Making Tracks, part two

Project Evaluation

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Acknowledgements

- Liz Pearson, Director, The Creative Way
- Lindsey Pugh, Programme Manager (Performing Arts and Music), The Creative Way
- Dr Andrew Gower, Director, Broadstairs Campus, Canterbury Christ Church University
- Rebekah Harris, External Relations & Recruitment Manager, BSix 6th Form College
- Joel Wynn, Creative Apprenticeships Coordinator, City & Islington College
- Cathy Walsh, Principal & Chief Executive, Barking College
- Delroy Harrison, Teacher, Barking College
- Kishan Pithia, Teacher, Newham Sixth Form College
**Project Overview**

**Aim**
To improve accessibility to higher education for young people who consider university out of their reach and who would otherwise decide against applying directly to a university such as Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU).

**Background**
Making Tracks Part Two was built on the partnership created through the first Making Tracks project led by CCCU. Point Blank has developed a 1-year Edexcel Higher National Certificate course in partnership with CCCU. Students who complete this year-long programme are eligible for progression to the second year of CCCU’s BA (Hons.) in Creative Music Technology - formerly Sonic Arts. To encourage this process, The Creative Way provided funding for progression agreements to be formalised with five FE colleges in the Thames Gateway. A programme of tasters and demonstrations at the colleges, followed by open days and workshops at Point Blank, were further planned in order to promote these new progression pathways, and the opportunities were also to be promoted via online marketing, a course brochure, and other marketing materials.

**Summary**
The project is now complete and the new course is in its second academic year. Though delays were encountered in partnership development and the formation of progression agreements, the project achieved its aim and students are now making use of the new progression routes. In an effort to minimise the effect of the delays in partnership development, more time than anticipated was spent meeting FE colleges to secure their involvement.
The original project timeline anticipated project completion by October 2009. However, there was some difficulty finalising progression agreements with the third and fourth partner colleges. As a result, this part of the project overran and despite redoubled efforts, a fifth FE college was not secured within the timeframe. Whilst four progression agreements were successfully agreed, the delay had a knock-on effect on later activities such as the Open Day workshops at Point Blank and the taster sessions at partner colleges. These activities had originally been planned to fit in with the UCAS calendar. Once the UCAS deadlines had passed, the activities no longer presented an effective strategy for meeting the project aim. Hence, not all were completed, as the following table shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 consultation meetings with Andrew Gower for curriculum development and alignment</td>
<td>COMPLETED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerous meetings with each FE college to formalise progression agreements</td>
<td>4 of 5 completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 taster sessions in each of the FE colleges</td>
<td>2 of 8 completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 open days / workshops at Point Blank</td>
<td>2 of 3 completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, manufacture and distribution of a promotional brochure</td>
<td>COMPLETED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, manufacture and distribution of marketing materials</td>
<td>COMPLETED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website updates to highlight Point Blank’s HNC as a progression route to higher education and employment in creative industries</td>
<td>COMPLETED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous monitoring of the project, and production of evaluation report</td>
<td>COMPLETED</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Activities**

**Curriculum Development**

The 3 consultation meetings between CCCU and Point Blank helped to develop the new HNC course in a way that facilitates progression to the second year of CCCU’s BA (Hons.) Programme in Creative Music Technology, and that complements Point Blank’s teaching approach. The course covers 10 units (of 15 credits each), split between 6 modules:

- Module 1: Record Production in Pop Culture H1
- Module 2: Music Business H2
- Module 3: Sound Engineering H3
- Module 4: Music Production H4
- Module 5: Creative Sound Design H5
- Module 6: Music Project H6

It is somewhat unusual to deliver 10 units within a single year, but learners have so far proven equal to this challenge given sufficient support.

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![A student in the purpose-built teaching studio for the HNC course](image)

**Progression Agreements**

Progression Agreements have been finalised with four colleges: Barking College, City & Islington College, Newham College and BSix in Hackney. These agreements establish a formal progression route from Further Education to Point Blank. In addition, a Progression Agreement is in place with CCCU, which establishes a recognised pathway from the HNC course at Point Blank to the second year of a BA (Hons.) degree programme at the University. Finalising the Progression Agreements proved to be much more time-intensive than anticipated, demanding several meetings with each college partner and a great deal of additional work and expertise to reach our goal. Curriculum alignment was a fairly new process for Point Blank, and was a more technical exercise than had been anticipated, requiring greater involvement of subject-specific staff than anticipated. However, despite delays, the process was completed as planned.
As a celebration and promotion of the Progression Agreements, a Signing Event was held, with student performances, demonstrations and staff talks. Despite the investment of additional time and energy, a fifth Progression Agreement was not obtained. However, we were confident that the four agreements in place were solid enough to ensure the project’s success.
Demonstrations and Open Days

Taster demonstrations were held at BSix and Newham colleges. Point Blank tutors gave demonstrations of Music Production techniques and promotional materials were distributed to publicise the upcoming Open Days at Point Blank. Two Open Days were held at Point Blank, with a tour of the studios, a talk on the course, question and answer sessions and performances from tutors and students. In addition, ad hoc tours were offered every week to students who wanted to see the college but were unable to attend an Open Day. As discussed above, the programme of reciprocal taster sessions and Open Days was shortened in light of project delays, but the events that took place were extremely well received.

On 15th December 2008, the HNC class visited CCCU Broadstairs campus for a tour and a Recording Workshop in the University studios. Attendance levels were good for all events, and the CCCU trip left a positive impression of the University, particularly on HNC students Ephraim Greenland and Lewis Mark Mackay, who have since progressed onto their second year of study there. The students also gained an insight into the recording industry on a class visit to Bark Studios in North London, where successful bands such as Primal Scream have recorded.

Promotional Materials

A range of promotional materials was produced to promote the progression pathways - including a print brochure, flyers, t-shirts and an online brochure. The print brochure is included as Appendix A. The online brochure attracts approximately 1,500 hits per month and the print materials have been extremely useful in promoting the new progression opportunities.
## Feedback for Future Development

### External Moderation

The first year of delivering the HNC course has been extremely successful. Our first external moderation report gave a very favourable assessment of the course and college, with the final comment “This private college is obviously committed to producing high quality education in the field of music - keep it up!”

### Student Feedback

Feedback from students in the first year of delivery was largely positive, though it highlighted some areas which were improved in the next academic year:

- The enrolment process will be completed earlier, to avoid a delay in students receiving their student ID cards.
- The assignment submission schedule has been reviewed to spread the workload more evenly throughout the year.
- Students will be given greater support to find bands to record on the Live Engineering module.

### Tutor Feedback

- After tutor recommendations, the main teaching room is to be equipped with a networked data storage device.

### Annual Review Feedback

- Tutors’ schedules will be adjusted to enable their full participation in management meeting and peer review sessions.
- New teaching staff will attend the Associate Tutor Scheme at CCCU.
Outcomes

Progression Outcomes

Recruitment went well for the first intake of students and this allowed us to select the most suitable applicants. The first class comprised 14 students (13 male, 1 female), who began the course in September 2008. A large proportion of the students found out about the programme through the marketing activity outlined above. 8 students received the award, 4 of whom progressed immediately onto the second year of a BA degree course, 2 of whom studied at CCCU and 2 elsewhere. The table below summarises the first intake’s outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Many Started?</th>
<th>How Many Gained the Award?</th>
<th>What Did They Do Next?</th>
<th>More Detail…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 progressed to the second year of a degree course at CCCU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 progressed to the second year of a degree course at other Universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8 received the HNC award</td>
<td>1 is applying to UCAS for 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 did not progress immediately</td>
<td>3 decided not to apply for 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 received authorisation to retake the course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 did not complete for medical reasons</td>
<td>1 requested deferral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 had to withdraw very late in the course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6 did not complete the award</td>
<td>1 failed to receive a study VISA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 decided it was the wrong programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 dropped out due to the workload</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>14 started the course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

Summary
Overall, this project has achieved its aim. It has encouraged talented students from local partner colleges to study at Point Blank, thereby benefiting from music industry tutors, high-end equipment, a vocational learning environment and excellent links to industry. This new offer will encourage people who consider university out of their reach, whether for financial or academic reasons, to ease themselves into University education at a private college, whilst paying normal university fees. The project has also strengthened Point Blank’s relationship with CCCU, and as a consequence, we have been involved in further projects together. We look forward to Point Blank’s further partnership work with CCCU and other members of the Creative Way.

Future Development
We are currently delivering the second academic year of the HNC and the recruitment and retention rates have increased significantly. The current class comprises 16 students and a greater proportion of the class plans to progress to University after the course at Point Blank. During the annual review meeting, the possibility was raised of building on the 1-year HNC course to create a 2-year Foundation Degree. An application has now been submitted to CCCU. If successful, the Foundation degree will allow Point Blank tutors greater freedom to create a bespoke course, without less restrictive external curricula. This freedom would engender a course with a greater focus on practical experience and knowledge of the industry.

There will continue to be opportunities for students from the four FE colleges to attend Point Blank open days and tours. We will also remain in contact with the college staff to inform them as new opportunities arise as a result of our continued partnership development work - for example, the proposed Foundation Degree with CCCU, a recognition agreement with Hertfordshire University and developments with Rose Bruford College including delivery of their Music Technology degree and collaboration on online courses.