make it difficult for LTI to use the project towards the Traveller children's Bronze Art Award; the end product alone was said by the LTI Lead to be insufficient.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are for the LTI and the UoL Film and Media Studies Module Leader to consider if the collaboration is repeated in the future.

Recommendations for both LTI and the Film and Media Studies Module Leader:

- Whilst the project was viewed as valuable it would be better run over a shorter period, i.e., over two or three weeks with one or two full days or half a day a week over four weeks. This would maintain the Traveller children's interest and motivation and reduce the disruption to their learning, especially their functional skills. However, this model of delivery may have a detrimental effect on the soft skills that the children developed during the project such as social skills and confidence building.
- Additional pre-project meetings with the client, involving the LTI teachers as well as the LTI Lead are essential to ensure everybody understands the project aims, objectives and limitations from the outset.
- The student mentors should meet with the Traveller children earlier in the schedule to give them time to consider what media product they would like to produce.

- LTI teachers should also meet with the student mentors to establish what, if any, support they might require when working with the Traveller children and ensure that individual sessions are well structured with clear aims and objectives.
- Ensure there is evidence of the learning and new skills the Traveller children gain during the course of the project, i.e., through lesson plans and portfolios, so it can be used for external purposes, for example, the Bronze Art Award.

Recommendations specifically for the Film and Media Studies Module Leader:

- Provide more pre-project preparation, such as timing the lectures of the module at the university prior to the mentoring sessions and ensuring the student mentors have enough information about working with children in non-traditional settings outside of mainstream school.
- Ensure all student mentors know how to access, book and use appropriate media equipment before the start of the project.
- Provide greater support for student mentors that are not from the Media Production course and for those who are not familiar with teaching.
- Ensure the whole process is started much earlier in the academic year.

Appendix A: Focus group and interview schedules

Student mentors focus group schedule

1. What's gone well with the project?
2. What's not gone so well?
3. How has your relationship with the Traveller children develop?
4. What challenges did you come across and how were they resolved?
5. How supported did/do you feel? (i.e., by UoL tutors, the Traveller teachers etc.)
6. What difference do you think the project has made to the Traveller children?
 - a. To their confidence
 - b. Learning new skills, which ones?
 - c. Working as a team or with others etc
7. How do you think the project has influenced how the Traveller children view higher education and universities?
 - a. Do you feel it has raised their aspirations in any way?
8. What have you learnt about yourselves?
9. If you were to run the project again, what would you do differently?
 - a. Any other support or information?
10. Anything else to add about the experience?

Traveller children focus group schedule

1. What did you enjoy most about the project?
2. What didn't you enjoy?
3. How did you get on with the Student Mentors (Zoe or Henry group)?
4. How did you feel about taking part in the project at the start?
5. How do you feel now that it is finished?
6. How do you feel about the music video / radio show you made?
7. What have you learnt? *i.e.:*
 - a. Technical media / video skills
 - b. How to work with others
 - c. What the university looks like
 - d. Other
8. How will you use what you have learnt?
9. What did you think of the university campus and its facilities at Lincoln?
10. What do you want to do when you are older?
11. How, if at all, has being part of the project influenced what you want to do in the future?
 - a. Has it changed your mind?
 - b. Talk about if they want to go to college or train in a particular industry.
12. How could the project be improved?
 - a. What else would they have liked, *i.e.*, more time, more visits off-site etc.

LTI teacher interview schedule

1. From your perspective, how has the project with the media students gone?
 - a. How well did the children engage with the project?
 - b. What did the children learn?
 - c. How was their and your relationship with the Student Mentors?
2. Were there any challenges and if so, how were these resolved?
3. What difference has the project made to the children? (Ask for examples)
 - a. Improved confidence
 - b. Aspirational
 - c. Skill development
 - d. Improved knowledge and understand of what is available to them post-16
4. Has it made any difference to their families? (for example, changed any of their parents views on studying / going to university)
5. Would you like to see similar projects run with the Traveller children in the future and why?
6. If the project ran again, what changes / improvements would you like to see?