



# Summer Programme 2010: Urban Skillz Project Research Report

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# 1. Introduction

This research report aims to interrogate and articulate “the artistic and educational merits of Reflex work in reducing recidivism,” as have been exemplified through the Reflex 2010 summer project: Urban Skillz. It does so through reference to a range of evidence collected through the methodology and approach outlined in 1.2. All photographs included are documentation of the process or stills from the films made.

## 1.1 Project Background

Reflex is a national faith-based Voluntary Sector Organisation, which exists to empower children, young people and young adults to break the cycle of offending and reoffending. Reflex works with at risk young people between the ages of 14 and 21. Reflex aims to tackle issues relevant to young people through challenging and creative programmes. Reflex aims to provide young people with the skills, confidence and opportunities they need to overcome the barriers they face and reach their full potential. Reflex offers young people space to creatively reflect on life choices and express themselves positively, whilst also challenging anti-social attitudes and helping redefine boundaries of acceptable behaviour.



Reflex’s aims correlate to identified factors leading to offending behaviour in order to meet the needs of young people across all areas of our provision:

- 1. Increase self-esteem and achievement levels**
- 2. Provide positive role models**
- 3. Provide relevant alternatives to criminal behaviour**

The methodology of all Reflex programmes is encompassed in the strap line:

### ***Creative Reflection - Positive Expression***

**Creative Reflection:** Regardless of the creative medium used, each programme is designed to develop young people’s creative thinking.

**Positive Expression:** Offering young people a platform of skills from which to express their feelings, thoughts and emotions, develop confidence and redefine their behaviour.



Young people are offered the chance to tell their story, share their experiences and express how they hope to move forward with their life positively. Young people are given an opportunity to be heard on how their community could be changed for the better, and are afforded a voice in the direction of their own future.

All Reflex programmes are underpinned by recognised learning theories, which are embedded into both course content and delivery.



Reflex delivered eight weeks of ASDAN accredited arts projects, in community and custodial locations in the West Midlands, in the summer of 2010. Each project was run with 10-20 young people in Urban Music, Drama and Film with participants producing a Music DVD or Live performance. The focus of this report is to interrogate and articulate “the artistic and educational merits of Reflex work in reducing recidivism” as have been exemplified through this summer programme of arts activities, entitled ‘Urban Skillz project.’

## 1.2 Research Methodology and Approach

The Evaluation Trust’s methodology is one of ‘action research,’ which seeks to take full advantage of the opportunity that evaluation offers for all stakeholders to meaningfully reflect on a project and its impact for themselves.

To this end we use a tool called the Outcome and Output indicator form, which allows us to:

- Map out the aims and objectives of all stakeholders involved in a project
- Identify the evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, that needs to be collected.
- Provide clarity of overview enabling any organisation to work with consultants to:
- Identify what evidence should be collected
- Identify the most pertinent, useful and appropriate mechanisms for collecting such evidence

“ The Evaluation Trust’s methodology is one of ‘action research’ ”

By completing the Reflex Summer Programme Outcome and Output indicator form (included in the appendix) together, the Reflex team and the evaluator were able to embed evaluative activities into existing project plans. The ongoing reflective practice of Reflex was apparent in this planning process, as many mechanisms for reflection were already in place, such as the ‘press conference’. The key evaluation activities, thereby identified, for gathering evidence throughout the process were as follows:



## 1.2.1 Evidence to be collected

### i. 'Baseline' evidence collection

- a) Mapping 1: Forward Mapping (15 mins) To take place at outset

*Possible exercise to carry out prior to filling in planning sheet and identifying Ground Rules – 'where do they want to go in the week – what do they want to achieve'?*

Provide people with large sheets of paper, unless something else is more appropriate (e.g. a project diary if people are keeping one) and different colour pens. Ask people to draw a map of where they want to get through the project: Where so they see themselves at the end of the week? 1: what do they hope to do: 2 What do they hope to learn: 3: What will they need to do to get to where they want to be?

Asking people to share their maps, by talking through their journey, can be very useful especially when it is useful for people to get to know each other. It is important that people volunteer to do this and that if one person shares their map that all who want to share their maps are given time to do so.

Maps should be photographed or left behind after event. In many instances it is best to let people take maps away, but ensure they are photographed or scanned first.

- b) Young people's ratings of themselves

Using existing questions and mechanism for collecting this evidence.



### ii. 'Ongoing' evidence collection

- a) Diaries kept by facilitators to include:

A record / description of the challenging and stimulating activities that are facilitated and reflection on their effectiveness in developing young people's creative thinking.

The Innovative methods of learning which are embedded and reflection on their effectiveness

The learning theories embedded into the project and how they offer a unique and holistic approach to meeting the identified needs of young people.

The significance of the faith based approach of this project and what impact you think it has.



- b) Video diaries to be kept daily by participants using the following questions as prompts:

- What work have you done today and how do you feel about it?
- Have you felt at ease in today's workshop and why?
- Have today's activities been challenging and stimulating? If so why?
- Have today's activities made you think more creatively? If so how?

- c) Video and photographic documentation to show:

Development in performers' / musicians' confidence

- d) Feedback from Audiences

To be gathered through existing mechanism and to include responses to question:

What did you think about the artistic quality of the production?



### iii. 'End of week' Evidence collection

Activities and questions for Evaluation Fridays

(Some could be included in press conference, some in small group discussions, some in big group discussion: suggestions re this allocation below.)

- a) Post its

As people arrive to get them thinking straight away: ask them to note down (on post it notes and put on relevant area on wall) the most memorable things about the project / event and the main learning points. These can be stuck to different areas of the room to be allocated. Photographs of the post it notes as well as written up content is useful for evaluation.

- b) Intro / table cloths (5 - 10 mins)

Facilitator explains what you hope to get out of session. It is useful to provide paper tablecloths for people to be able to write comments or thoughts on throughout activities. If doing this, explain what the table cloths are for, etc., and how the activities that take place today will be crucial to the evaluation process. If people don't all know each other do a quick round of intros.

- c) Press conference

- How did you feel during the final performance?
- How does it feel to think about it now?
- Did you think, at the beginning of the week, that you could have achieved what you have achieved?
- Has the project led you to think about what else you could achieve?

- d) Big group discussion

- What do you think about the people who have worked with you on this project?
- Were you aware of the opportunities there are in this area of work before the project?
- How far has this project enabled you to express you feelings, thoughts and emotions?
- Have you been able to tell your story and share your experiences through this project?

e) Small group discussion(s)

Small group discussion

Small group discussion (ideally groups of 4 - 6) re questions below:

- Do you feel more confident now than you did before the project about yourself and your potential?
- Have the creative processes you have used in this project helped you think about and explore issues you might face?
- If so, has this helped you to identify ways to move forwards, or of overcoming those issues?
- Have you been able to talk about how you think your community could be changed for the better?
- Do you think you are able to influence the direction of your own future? Did you think so before this project?

**All feedback to wider group**

Small groups feedback to wider group, re the outcomes of their discussion of key question. Key points to be scribed on flip chart by facilitator, written up and collated with other evidence and sent to Roz.

f) Mapping 2: Retrospective (15 mins)

Provide people with large sheets of paper and different colour pens. Ask people to draw a map of their journey of the project: 1 what they did: 2 What they learnt: 3: What else happened. Discuss the maps at this point and then using different coloured pens, ask people to mark the following on the map: 4 What impact different things within the project had for them (e.g. if they learnt something how did this make them feel): 5 What were highlights / the most important things that happened and why they were important: 6 Any issues.



**Review of forward mapping: comparing before and after maps to identify whether:**

- A. They have achieved all they set out to achieve.
- B. They haven't achieved all they set out to achieve.
- C. They have achieved more than they hoped.
- D. They have achieved different things than they hoped but which are just as or more valuable.

Asking people to share their maps, by talking through their journey, can be very useful at this stage too, as often people will identify different learning from the same activities, prompting people to realise more about what they themselves have also learnt.

Maps should be photographed or left behind after event. In many instances it is best to let people take maps away, but ensure they are photographed or scanned first.

g) Mapping 3: Forward Mapping after workshops (15 mins)

After retrospective mapping ask people to now think about where they want to go / what they want to do next. Given what they have learnt, how would they like to apply that in future? Map the journey of where they are now, where they want to be in a year's time and the things they will need to achieve and support they will need to have to get there.

Asking people to share their maps, by talking through their journey, can be interesting at this stage as well, if there is time.

Maps should be photographed or left behind after event. In many instances it is best to let people take maps away, but ensure they are photographed or scanned first.

#### iv. 'End of Programme' Evidence Collection

a) Team debrief / interviews with key staff at end of programme to include questions:

- What learning theories were embedded into the project and how did they offer an unique and holistic approach to meeting the identified needs of young people?
- What is the significance of the faith based approach of this project and what impact do you think it has?
- What challenging and stimulating activities were facilitated and how effective were they in developing young people's creative thinking?
- What Innovative methods of learning were embedded and how effective were they?
- Do you have any comments about the evaluation process and approaches used in this programme?

b) In analysis:

All feedback from young people mined for evidence of faith-based approach having impact.

The evaluator produced two tools to support the Reflex team in gathering this evidence; 'Keeping a diary' and 'Sense making outline', which are included in the appendix. Reflex have welcomed the Evaluations Trust's approach as one that has as its legacy, not just the findings presented in this report and tools that can be used in the future, but also the additional reflection that the approach has stimulated for the team and participants and how this has nurtured ongoing development for all involved.



**“ Reflex have welcomed the Evaluations Trust's approach ”**

## 2 How The Reflex Summer Programme 2010 met its aims

This section of the report will consider how successful this programme has been in realising the aims of Reflex and the Urban Skillz programme. Relevant evidence is presented, beneath headings below, which represent the various aims of Reflex and the Urban Skillz Programme. The final part of this section will consider how effective Reflex 's approach and strategies have been in realising Reflex's aims.



“ *The approach was excellent and engaging, you could tell the young people had hope and a renewed sense of self worth by the end of the course. We could all tell this by the emotions they showed and the respect they showed to our team.* ”

Ben Williams: Urban Skillz Facilitator

### 2.1 Increasing self-esteem and achievement levels (Reflex Aim)

There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that participants self esteem and achievement levels have been increased through this project. For example:

*“I feel well more confident.”* Participant: Werrington

*“When I first came down I didn't know how to write lyrics had no confidence and since I've been on the course I can work in a group and I have loads of confidence and write my own lyrics...”* Participant: Brinsford

*“I just want to say I appreciate and thanks for the time you brought in, cause it's built my confidence and made a better person today, thanks.”* Participant: Werrington

*“Doing all the play scenes have challenged me because I'm not really a confident person but as soon as you do it you get more confident and you feel better in yourself.”* Participant: Brinsford

*“Getting more confidence as a person.”* Participant: Brinsford

*“Since I started this whole thing, even the music thing, I didn't have any confidence at all, I didn't want to do anything, I didn't want to spit my bars or anything like that, didn't want to perform, now I've found my confidence and I've found my feet.”* Participant: Werrington

**Peer support, encouragement and the development of team working skills are clearly realised through the programme:**

*“We've helped each other out in the class.”* Participant: Brinsford

*“It's helped me in a lot of ways, I'm more confident around other people now.”* Participant: Werrington

**Such team working skills are important to the development of self-esteem and confidence and a sense of what is achievable in the future as well as developing a sense of responsibility to a team:**

*"I enjoyed it and I didn't want to let down anyone because everyone was doing good."* Participant: Werrington

**Team reflection and feedback concurs with participant feedback and also indicates some of the elements of the programme that were effective in realising this aim:**

**“ I’m more confident around other people now ”**

*"Yes, at the beginning they couldn't imagine themselves performing but once they realised they could do it they were buzzing."*

*"In the press conference they all talked about how much more confident they were than at the beginning and how surprised they were at how far they had come."*

*"They were sometimes hard to motivate, but once they started, they saw they could achieve things and so became more motivated. In the music work, writing lyrics, for example, once they had recorded themselves once, this was reassurance; they realised that they could do it and that motivated them more in writing lyrics."*

*"Peer feedback is a big confidence builder because they think that we might always say something is good but they believe their peers feedback."*

*"Seeing that their own feedback and constructive criticism was useful and was taken on board was important to their confidence."*

*"The impact of this raised self esteem and achievement level is clearly relevant in terms of recidivism as it helps to make an alternative future seem possible:"*

*"Today's activities have been challenging, kind of hard, but when you learn you get better at things, so it's been challenging but, you know, when you work for something, you achieve."* Participant: Brinsford

**“ They were sometimes hard to motivate, but once they started, they saw they could achieve things and so became more motivated. In the music work, writing lyrics, for example, once they had recorded themselves once, this was reassurance; they realised that they could do it and that motivated them more in writing lyrics ”**



“ They have experience so they can pass their experience down to the younger people ”

## 2.2 Providing positive role models (Reflex Aim)

It is perhaps not surprising that there is little explicit evidence of positive role modeling from the participants, as the process itself is perhaps more implicit than those related to the other aims. However, it is clear from feedback that participants enjoyed and looked forward to working with the Reflex team and that the team had a positive impact for them:

*“All the Reflex people are very nice people.”* Participant: Werrington

*“The reflex guys are funny. They’ve done a good job and helped us out a lot.”* Participant: Werrington

*“I think the Reflex team are good at what they do. They are talented; they know what they are on about. They have experience so they can pass their experience down to the younger people, so yeah I think it’s good.”* Participant: Werrington

*“...they are going to help you out, they are polite people they are going to help you improve and build your confidence. If you ain’t never wrote lyrics they will teach you to write lyrics and help you out to write lyrics. You get time to record. If you ain’t done it before, it’s something you can try.”* Participant: Werrington

### **The Reflex team identified the following elements as the most effective ones in providing positive role models:**

*Facilitators being a part of the group and working with the lads is important.*

*Games: they had to lead on games, which created role models within the group and so they become role models to each other.*

*Demonstrating a task and then asking them to lead; for example, coming up with and performing the short play, this also means you can model skills in acting.*

*The relationship between the group and facilitators is built up so that they don’t feel intimidated by the skills of the facilitators.*

*Progression: gradually building up, one bar at a time until you have a whole song; they then feel safe to move onto the next bar or to work in more depth.*

*Your approach as a facilitator has to be consistent; they watch everything you do; so it is about the whole approach rather than just elements of it.*

*Coming up with the rules together, so they are the groups rules, because then they will stick to them and us adhering to those rules*

“ The relationship between the group and facilitators is built up so that they don’t feel intimidated by the skills of the facilitators. ”

*Expressing emotion in a controlled way, which is modeled both through the facilitators’ behaviour, but also in the performances, as they act out an argument, which shows that you can control such behaviour, which is a massive life skill; learning to separate your emotions from your reactions.*

*Our reaction to staff was positive, which is important, as role models and our general way of being with prison staff, in terms of just good manners really.*

*What’s interesting in the films is the focus on decision making and the right and wrong in their narratives – in the narratives both the ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ decisions are considered, but neither chosen. They have created a role model in the story lines.*

## 2.3 Providing relevant alternatives to criminal behaviour (Reflex Aim)

As is indicated in 2.1, the development of confidence, self esteem and achievement helps to make an alternative future seem more feasible. In addition, there is a wealth of evidence to suggest that many participants have developed greater aspirations for their future because of the course:

“ I believe it will give them an alternative to their life of crime ”

Rev Phil Seadon: HMP & YOI Brinsford

*“I believe it will give them an alternative to their life of crime; it built their self esteem, helped them to see that there's more to life than the previous life, and we're very excited and enthralled about what they were doing.”* Rev Phil Seadon: HMP & YOI Brinsford

*“Future-wise I'll be doing it again.”* Participant: Werrington

*“My plans for the future is I'm going to write more tunes in my pad, I'm gonna work harder, I'm gonna take my time, when I get out I'm hoping to go to college, maybe come and link up with Reflex, come down and do a few tunes, maybe hopefully do a couple gigs, if I get noticed I get noticed but I wont give up on my dreams that easy.”* Participant: Werrington

*“This is a great experience, something I can take away for the future.”* Participant: Brinsford

*“Today's activities have made me think a lot more creatively because I know I'm going to fulfill my dreams with what I'm doing.”* Participant: Brinsford

*“I ain't got long left, so when I get out I will definitely look into going into drama.”* Participant: Werrington

*“Before this course I'd have never, ever, ever stepped out and done that by myself, ever, so I think my confidence has just shot through the roof, that's the main thing for me, I could never have done that before and now I've got the confidence I can just get one with it.”* Participant: Werrington

**Not only does the course nurture ambition, extending participant's sense of what they can achieve, it also equips them with some of the social skills necessary to achieve:**

*“I have more ambition, mainly more respect for people, listen to people more, basically, I used to be shy a lot and now I don't feel shy at all.”* Participant: Werrington

*“I feel like I'm not shy no more and I can open up.”* Participant: Werrington

**The evidence collected suggests that the course is very effective in nurturing such positive relationships for participants with other people:**

*“I've got more respect for people now than I did before.”* Participant: Werrington

*“I've learnt to be open with new people, I've learnt to be able to work with new people.”* Participant: Werrington

*“I've learnt to respect people for the way they work and the way they are.”* Participant: Werrington

*“I do feel different, actually, I feel like I can express my feelings and how I want to be.”* Participant: Werrington

“ when I get out I'm hoping to go to college... I wont give up on my dreams that easy ”

**The extent to which the course enables participants to confidently express themselves and therefore communicate to others is clearly pivotal to this outcome:**

*"I recommend Reflex to other inmates cause its good for thinking skills and how to work with your peers."* Participant: Werrington

**As in 2.1, reflection and feedback from the Reflex team is aligned with that from participants and prison staff and also indicates some of the key elements that enabled this aim to be met:**

*The idea of college was starting to be considered by some of the group, so the programme worked in raising their aspirations.*

*The young people in Werrington watched the Brinsford DVD and they performed positive lyrics etc., because they were older guys, showing this to younger guys, the younger guys had respect for what the older guys did.*

*By making them feel comfortable with taking risks, different risks than they may be used to taking; someone said in the press conference that 'it shows me I can do something that I didn't think I could do'; it's about taking a risk in something positive, rather than negative and seeing that in the future they can take those positive risks.*

*Its important not to try to convince them that they will have a career in performance or music, although some do want to learn more, but to think about it more as an opportunity to think about what is positive and to build positive life memories.*

*The programme activates talent, e.g. in acting, that some people didn't realise they had.*

*The example we gave earlier, the 'angel' and 'devil' theme that the groups came up with for both the play and the film is evidence that the project got them to think about the alternatives.*

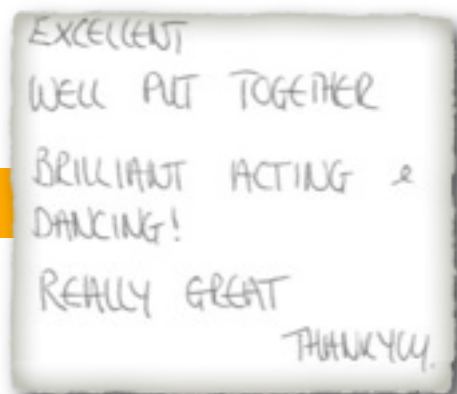
### Example of Reflex Expressive Arts planning sheet



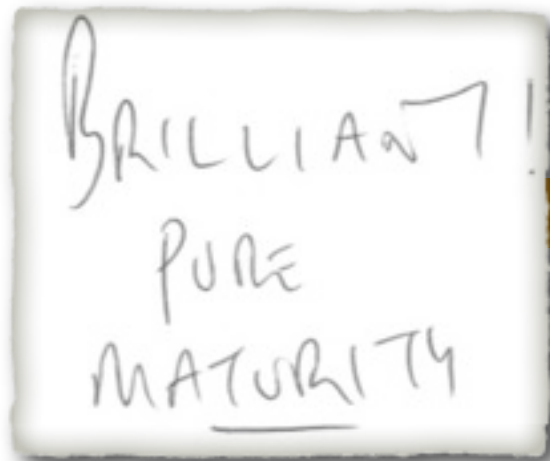
## 2.4 To ensure production achieves a certain Artistic quality (Project / ACE Aim)

Feedback regarding the performance indicates that production achieved a certain artistic quality:

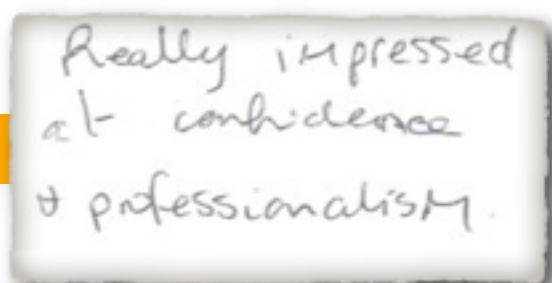
"...what they produced, its been first rate both musically and in terms of drama and acting ability." Rev Phil Seadon: HMP & YOI Brinsford



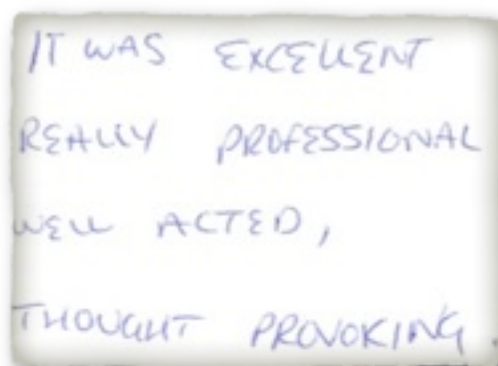
EXCELLENT  
WELL PUT TOGETHER  
BRILLIANT ACTING &  
DANCING!  
REALLY GREAT  
THANKYOU.



BRILLIANT!  
PURE  
MATURITY



Really impressed  
at confidence  
& professionalism.



IT WAS EXCELLENT  
REALLY PROFESSIONAL  
WELL ACTED,  
THOUGHT PROVOKING

### **Audience feedback from performance at HMYOI Werrington - Comments from a combination of staff and young people**

Furthermore, as is evident in the films made, the production standards in music and film making are clearly of a professional quality. It is also clear from the participant's worksheets and the quotes evidencing participants' growth in confidence, presented above, that they were proud of what they achieved.

The question of quality of a final performance or production is often overlooked or considered to be less important than the outcomes from a process such as this one. However, what is clear is that there is a need for the quality, of the products of such participatory processes, to be one that the participants themselves will be proud of, in order that their increased sense of confidence, raised aspirations and sense of future possibilities are not then undermined, as they would be if the quality of production was one that they were not proud of.

In addition, the products of Reflex's programme are then used as examples of what can be achieved to new participants:

"For them to trust us that it would actually be a professional outcome, we showed them some previous work that we did so that's given them a standard of how we work and that went down well." Adam Brown; Course facilitator

High quality products, such as the films made during this programme, are then valuable as resources that can encourage engagement and enthusiasm and set a relatively high bar in terms of what is expected from participants by the end of any programme. Placing such an expectation on participants at the beginning of a programme is also a way of articulating a belief in them and their abilities, which would clearly have positive impact on group dynamics and levels of engagement as well as on the potential for participants to fully utilise their abilities.

## 2.5 To promote and ultimately sustain the approach within custodial locations (Project Aim)

The project has clearly promoted the approach within custodial locations to staff and young people alike:

*"I couldn't recommend it highly enough, I think it's fantastic!"* Carl McGregor: Tutor: HMP & YOI Brinsford

*"I would certainly recommend that (other establishments) use your wonderful talents and abilities."* Rev Phil Seadon: HMP & YOI Brinsford

***"I would certainly recommend that (other establishments) use your wonderful talents and abilities."***

*"It's been a really good week, the staff have obviously seen what we do at best, the staff have been really encouraging and they really value the work that we do."* Adam Brown: Facilitator

*"I would definitely recommend it to other prisoners in the other jail; it's a one in life time chance, being inside these places you don't get many chances to do things like this so I recommend it to other prisoners. I would definitely recommend it to other prisoners you never know in the long run it could help them achieve their goal."* Participant: Werrington

Furthermore, HMYOI Werrington and HMP&YOI Brinsford is now in discussion with Reflex, as staff there would like Reflex to deliver two courses there each quarter. This outcome will enable Reflex to sustain the approach within at least two of the locations.

## 2.6 How the approach worked in practice to support the realisation of aims

*"What was unique for the young people was the non formal style of the course, a complete contrast to the education systems that many experience in cross country schools or in prison. It allows the leaders and facilitators to meet the needs of each person, encouraging them to grow their strengths..."* Ben Williams: Course facilitator

Reflex's approach is an informal one, which is based on a number of strategies and informed by various pedagogies. The approach involves:

Recognised learning theories.

Innovative methods of learning.

Challenging and stimulating activities.

A faith based approach.

***"Reflex's approach is an informal one, which is based on a number of strategies and informed by various pedagogies."***

This section will present evidence of these different aspects of the approach, consider the impact of approach and outline how it is realised in practice. Firstly the learning theories and methods are considered.



## 2.6.1 Recognised learning theories and Innovative methods of learning

Recognised learning theories, which are embedded into both our course content and delivery, in order to offer a unique and holistic approach to meeting the identified needs of young people.

Innovative methods of learning, which are embedded to give young people the space to create in a non-threatening environment.

It is clear from the Reflex Learning theory resources and feedback from tutors that the team has an informed understanding of learning theories. Furthermore, it is clear that these theories are put into practice, as is evidenced in the conclusion of this report and in the detailed responses below from facilitators with regard to the learning theories and methods used:

**Social learning theory** and how they assess themselves, practice, test and experience. You can see it happening in small ways as well as across the course as a whole: see my diary example re the monologue.

They explore their life choices through the course, they rate theirs, hear ours, practice through a character and then take that experience into the rest of their lives.

**Role theory** – awareness of roles

**Cognitive behaviour therapy** - how there are events and actions in their lives and they may not be able to control all events but they can control their reactions and how, of you change that, it changes the outcome of events. (Event / incident + action / reaction = outcome.) ‘Stop reacting, start thinking and then acting.’

*“Trying to support them to move from dependence to independence to interdependence; many of the people we work with have not been able to depend on anyone so it is important to move them through that process. Responding to their needs but supporting them to be independent; for example, through encouraging a boy to write on his sheet, instead of us just doing it for him.*

*The starting point is their personality and talent and the process is about them developing character, knowledge and skills that lead to maturity. Being aware of what they are good and bad at, so that they can use their strengths and address their weaknesses, thus developing interdependence. “*

**Learning styles:** young people this year loved writing, the older lads liked to draw or to learn through doing. It’s where the theory of different learning styles becomes apparent. The programme doesn’t attempt to ‘hit’ each learning style, but it does this, hits all of them, by being responsive to the different learning styles people bring to the programme. In essence, the Reflex approach is a reflective one, whereby all involved reflect on what has happened to inform future development. This happens in an embedded and ongoing way. For example, the following chart has been produced by the Reflex team in order to ascertain the overall movement in young peoples self ratings:

Summary by Category								
Mean Total	Speaking clearly and projecting my voice	Confidence in front of people	Accepting constructive criticism	Overcoming my nerves	Using body language	Remembering lyrics/lines	Being focused	Being enthusiastic
Initial Rating	3.45	3.23	4	3.64	3.5	3.32	3.23	3.59
Closing Rating	4.14	3.73	4.41	4.55	4.27	4.32	4.41	4.50
Variance	0.68	0.50	0.41	0.91	0.77	1.00	1.18	0.91
Max Movement	2	3	2	3	4	4	3	3
Min Movement	0	0	-1	0	0	0	-1	-1

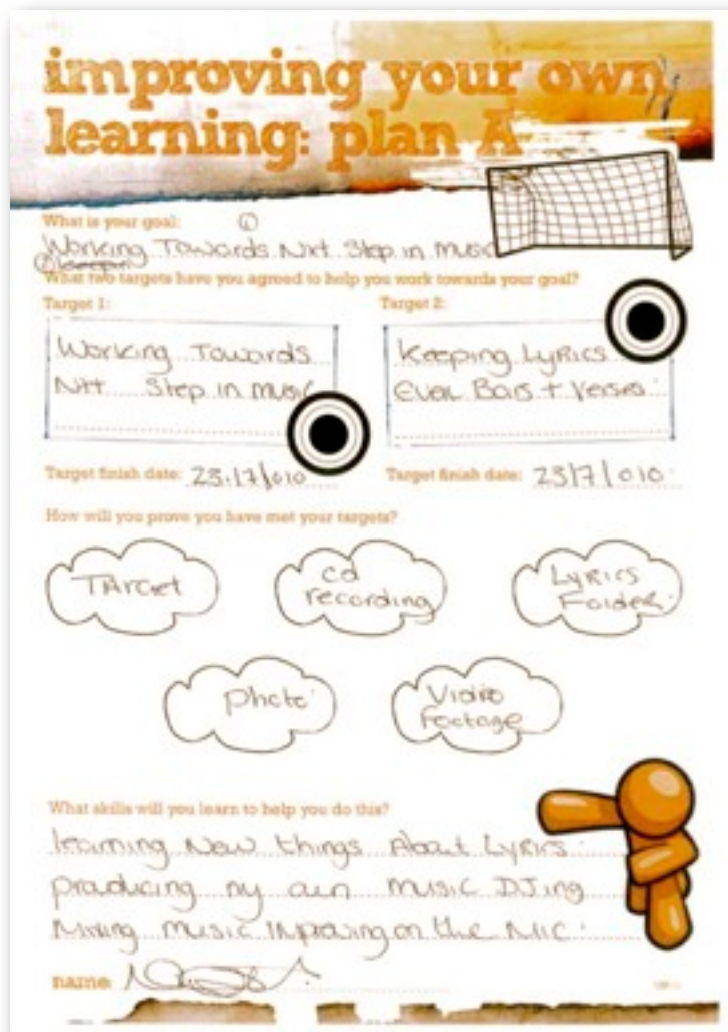
Embedded ongoing reflection, evaluation and analysis take place as standard Reflex practice. To continue with the example given above, the Reflex team have identified that some young people might rate themselves higher in relation to some of the headings in this chart at the beginning of a course than at the end, because of a lack of self-awareness at the outset. In other words, the course itself may lead them to realise that they aren't actually as good at accepting constructive criticism, for example, as they once thought they were. Reflection on this amongst the team has led them to consider the need to add an activity to courses, whereby participants revisit both their base line answers and their final answers, with the Reflex team, so that they might themselves reflect on any movement and the reasons for that movement.

**“ Embedded ongoing reflection, evaluation and analysis take place as standard Reflex practice ”**

The Reflex team tailor their approach and consequent processes by bringing together concepts and theories from a range of appropriate and relevant disciplines. The Reflex team constantly review and develop their approach, activities and resources on the basis of what it is that they discover and in this way the Reflex approach can also be understood as aligned with action research methodologies. This has been made evident through the process of evaluation, whereby, as issues or opportunities have been highlighted through the evaluation process, the Reflex team have been quick to identify how best to act upon them.

**“ The Reflex team tailor their approach and consequent processes by bringing together concepts and theories from a range of appropriate and relevant disciplines ”**

Furthermore, ongoing reflection and evaluation is also built into the participants' processes through some of the worksheets that they complete during a programme, for example:



**“ The Reflex team constantly review and develop their approach...the Reflex approach can also be understood as aligned with action research methodologies ”**

## 2.6.2 Challenging and stimulating activities

*"A lot of games and introduction activities were included in each workshop to create a stimulating environment where the young people were open minded and willing to take part. It broke down barriers of peer pressure and reputation, and created a place of trust. We worked many in large group settings, and the facilitators always gave examples of the activities first, to show the young people that it was okay to get up and give it a go."* Ben Williams: Course facilitator

The worksheets from participants' ASDAN files, examples of which are contained in the appendix, are clear evidence of a range of stimulating and engaging activities. Feedback presented in earlier sections is also evidence of how engaged the participants were throughout the programme. The following quotes are further examples of the evidence there is to indicate that participants have found this opportunity for creative reflection and positive expression stimulating:

*"It's been stimulating because you get to come down and express yourself."* Participant: Brinsford

*"It's been a creative reflection on positive expression really."* Participant: Werrington

**“ Reflex activities support young people to identify and platform their skills, express their feelings, thoughts and emotions, develop confidence and redefine their behaviour ”**

**“ Decision making exercise are clearly key ”**

What is also apparent in these quotes is how the Reflex strap line works in practice, whereby Reflex activities support young people to identify and platform their skills, express their feelings, thoughts and emotions, develop confidence and redefine their behaviour. Feedback from the Reflex team indicates some of the activities that have been key to engagement and how they have worked to realise Reflex outcomes:

*"Planning was the most challenging thing: planning the play and working as a team to do this, getting them to think creatively.*

*Decision making exercise was clearly key to both projects. There's a crux moment and a past and future in this exercise and ended up being pivotal to the play, the film and the music.*

*Games were important for them to get to know each other. I never knew how important games were until I saw how it made them all engage and encouraged them to get involved as well as getting them to use skills they didn't realise they had. For example, Soundscapes: they had to work as a team and think of sounds in terms of how they would create a scene from those sounds, which meant they had to make noises in front of each other.*

*'Rate yourself' is a pivotal thing.*

*Young people's use of creative tools to process their thoughts and search deeper into the issues they face in order to progress as individuals.*

*Offering young people a platform of skills from which to express their feelings, thoughts and emotions, develop confidence and redefine their behaviour.*

*Young people telling their own story, sharing their experiences and expressing how they hope to move forward with their life positively."*

What is apparent from this feedback and from the ASDAN work folders

**“ Young people use...creative tools to process their thoughts and search deeper into the issues they face in order to progress as individuals. ”**

is the importance of starting the project with the participants; their experiences, their ground rules, their priorities, their aspirations. For example, their own stories are used as the starting point for lyrics, or storyboards for performance or film:



Reflection by a young person on rehearsals, before a live performance

Storyboard of DVD produced in HMP&YOI Brinsford, developed by young people



### 2.6.3 A faith based approach.

*"Faith based approach allows for compassion and understanding, a desire from a personal point of view to identify with the past life of the offender and enable them realise their future can be more hopeful. Although not strongly religious, a lot of the work and the way the course is lead has bible based standards in it, especially the way we communicate and treat the young people."* Ben Williams: Course facilitator

As with the aim to provide positive role models, there is less evidence from participants themselves regarding this approach, probably for similar reasons. However, what is apparent is the way in which the team has a shared understanding of the significance and impact of the Faith based approach:

*"The fact that it is faith-based means we can use a different style of teaching and show that we are passionate and that we genuinely want to help them.*

*They know that we have faith and belief in them as individuals.*

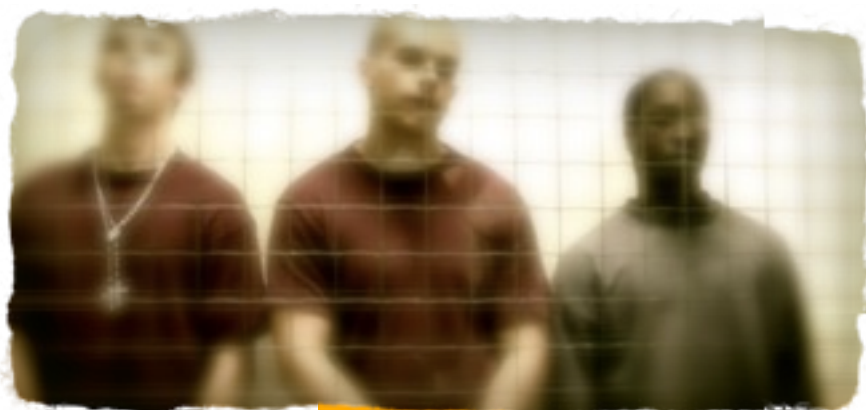
*As role models, the three facilitators having a strong faith and belief and being a similar age to them, means that they can see the impact that faith has had on the facilitators life choices and the way in which it gives the facilitators a reason.*

*In terms of character development, exploration of faith and spirituality is key and seeing it as acceptable to explore faith is vital to this. The role modeling helps participants to see it as acceptable and makes apparent the reflective process that people put themselves through.*

***" In terms of character development, exploration of faith and spirituality is key and seeing it as acceptable to explore faith is vital to this "***

***" People have strong ideas about Christianity...when we go and look again at something we think we know, it challenges our stereotypes "***

*People have strong ideas about Christianity and it's always the same when we go and look again at something we think we know, it challenges our stereotypes. They had the opportunity to ask us questions about our faith and beliefs and they open up to this opportunity. There are often guilt issues and people don't always expect forgiveness from God, so they don't realise they have a second chance and this project is chance for them to hear that, which effects the way they see themselves."*



### 3 How the Reflex Summer Programme 2010 Realised its objectives

It is clear from feedback gathered that the young men participating developed and gained numerous skills in a range of *media*, for example:

*"We've learnt how to mix tracks, how to write rhymes and lyrics, we've had a bit of mc-ing, free-styling and trying to join words together"*

*"I've helped produce the actual song that we're writing, put my lyrics down, did the chorus and did some beat boxing as well."*

*"Acting skills"*

*"Team skills, learning about each other."*

*"I've been confident with the people around me encouraging me."*

*"I've found today quite good, working as a team, working together."*

*"Some strategy work, which was a good exercise."*

*"All sorts of acting and freeze frames."*

*"How to spit positive, how to produce and how to work with a group."*

*"I've learned a lot this week."*

*"I've learnt how to act, I've learnt how to deal with other people."*

From Brinsford and Werrington participants

**“ Reflex have supported participants to submit folders for ASDAN qualification...the more formal elements that are a necessary part of such qualifications have been built around the main focus of the project ”**

**“ The methods used were very personal and accessible, allowing for accreditation criteria to be met while also bearing in mind the learning needs of the young people ”**

Consequently, Reflex have supported participants to submit folders for ASDAN qualification through this project. However, the more formal elements that are a necessary part of such qualifications have been built around the main focus of the project, rather than being centre stage themselves:

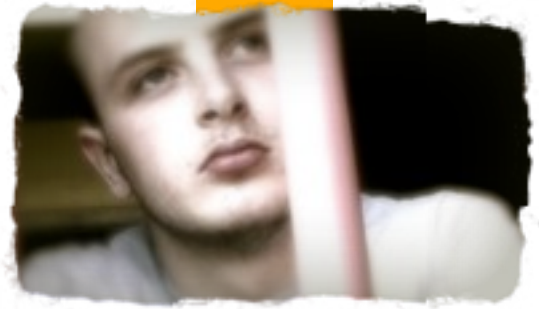
*"The methods used were very personal and accessible, allowing for accreditation criteria to be met while also bearing in mind the learning needs of the young people. Therefore many of the sheets / written work was done as part of physical or energetic activity and also used visual pictures to engage the minds of the prisoners. Furthermore listening activities were included to reach out to those who learn better in this way. Also the fact that the course allowed for individual, one on one communication allowed for fast advancement as the young people enjoyed this, mainly because they had probably not experienced this type of work before."* Ben Williams: Course facilitator

A highly professional and responsive approach, whereby tutors tailor their working approach and activities to suit the learning styles of the participants, has clearly been embraced and fully utilised by the Reflex team to ensure that the objectives of the project were met, but never at the expense of the aims of the work.

**“ A highly professional and responsive approach, tutors tailor their working approach and activities to suit the learning styles of the participants ”**

## 4 Conclusion

**“The artistic and educational merits of Reflex work in reducing recidivism.”**



The clarity of Reflex’s approach and the extent to which the team has an informed understanding of learning theories is evident in the feedback from facilitators, the reflective notes in facilitators’ diaries and in the Reflex Learning theory resources (Appended.)

**Facilitators have indicated through their feedback that they have an understanding of learning theories, but furthermore, it is also evidence that they thoroughly grasp the relevance of an approach informed by these theories:**

*“The project uses Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed techniques in many ways and which derive from Paulo Freire’s questions about society, education and culture, and his educational systems which allow for promise of a better future and more diverse study.”* Ben Williams: Course facilitator

**Furthermore, facilitators have indicated an understanding of how such theories work in practice and a commitment to such approaches in their practice:**

*“You have to work against the compulsion to suggest ideas or lead the work however much it might feel like it is easier or ‘safer’ to do so and however much we might feel like we are not doing enough when we don’t make suggestions.”* Samuel Mcpherson: Course Facilitator

**Pivotal to Reflex’s approach is the emphasis placed on the existing skills, experiences and understandings of the participants as valuable, positive attributes which can be developed further:**

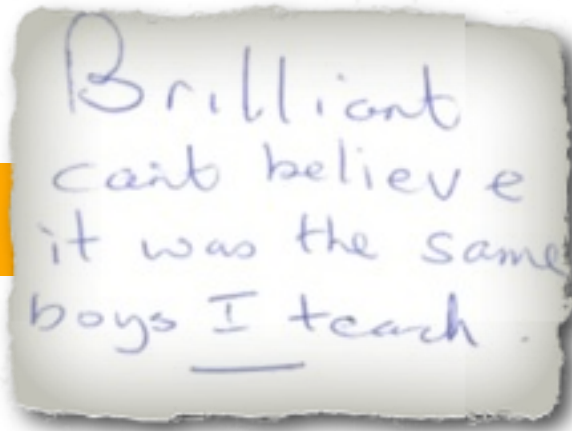
**“ Reflex also has an opportunity to inform the development of wider teaching within secure environments, as the outcomes of the Reflex project are clearly greater than many staff have experienced through more traditional approaches ”**

*“The opportunity that they have been given to be able to take their natural ability and be able to put it down and also to learn the technical exercise of being able to record, learn to produce their own tracks and to be able to take what they have written and to express it in video and recording, that’s been brilliant and its just given them a hunger to be able to instill that kind of passion and feed that passion. The hope is to be able to take that on when they get out and go to college, go to university because they know they can now do it now, so hey, job done.”* Carl McGregor: HMP & YOI Brinsford

**Also key to the success of this approach is the extent to which participants have a sense of ownership of and therefore pride in the work made:**

*“Ownership is important; In our training, we were taught that when we are teaching, it’s important to encourage the young people to come up with the ideas and to be creative, rather than us giving them our ideas when they ask us what they should do, encouraging them to use their imaginations.”* Sam Mcpherson: Course Facilitator

It is clear from evidence presented above that staff within prisons are aware of the value of Reflex's approach. By working within prisons in a more sustained way, as is Reflex's intention, Reflex also has an opportunity to inform the development of wider teaching within secure environments, as the outcomes of the Reflex project are clearly greater than many staff have experienced through more traditional approaches:



The outcome of this approach is evident in the products of the project, whereby the content within the films, performances and music that have been made, has consistently conveyed a message about the potential alternatives to criminal behaviour:

"The lads have decided to call the song 'change your life' simply because the chorus is all about 'what are you going to do, are you going to carry on or are you actually going to make a change.'" Adam Brown; Course Facilitator

The extent to which the ultimate impact of this work in terms of reducing recidivism can be measured is limited without a more long-term approach to evaluation. Such a

long-term approach, measuring impact for previous participants over a greater duration of time, might be enabled through permanent staff being placed in secure environments to facilitate similar programmes in a more sustained way.

However, it is clear from the evidence gathered that the approach is successful in using a creative process as a means by which participants can think through the potential alternatives there might be for them in their futures, articulate these alternatives in their work and make a positive alternative future seem like a viable option through becoming more skilled and more confident in their own skills and abilities. In this way it is clear that the Reflex summer programme has had outcomes that would logically lead to a reduction in recidivism.



"It's been emotional."

Participant: Werrington



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