

STARS

Secondary two and road Safety

Project Evaluation

May 2008



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COUNCIL



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STARS Project Evaluation

May 2008

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STARS Project

Evaluation Report

Introduction

Drama has long been recognised as a good way to reach children with road safety messages and the production of road safety plays, performed in schools by professional actors has proven to be successful and well received by children and their schools. However, two of the issues associated with this method are, firstly, the actors (even though young actors are often used) are older than their audience and therefore seen as adults and part of the establishment. Secondly, the scripts, and hence the messages contained in the performances, are written by adults and are what adults think the children need to know.

The concept of the STARS project is that the ideas and messages being delivered are entirely produced by the students themselves. The way in which these messages are put across and the delivery of them is also done entirely by the students.

The project could be used for any age group, from primary children to adults but second-year secondary pupils were chosen, as this is the one school year where there was a gap in road safety education.

Project Description

The project involved two youth theatre workshop leaders working with a group of around 20 second-year secondary (S2) pupils over two consecutive days, using drama techniques to explore the themes and issues surrounding Road Safety as identified by pupils of this age. Workshops and games were used to establish relationships and working practices within the group and gradually start the participants thinking

about road safety and their own experiences. This was then developed into producing the messages and concerns the participants wanted to convey to their peers. With guidance from the workshop leaders, these ideas were brought together into a performance of about 20 minutes which was scripted and performed entirely by the participants to the remainder of their year.

After the performance, an informal discussion was held with the audience to gauge their reaction and establish if they had recognised the messages being presented to them. The format for this was varied, being led by a road safety professional or a member of the teaching staff and, at one event, was held as pre-show workshops led by the cast.



Aims

To heighten awareness and improve knowledge and understanding of the issues related to Road Safety as relevant to S2 pupils using the medium of drama.

Dates

An initial pilot programme took place in early 2007 involving 3 schools. This was used to carry out an initial assessment of the project. This was done over two days at each school, but one week apart i.e. the first school began on a Wednesday and the second part was completed the following Wednesday. The idea behind this was to give participants the opportunity to spend time amongst themselves working on parts of their performance. In practice, this did not happen and the workshop leaders found they had to spend more time on the second day reminding the participants of what they had been doing. The de-briefing of this initial pilot identified a number of other minor adjustments and refinements which were incorporated into the main project involving 10 schools (including revisiting the initial 3 schools). This took place from September 2007 until March 2008

Schools

The project involved 10 schools. The following schools that participated were:

- Turriff Academy
- Westhill Academy
- Portlethen Academy
- Aboyne Academy
- Fraserburgh Academy
- Mintlaw Academy
- Meldrum Academy
- Banchory Academy
- Ellon Academy
- The Gordon Schools

Questionnaires

Three questionnaires were produced, all with similar questions. One was produced for each group involved in the project: the participants, the audience and the school staff supervising the audience. The questionnaires were distributed to everyone immediately following the discussion at the end of the performance and collected before they left, ensuring a good rate of return. However, The Gordon Schools did not complete the survey, due to a delay in the completion of the questionnaires.



Project Feedback Participant Survey

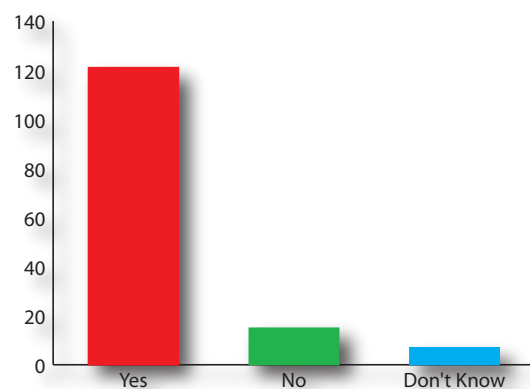
The following seven questions were given to the participants:

1. Did you enjoy taking part in the work shops?



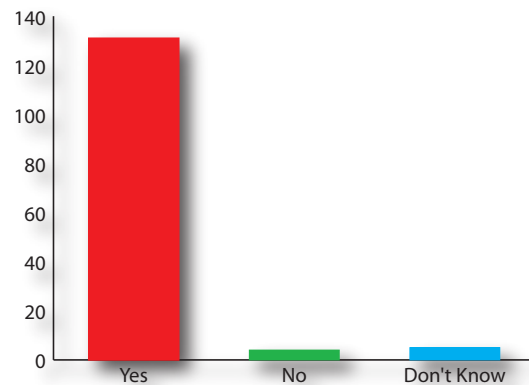
- The result shows that 138 participants out of the total 143 that took part in this survey felt that they enjoyed taking part in the workshops.
- 3 felt that they did not enjoy the workshops
- 2 were unsure.

2. Did you like the way the workshops were organised?



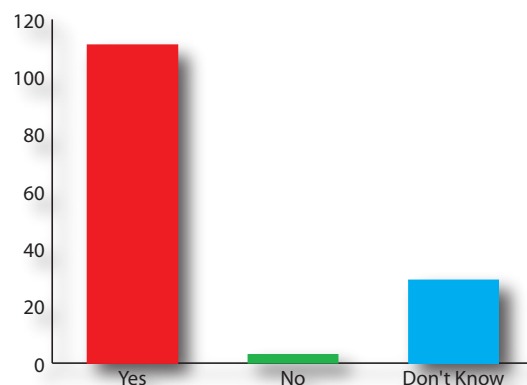
- 121 out of the 143 participants said that they liked the way the workshops were organised.
- 15 out of 143 disliked the organisation of the workshops
- 7 out of the 143 were unsure.

3. Did you enjoy the performance of the play?



- 131 out of the 143 participants felt that they enjoyed the performance of the play.
- 4 felt they didn't enjoy the performance
- 5 were unsure.

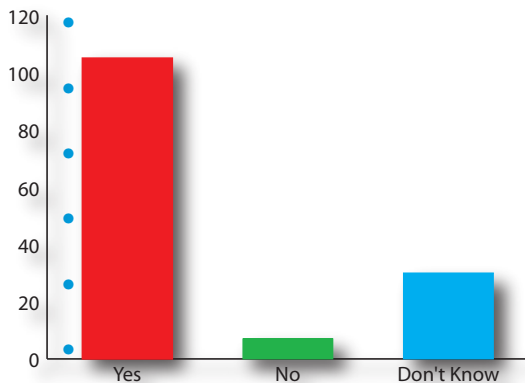
4. Did the audience seem to enjoy the play?



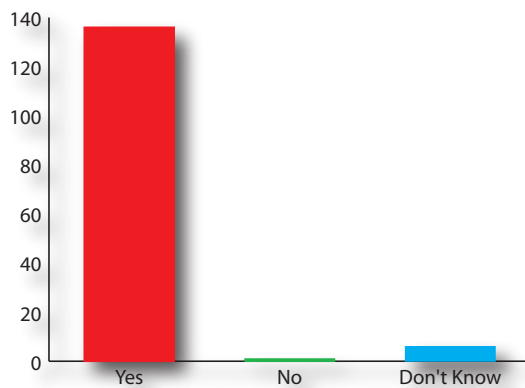
- 111 out of the 143 participants felt that the audience seemed to enjoy the play.
- 3 out of the 143 said the audience didn't seem to enjoy the play
- 29 were unsure.

5. Do you feel the audience understood the safety messages?

- 105 out of the 143 participants felt that the audience understood the safety messages.
- 7 out of the 143 felt that the audience did not understand and
- 30 were unsure.

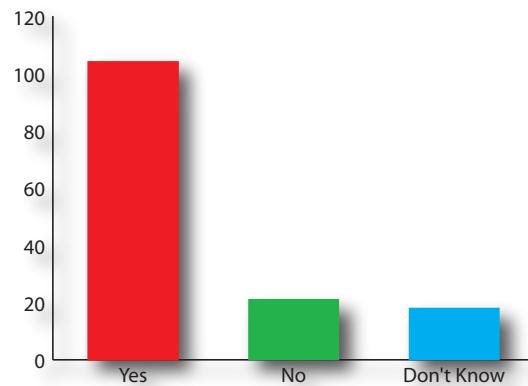


6. Do you think delivering messages in a play rather than in the classroom is a good idea?



- 136 out of the 143 participants felt that the delivering messages in a play rather than in the classroom is a good idea.
- 1 person felt that delivering messages in a play is not a good idea
- 6 were unsure.

7. Did you feel you learnt anything from the workshops?



- 104 out of the 143 participants felt that they learnt something from the workshops.
- 21 out of the 143 felt that they did not learn anything from the workshops and
- 18 were unsure.

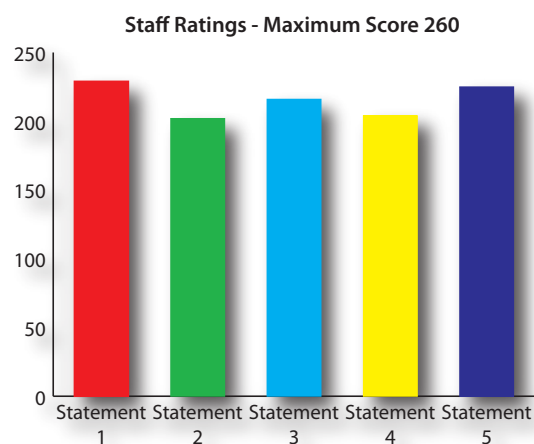
In the feedback, it is shown that approximately between 73%-95% of the 143 participants taking part in the survey said yes to each of the questions and this is a positive sign that the participants thought it was a success. Another very positive aspect of the results was that less than 7% of the participants said no in their answers to 5 out of the 7 questions. However, the results show that 10.5% of the participants said they did not like the way the workshops were organised (although 95% said delivering messages in a play rather than in the classroom is a good idea) and 14.6% said they did not feel they learnt anything from the workshops. The survey also shows that between 12 and 21% of the participants said they were unsure to 3 out of 7 questions.

Staff Survey

In this survey, the staff was asked to rate a series of statements from 1-5 (5 being best). The survey consisted of the five following statements along with two additional yes/no questions:

- Value of programme to participants (actors)
- Value of programme to spectator pupils
- Relevance of road safety tips covered to your pupils
- Appropriateness of the messages to pupils' age and understanding
- The use of theatre for getting road safety to this age group (see figure 1 below)

1. Staff ratings



Statement 1:
Value of programme to participants (actors)

Statement 2:
Value of programme to spectator pupils

Statement 3:
Relevance of road safety issues covered, to your pupils

Statement 4:
Appropriateness of the messages to pupils' age and understanding

Statement 5:
The use of theatre for getting road safety to this age group

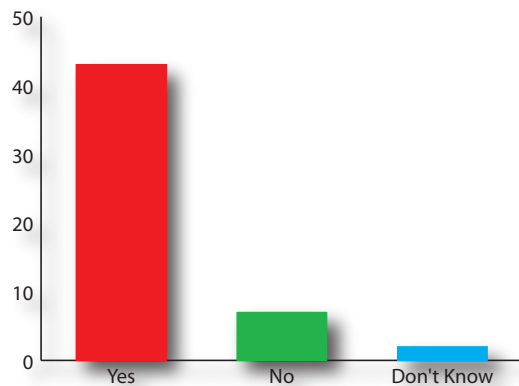
- In the feedback, the total number of staff that participated from 8 schools is 52.

- In statement 1, with a total of 229, the average rating was 4.4 which is very high with the rating of each school varying from 3.8 to 5
- In statement 2, with a total of 202, the average rating was 3.9 the ratings per school were between 3.3 and 4.8. The schools that gave the lowest ratings were Ellon Academy with 3.3, Meldrum Academy with 3.5 and Mintlaw Academy with

3.6.

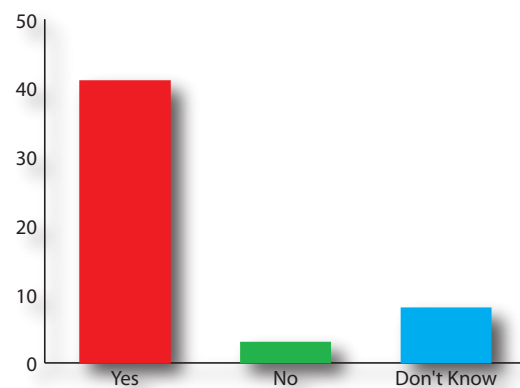
- In statement 3, with a total of 216, the overall average was 4.2 with school averages ranging from 3.3 to 5. Lowest rating was given by Meldrum Academy with 3.3
- In statement 4, with a total of 204, the average rating was 3.9 with schools ranging from 3.1 to 4.7 with the lowest rating given by Ellon Academy.
- In statement 5, with a total of 225, the average rating was 4.3 which is very high and schools varied between 4 and 5.
- Overall, the ratings are consistently high with averages varying from 3.9 to 4.4. The lowest rating from any school for any question was 3.1 and this related to the appropriateness of the messages to the pupils age and understanding. Since the messages being portrayed ALL came from pupils themselves in this age group, this response may indicate a lack of understanding within certain members of the teaching staff.

2. Did you feel the pupils' attention was engaged throughout?



- 43 out of the 52 teachers felt that the pupils were engaged throughout.
- However, 7 staff felt that the pupils were not engaged throughout.
- 2 people said that they were unsure of this and the majority of the negative answers came from Ellon Academy with 4 no's and 1 don't know. There was a technical problem at Ellon (through no fault of the workshop leaders) which halted the production for a short time, leading to parts of the audience becoming restless and this undoubtedly shows in the questionnaire responses. Portlethen Academy had 1 don't know as well.

3. Would you recommend this project to be expanded next year?



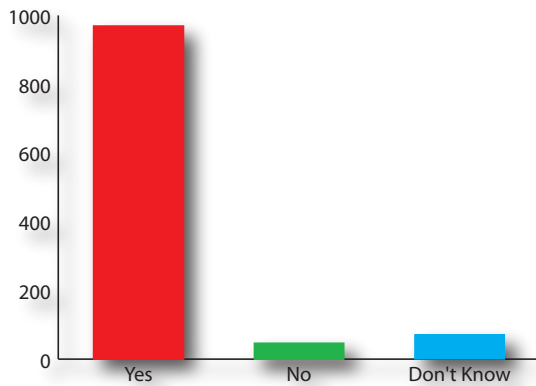
- 41 out of the 52 staff said that they would recommend next years' expansion of the project.
- However, 3 teachers said that they wouldn't and 8 people said they were unsure.
- The NO answers came from Portlethen Academy, Fraserburgh Academy and Ellon Academy. The DON'T KNOW answers came from Mintlaw with 5, Ellon with 2 and Portlethen with 1.



Spectator Survey

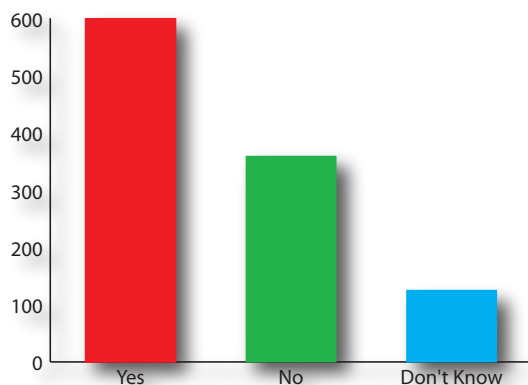
In this survey, the following eight questions were given to the spectators:

1. Did you enjoy the play?



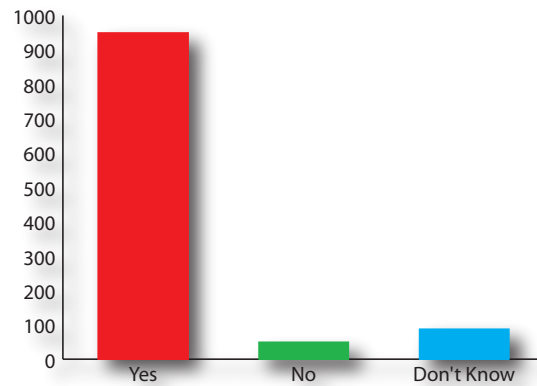
- 969 out of the 1087 respondents said that they enjoyed the play.
- 47 out of 1087 said that they didn't enjoy the play
- 71 were unsure.

2. Did you learn anything new from the play?



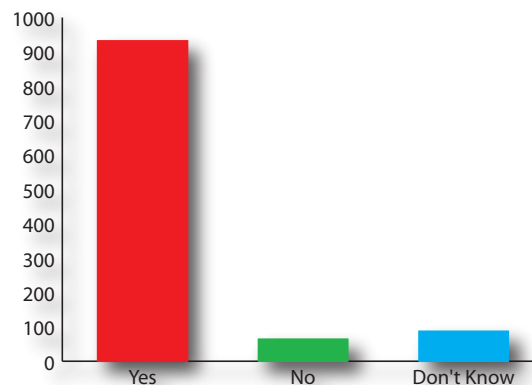
- 599 out of the 1087 spectators said that they learnt something new from the play.
- 359 out of the 1087 said that they didn't learn anything new from the play
- 125 were unsure.

3. Do you think the messages were easily understood?



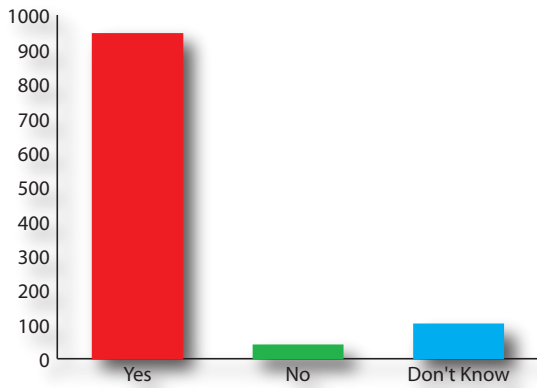
- 949 out of the 1087 spectators said that they thought the messages were easily understood.
- 50 out of the 1087 thought the messages were not easily understood
- 88 said that they were unsure

4. Were the messages suitable for your age group?



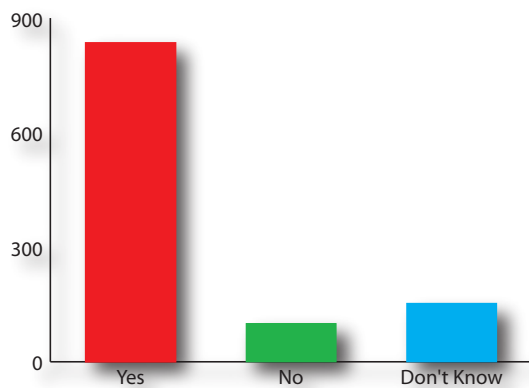
- 932 out of the 1087 respondents thought that the messages were suitable for their age group
- 65 out of 1087 thought that the messages were not suitable for their age group
- 88 were unsure

5. Do you think delivering messages in a play rather in the classroom is a good idea?



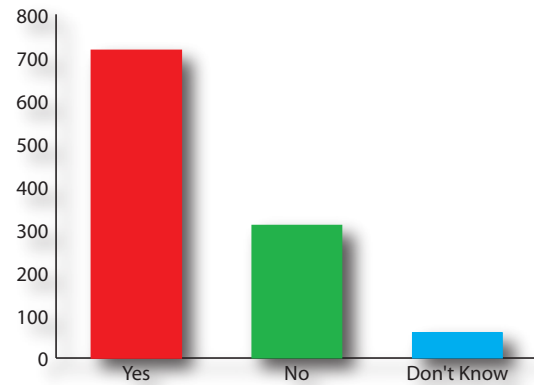
- 945 out of 1087 thought that the delivering messages in a play rather in a classroom is a good idea.
- 40 out of 1087 thought that delivering messages in a play is not a good idea
- 101 were unsure.

6. Was the play performed to a high standard?



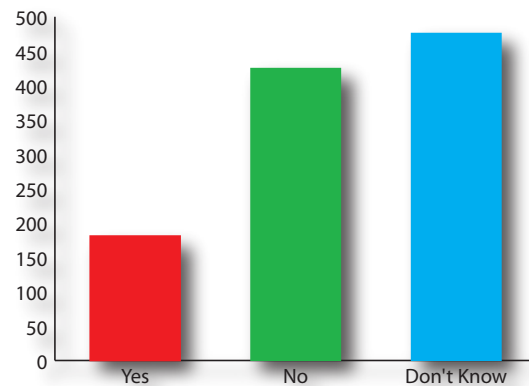
- 835 of 1087 spectators thought that the play was performed to a high standard
- 100 out of 1087 thought the play was not performed to a high standard
- 153 were unsure

7. Was the length of the play about right?



- 716 out of the 1087 people thought that the length of the play was about right
- 309 out of the 1087 thought that the length of the play was too short
- 59 out of the 1087 thought that the length of the play was too long

8. Should other road safety topics have been included in the play?



- 181 out of the 1087 spectators thought that the play should have included other road safety topics.
- 425 out of 1087 thought that the play should not have included other road safety tips
- 476 were unsure

Overall

In the feedback, it is shown that between 55%-90% of the 1087 people said yes to the first seven questions. Another positive aspect is that less than 10% said no to the first seven questions. The feedback shows that the majority of no answers were in question 2 with 33%. Also, it shows that less than 10% of the 1087 people said that they don't know to six of the seven questions but the question

which had the majority of don't know answers was question 6, which had 14.1%. In question 7, 61.3% thought the play was at the correct length, 28.5% thought that the play was too short and only 5.4% thought that it was too long.

In question 8, 16.7% said yes to the question, 39.3% said no and 44% said that they don't know which shows that over a third of the audience thought that the play included all the appropriate messages.



Conclusion

To conclude, this project has been a success as the vast majority of the feedback has been positive.

In the student survey, the pupils participating thought it was good as it was beneficial and it broadened their knowledge and understanding surrounding the issues of Road Safety. However, a few pupils did not like the way the workshops were organised although this may have been because they did not volunteer but were sent by the school, in spite of the instructions provided to the schools.

In the staff survey, the ratings were quite high as they varied from approximately 4 to 5 for the majority of the statements. However, some schools (e.g. Ellon Academy) gave it an average rating of about 3.3 because they felt it didn't have quite the impact as planned in their school. This may have been due to the technical problem that interrupted the performance for several minutes and destroyed the main effect the participants were trying to achieve. This problem was down to the school but some of the staff may have attributed it to the workshop leaders.

In the spectator survey, the feedback shows that the majority were happy with the play as they thought it was useful and it was well planned. However, some felt that the play should have covered other road safety tips and that they did not learn anything new from the play. Since the aim of the project was to raise awareness and not to teach the pupils anything new (the topics were coming from pupils themselves) it is not necessarily a bad thing that they did not feel they had learnt anything new. The fact that some felt the performance should have covered other road safety topics simply shows the different priorities that different sections of the community have when it comes to road safety.

While the overall project has been very well received by participants and audience alike, there are still a few minor improvements to be made. These are principally in the organisation side, particularly in the communication with the schools prior to the project commencement. The post-performance discussion needs to be reviewed and formalised but otherwise the delivery of the project is working well.



Appendix 1

STARS Project

The following project will be delivered by West Lothian Youth Theatre (WLYT):

Aim

- To heighten awareness and improve knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding Road Safety through the medium of drama as relevant to S2 pupils.

Objectives

- To work with a group of 20 (max) S2 pupils over a period of 2 days.
- To use drama techniques to explore the themes and issues surrounding Road Safety as perceived by pupils of this age.
- To facilitate the creation of a short devised piece lasting approximately 20 minutes for performance to their peers.

Target Groups

- The project is entirely group driven. The participants should understand that this is a drama project using the techniques of creative learning, and as such they will be required to play an active part in the creation and performance of the piece.
- The demands of the project will often be different to curriculum drama, and the selection process for the group should have willingness to take part and an interest in the subject matter as its most important criteria.
- WLYT practitioners will only work with S2 pupils on this project.

Responsibilities of the school

- To provide one S2 group as outlined above.
- To allow the Drama Workshop Leaders to take full responsibility for discipline issues but to play a supportive role in decisions made.
- To provide a non teaching point of contact for the duration of the project. Additional teaching support in the workshop is not required.
- To provide a large empty classroom/ drama studio. This should be large enough for the group to move freely around and to have space to work in small groups. It should have a minimum of furniture in it. The room is required for Day 1 only but is required all day including break and lunchtimes.
- To provide a large empty space suitable for performance. The project does not necessarily require a stage. A flexible approach to the use of the space for performance is desirable and gives the group choices in the style of performance they select. It should be noted that most school Gym Halls are not suitable due to adverse acoustics. This space is required for the whole of Day 2, including breaks and lunchtime.
- To release the remainder of S2 pupils for one period at the end of the second day to view the performance.
- To make available, where possible, a projector, laptop and screen; also music playback facilities and enough chairs for each member of the group.

Responsibilities of West Lothian Youth Theatre

- To provide two Drama Workshop Leaders to deliver a two day programme with a group of S2 pupils (schedule below)
- To deliver workshops that will use drama tools and active experiential learning techniques to enhance understanding of road safety matters
- To take full responsibility for discipline issues within the workshops
- To chair an open discussion at the end of the second performance day that will be supported by a road safety expert.
- To develop the personal, social, learning and creative skills of the participants through drama games and exercises

Schedule

The group will work intensively. It is beneficial to the process if the school can allow a flexible approach to the timetable where possible. The following schedule outlines the timescales.

Day 1

Session 1 1.5 – 2 hours

Whole group warm up followed by a range of drama games tailored to the needs of the group.

Session 2 1.5 – 2 hours

In small groups the participants will start to generate ideas for inclusion in their performance. During this session they will feed back ideas to the whole group.

Session 3 1.5 – 2 hours

This session will be spent devising the performance. By the end of the day the group will have a range of scenes for inclusion and will have discussed the use of appropriate media and props. They will also have made decisions regarding costume and staging.

Day 2

Session 1 Morning

Whole group warm-up. The group will finalise details in their performance and rehearse in the performance space. Any use of multi-media, props and costume will be included. The session will end with a Dress rehearsal.

Session 2 Afternoon

Performance: during the final period of the school day, the group will share their devised work with the rest of their year. This will be followed by a discussion chaired by the Drama Workshop Leaders. This final session will include additional feedback from Road Safety experts.

S.T.A.R.S. – Feb 2008

Staff Survey, Academy

Please circle your answer to each question

1. With 5 being the highest score and 1 being the lowest, please rate the value of the programme to participant pupils (actors)

5 4 3 2 1

2. Please rate the value of the programme to spectator pupils

5 4 3 2 1

3. Please rate the relevance of road safety issues covered to your pupils

5 4 3 2 1

4. Please rate the appropriateness of the messages to pupils' age and understanding

5 4 3 2 1

5. Did you feel that the pupils' attention was engaged throughout?

Yes No Don't know

6. Please rate the use of theatre as a means of illustrating road safety messages to this age group

5 4 3 2 1

7. Would you recommend that this programme is expanded next year?

Yes No Maybe

8. What did you like most about the programme? Please give details in the box below:

9. Do you have any comments or suggestions on how we could improve the programme? Please give details in the box below:

Thank you for your help.

And finally, thanks are due to:

Grampian Police Road Safety Unit, especially Sandra McKechnie

Aberdeenshire's School Travel Planning Officer, Aurelie Irving

Aberdeenshire's Education, Learning & Leisure Service, particularly the staff of the ten schools who participated

West Lothian Youth Theatre - to Michael Richardson whose patience and flexibility facilitated the project and to Rachael and Judith, whose enthusiasm and stamina made the project work.

This report prepared by Mohammed Kassab and Andy Duff

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