



Forgotten Futures and the City:

A MANUAL for the use of arts intervention
in prisons and other rehabilitation settings

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About This Manual

This manual emerges from research undertaken by Dr Niamh Malone (Liverpool Hope University) the findings of which facilitated by Liverpool Hope Theatre Company in HMPrison Liverpool (2019, 2020). Malone’s model of practice is part of a large scale project titled *Forgotten Futures and the City*. The premise for this project is the recognition that offenders have the potential to actively, and positively, contribute to society on their release. This project uses the power of the arts to enable adult learners in the prison setting, to engage in affirmative, forward looking projects about their role in the city. All too often, the weight of a criminal record impacts negatively upon an ex-offender’s ability to integrate confidently back into society. This model of arts practice encourages the offender to consider their own pro-active citizenship within the city in a positive way. Alternative models of thinking about the city and active engagement are explored through a range of creative formats, such as storytelling, music, poetry, visual arts, and movement.

Why the Arts in Prisons?

The employment of arts in rehabilitation programmes can be seen as a direct response to the ideology that prisons are places of punishment and not rehabilitation. This is an ideology as archaic as the century from which it stemmed, with the early 19th century witnessing the first state built penitentiary in Millbank, London in 1816. With a somewhat brutal journey through two centuries of severe physical and psychological punishment, the recognition of offenders (and in turn society) benefitting from rehabilitation efforts was slow to be trusted, with some eventual acknowledgment in the mid to late 20th century. The use of arts as an integrated part of rehabilitation programmes for offenders, gained recognition from the late 1980s in the UK. While there is a history of pockets of arts activity within certain prisons and probation centres nationally prior to this, the 80/90s saw the official establishment of important theatre companies such as Clean Break TC (est. 1979) by Jackie Holborough and Jenny Hill, Geese Theatre Company (est. 1987) by Clark Baim and Theatre in Prisons and Probation (TiPP est. 1991) by James Thompson and Paul Heritage. There has been a considerable expansion of arts programmes in prisons, with many prisons now employing full time art educators as members of their core staff. Developments have also flourished with the establishment of more theatre companies who dedicate themselves to the use of arts within prisons and other rehabilitation centres, such as Synergy TC and Fallen Angels Dance Company, who continue to build upon the work that was pioneered at the end of the 20th century.

James Thompson (1998: 10) poses a number of questions in his seminal work *Prison Theatre – Perspectives and Practices* about the intention of arts programmes in the prison setting. One such question is ‘Does [theatre] provide the means to transform a person’s life or does it transform the whole community?’ The creation of the *Forgotten Futures* and *The City* project is an attempt to build on the work of those who have gone before me, and to expand the portfolio of work that is currently being implemented in the UK. The *Forgotten Futures* and the *City* project could be seen as an attempt to answer Thompson’s question practically: an arts project which is successful at the level of the individual in the prison or detention centre, and the community at large. This is achieved through the delivery of workshops onsite in the prisons and working with public art and educational institutions to bring the creative work of the offenders into the public sphere.

Who is This Manual For?

This manual is designed as a resource for those who are working with the arts in prisons or rehabilitation centres, or those who have an interest or curiosity as to the value of implementing arts programmes for offenders. This manual is aimed at people who believe in the transformative potential of the arts to enable social change but the overarching aim of this work is to enhance the lives of people who are on their journey of rehabilitation and reintegration into mainstream society. This guide will help create a productive learning environment because it fosters a positive sense of self for offenders. This is done in the context of exploring future aspirations and potential active citizenship upon release.

The manual offers ideas an array of artistic approaches which demonstrate how the arts can be an effective vehicle to engage adult learners in a creative and productive manner in an educational environment. It works on a democratic, student-led approach which attempts to dismantle the hierarchical structures of education that is all too familiar to most people who have gone through mainstream education. The founding principle on which this work rests is the belief that to make education effective, the learners must have a sense of ownership over the material and that the work must be relevant and reflective of their realities. In short, it must matter to the adult learners, to ensure that it will be a productive experience for them. The tutor/facilitator is seen as an enabler rather than an instructor. Facilitating dialogue and group discussions is an essential element to ensuring the success of the sessions. This manual will help you prepare and structure your lessons to create a positive and conducive learning experience for all involved.

To ensure that you feel equipped with, not only creative ideas for activity work, but also the know-how to facilitate and get the best out of yourself as an effective and successful educator, it is important to be mindful of what makes a good facilitator, which is the focus of the next section.

What Makes a Good Facilitator?

Friendly and Respectful:

Always be mindful you are working with a group of learners that are often categorised as vulnerable adults. You need to be conscious that many of the adult learners in a prison setting will have had bad experiences of education in the past, with a lower level of education achievement common among this constituency group. Some of the adult learners will have been enrolled on this course without consultation, and therefore you may come across some element of resistance on their behalf. Should this be the case, you may find that the first lesson is vital in establishing a learning environment which is inclusive and engaging for all present. Be kind and don't be afraid to give people a simple smile and welcome as they enter the room.

As the UK is a diverse society, you need to be aware of the variety of cultural codes that may be present in the room. Depending on the theme you decide to work through, you need to always take heed of issues regarding gender, race, religion, politics, social etiquette etc. You may also be working with people from ethnic minority groups, which may require you to consider elements such as language register, literacy levels, and what are the best modes of communication available to you, for example, the integration of images, music, physical theatre, mask work etc.

Take your time when delivering the workshops and don't ever rush discussion. Inexperienced facilitators often feel the need to 'fill silence' with constant talking should there be a lapse in contributions from the group. Trust in yourself and the adult learners, and don't be afraid of giving the group 'silent time' to get their thoughts together. Also, remember that many of these adult learners may have gone through traumatic experiences during the time of their crime and subsequent sentencing. Be careful that the material you explore in the workshops will not trigger any unintended post-traumatic stress episodes. There may be therapeutic benefits to your work, but you are not a trained therapist, so the onus is on you to always protect the learners you are working with, and create a safe and pleasant learning environment.

Make sure you listen to each contribution from all members of the group. Make eye contact and always try to give positive responses. Even if the learner may give a 'wrong answer', try and always find something that is praiseworthy about the contribution, while at the same time enabling them to understand what the correct answer may be. From experience, I have found that it is invaluable to build confidence in each of the learners so they feel free to contribute throughout the workshop(s). Always make sure that your approach to facilitation is about generosity and the sharing of knowledge. You must erase any hierarchy of

knowledge transfer which is characteristic of much of mainstream education, whereby the teachers are all knowing with the learners seen as empty vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge.

Be Organised:

Make sure that you have as much information about the setup before you arrive on site to deliver the workshop(s). You should have a name of a person on site which will enable you to understand the set up and logistics of the workshop delivery. You need to know the amount of time it will take you from arriving at the entrance of the prison to get to the actual room in which you will be delivering your workshop. Prisons very often have complex security systems, so make sure that you have scheduled enough time prior to, and after, the workshop for getting in and out of the prison. Also, make sure you know what kind of space you will be working in and how that will influence your selection of activities. Pay particular attention to space, room furniture (sometimes which can't be moved and therefore impedes upon any physical exercises or group work), air ventilation (or lack of), how many security personnel will be in the room, where the emergency push button is (should there be an incident) and where art materials are stored/set up. You need to know what resources will be available for you to use on site, and what you can bring on site. Depending on the security level of the prison (Category A, B, C, D) the materials and any technical equipment, may need to be vetted prior to the day of the workshop or sourced from within the prison system. This latter arrangement can often take weeks and sometimes fails to come to fruition when expected, therefore always have an alternative plan to hand.

When selecting the material that you will be working with, make sure it is content appropriate and suitable for the age group, and other specifics of the group such as literacy levels, gender and race politics, etc.

Make sure to document your workshops abiding by the regulations specific to each setting. You need to be informed about whether images, voice recordings, video recordings are allowed. Procedures for protecting the learners' identities are paramount so make sure you always follow the protocols of the prison. Confidentiality is extremely important and is absolutely necessary that you abide by it. Regardless of your experience of facilitation, it is essential that you always conduct yourself in a professional manner.

Always have a PLAN B. Prisons by their very nature are often unpredictable when it comes to consistency in participation numbers and daily interruptions of the

educational setting due to 'drop in' meetings for participants with parole officers, scheduled medical checks, etc. A very unlikely occurrence is when the prison goes into 'lockdown' where the prison is effectively closed off to any activity and all learners are returned to their cells. This is usually due to a security breach, a protest, or a global pandemic such as COVID-19.

Be Democratic:

As mentioned earlier, your job as facilitator is to help the work matter to the learners. For the participants to really commit and benefit from the experience, you need to give them a sense of ownership over the work, where they have an invested interest in making it happen. Make sure that the content of the work is relevant for the adult learners and reflects their interests and needs. Collaborate with the staff on site to see what opportunities are available to work towards a presentation of the work to people who have not been directly involved in the workshops, for example. There may be an opportunity to showcase the work to a group of other offenders, or for a 'family day' viewing, as is the case in some prisons, or perhaps to form a partnership with an outside arts venue that may be able to give you use of an exhibition space. I have often found it builds enthusiasm and commitment should the learners know that there will be some level of public viewing of their work. Having an event to showcase the work, lends a real sense of focus to the unfolding work, while enabling the learners to gain public recognition for something positive they have achieved.

Energy Level as Facilitator:

As facilitator you are responsible for setting up a positive, safe and productive learning environment. You need to ensure that your workshop is fully inclusive and that all participants are treated equally and with respect. Depending on the length of programme, whether it runs weekly, or is a one-off, you need to gauge your energy level and ensure that your level will reflect the needs of the group. Initially, while you are actively trying to establish yourself as a facilitator and getting to know each of the participants, you may need to 'up' your level of energy and really focus building a positive group dynamic, while also getting everyone motivated and committed to the workshop. Heightened energy doesn't mean that you dominate conversation and stop listening to the participants, it's actually the opposite: your energy is best focused on listening and identifying the needs of the group. Usually, there is one person confident in speaking out within any group. Make sure you get them onside from the very beginning, without allowing them to dominate discussions.

Make sure you give a very clear indication as to how you see the workshop(s) developing and ask for contributions from the group. As will be discussed in the workshop section, you may need to facilitate some high energy warm up activities just to get a level of working energy established in the room. It is really important that there is some form of activity, that helps the learners to fully commit to the activities within the room, and offer a distance from other external concerns they may have.

Be Realistic:

As a facilitator you need to set realistic goals for you and the project. You need to understand that you just being in that space, has made a difference to the, very often, monotonous, repetitive, daily routines that characterise prison life. Inevitably, you will be working with a mixed group of abilities and experiences, so you need to be conscious of this fact in your planning and expectations. Participants will come from a variety of backgrounds – educational, cultural, political and social – and therefore you need to set your goals accordingly. The work you conduct may make a considerable difference to someone's life, whereby you tap into a previously unknown artistic talent. Your work may whet their appetite to start/continue in their studies concerning an art form. You may help build an individual's self-esteem, while also fostering their ability to use the arts as a means of expression, introducing them to new ways of thinking about the world. The arts may also be a format through which they can reflect on their past and consider how behaviour can be altered. The arts present a variety of ways through which we can think about society and our need to participate.

You may also be introducing them to a whole new vocabulary associated with the arts which ultimately helps the participants to critically engage with arts practices and articulate their responses accordingly.

Don't worry about setting out too ambitious a stall. Making small differences, such as someone feeling a little bit better, more positive in themselves, part of a collective striving towards a shared goal, are every bit as important as some statistic such as how many people have gone on to further education. Remember, small, positive steps forward can bring people on a rewarding journey of self-discovery.

Workshops – Getting Started...

Fail to Prepare, Prepare to Fail

How to Structure a Workshop

The structure of a workshop is very important. You need to be prepared walking into the space. Feeling prepared bestows confidence in yourself as a facilitator and confirms respect for the practitioners and the art form. It is good to structure each of your workshops around three main areas of activity:

1. Warm up
2. Exploratory section
3. Warm down/reflection

As mentioned earlier, building your workshop around a theme gives it focus and helps keep participants engaged. How to select an appropriate theme will always be something you need to consider. The most important factor is to choose a theme that matters to the participants. This theme can be democratically reached by starting your first workshop with an open discussion about the issues, subjects, and art forms that are of interest to the group. It is always advisable to have a backup theme ready to go, just in case the group are hesitant to get involved and you have to generate an appetite for the workshops in an instant. Sometimes you are also working to a given brief from either the prison service itself, like exploring the issue of inside bullying for example, or you are working to a brief dictated by a funding body, such as enhancing levels of literacy within the prison population.

It is important to start with a warm up section. This can be a mix of discussion and activities. It is key that you create a warm and friendly atmosphere and one that feels inviting. Having a few conversation prompts ready is a very useful resource. You might want to look at the news headlines before you start the workshop, as referring to the news tends to be a very good place to start conversation. How people respond to news headlines will give you an insight into the kind of priorities that your participants have. Simple questions like asking the learners what their schedule for the day is like, is also a good way of starting discussions. Remember, in a prison setting, or probation centres, you never ask the participants what crime they have been convicted of, or how long they are serving. Keep conversation on general subjects and never ask inappropriate, personal questions. Should some of the participants freely offer personal information, you need to remember that all information concerning offenders in such settings is regarded as confidential. What is discussed in the workshop space, stays in the workshop space. The only

exception to this rule is where certain material has been artistically explored and informs the content of a final performance, for example.

Be conscious that very often the group of people that are brought together may not know each other at all and have been selected from different wings in the prison. Name games tend to be a very good place to start. It is most important that you, as the facilitator, get to know everyone by their first name. The faster you are able to refer to people by their name, the quicker trust is established. It is also important that the participants know each other's names too. This really helps create a friendly and respectful group dynamic.

Use the warmup time to generate a discussion as to the purpose of the workshop, followed by an exploration as to what the group hopes to achieve by the end of the day(s). From experience, I have always found that if there is a collective will to achieve a shared goal, the workshops tend to be much more successful. To start your workshop, always set up the space so that you can facilitate the opening discussion with everybody sitting in a circle. Such a formation is a very easy and effective way to ensure inclusive practice from the beginning. Remember, the circle formation, is a facilitator's best friend!

You should integrate some simple exercises that help the adult learners to get into the right frame of mind so they can be focused throughout the workshop. Simple breathing exercises can be very effective in creating a calm and relaxed environment and helping people forget about any issues that may be playing on their mind. Simple, kind questions such as 'how are we all feeling today'? How is the weather, prison schedule, attending the workshop, making them feel? As a facilitator, you need to check for any tension in the group. Sometimes there may be a carryover of some hostility between participants from outside the workshop space. If this is the case, make sure that you set exercises that will respect each of the participants and keep them distanced from each other, if possible. You may be able to put them in a group to work together towards a common goal at the end of the workshop, but you need to be careful and always try to diffuse any tension, not ignite it.

The warm up is also essential in establishing the correct energy register for conducive work to take place within the group. The energy transfer from facilitator to participant sets the general pace of the workshop from the start. The energy must be stable, enabling focus and commitment to be maintained. Facilitating demands a high energy output, make sure you are fully focused and ready to expel the amount of energy necessary to deliver a successful workshop. The usual guidelines for wellbeing apply to you as the facilitator here. Try and make sure that

you are well rested before the workshop takes place, that you have had a good night's sleep and have eaten properly. Make sure that you drink water throughout the workshop and that the space you are working in is as pleasant as possible. Having a source of fresh air in the workshop space is really important, but not, unfortunately, always available.

Your energy in the group is infectious – if you are positive and give off high energy (but always focused), your participants will meet you at a similar register.

The warmup space is a great place to negotiate the intention of the workshop and the ultimate goal. Encouraging the practitioners to invest in these goals is paramount to the success of the workshop(s).

10 Warm Up exercises:

After starting the workshop by conducting a general discussion and collectively negotiating the goals of the work, it is now a good time to move on to more interactive, practical activities. In the first workshop, and, perhaps even subsequent workshops, it is always a good idea to start with a name game. Here are some examples:

1. Name Games

- 'My name is... and I like...' With everyone sitting in a circle, get the first person to introduce themselves by saying their name and something they like that starts with the same initial as their name, for example, 'My name is Anna and I like apples'. Then, you move on to the next participant and they have to introduce Anna and what she likes to the group, while adding their own name to the list, for example the participant will state "Her name is Anna and she likes apples, my name is Peter and I like planes." This then is passed on to the next person sitting beside Peter and they have to introduce both Anna and Peter, what their likes are, then add their own name and what they like. This is in part a memory game but can give rise to some group humour when people, understandably, get mixed up. The last person to go in the group has to have a very good memory indeed! This exercise is fun and a good way to break the ice. It is also a very effective way of learning names fast. I have only ever had good experiences with this warm up and would recommend it.
- 'Juggling and Names' Get all participants to stand in a circle. Do a quick recap of names. Once names have been refreshed, introduce a soft tennis ball, (or juggling balls) into the activity. This is done by one person choosing

somebody by throwing the ball in their direction while calling out their name. The recipient has 3 seconds to choose the next recipient. If they stumble to recall someone's name they are out. Once you get the rhythm of the activity established then you can introduce a second ball at the same time, followed by a third ball. This activity is high energy and demands a lot of focus from the participants. It is fun and effective in creating a positive group dynamic.

- “I went to the shop and bought a ...” This name game is similar to the first one, whereby each person in a circle says their name followed by an item that they bought in the shop. This is then recounted by the next person while adding their own name and item to the list and so on. For example, it will go something like “Her name is Anna and she went to the shop and bought some bread, Peter went to the shop and bought some butter, my name is Mary and I went to the shop and bought some cheese’. This is essentially a memory game and helps with learning the names of the participants. It can be a lot of fun when people decide to buy unusual or extravagant items, and helps to create a positive atmosphere.
- ‘Guess my middle name?’ This game is where each participant in a circle presents the group with two possible middle names. The group has to decide which middle name they think is the right one. If a person doesn't have a middle name, ask them to select a name that they would like and one they wouldn't like so much. This tends to produce discussion about whether or not somebody 'looks like a 'Robert', 'Alice', 'Lynn', 'Gary' and can give rise to some humour in the group.

2. Breathing Exercises

Encouraging learners to engage in breathing exercises can be a very good way to help them relax and also enhance their focus. Sometimes it may be difficult to get the learners to take these exercises seriously and they may cause a few giggles. Let the giggles come, and laugh with them, that tends to be more effective than trying to correct them. Tension is the enemy to good breathing, therefore, it is advisable to get the participants to stretch and shakeout their limbs as they stand in the circle in preparation for the following breathing exercises. The more relaxed the learners are, the more effective the breathing exercises will be.

- With all participants standing in a circle in the 'neutral' position (both feet flat on the ground, knees slightly flexed, sitting into the pelvis, straight back and

looking straight ahead), now with eyes closed, ask the participants to become conscious of the sounds in the room. Then after a moment ask them to listen and follow their own breathing pattern. Talk to them about the importance of controlling their breath, especially when performing, as when you get nervous your breathing tends to become shallow. Tell them you are going to count from 1-5 and that they need to inhale in a controlled way, making sure their lungs are full by count 5. Then ask them to hold their breath, and release for 5 beats. You repeat this exercise all the way up to 10. You can expand this exercise by getting the participants to say a vowel sound (e, a, i, o, u) when they are releasing their breath.

- For higher end learners, another exercise that can really help with breath control is to select one of Shakespeare's sonnets, (they are readily available online), and get the group to read through the sonnet as a collective exercise. It is a great way to introduce the topic of poetry too and why the sonnet form has come about. The rigorous structure of a sonnet sets particular challenges for a writer, it is good to explore that too and have a chat with the participants (a sonnet is a 14 line poem written in iambic pentameter. It consists of 3 x 4 line sections called quatrains, with a finishing 2 lines called a couplet). Introducing and working with a sonnet in the warmup, makes for a very easy transition for using poetry in the exploratory section of the workshop. Be mindful of literacy levels throughout this exercise and make sure to stress that nobody has to recite the sonnet individually should they not want to.

In pairs, name the participants A & B. Start with A, where they will read the sonnet and see how far they can get on one breath. B needs to monitor them and make sure they do not take any 'sneaky' breaths. Then reverse the process and B recites the sonnet. Usually, untrained actors will get to around line 4/5. A trained actor should be able to present the whole sonnet on one breath. You can also facilitate this exercise with some contemporary poetry which may be more suited to the group. Contemporary poetry very often is written in blank verse and is not dictated to by a formal structure, and easier to recite.

- In pairs, get participant A to stand in front of participant B, holding an A4 sheet of paper 10cm away from B's mouth. Get B to exhale one breath, this breath should be able to push the sheet of paper out at a 45 degree angle. The aim of this exercise is to try and get the participant to maintain the angle of the paper for as long as possible on the strength of one breath. This exercise is all about trying to control your breath as you exhale. Then repeat the exercise reversing who holds the paper.

3. Focus Exercises

- '1 to 10' - In a circle, the group will try to count to 10, individually shouting out a number in sequence. The aim of the exercise is that, should two people say the same number, the group has to then go back to number 1. This exercise is a lot of fun and makes participants really concentrate and be aware of the people they are working with. Once the group gets familiar with this exercise, you can then develop it further by getting the group to count to 20 or more.
- 'Sound and Movement Sequence' - In a circle, get each participant to think of a sound and a movement. This can be a very simple monosyllabic sound like 'boo' and they move one step forward with their arms open, for example. Then the whole group repeats that sound and movement. The next person offers their sound and movement, and this time the whole group repeats it, and the first sound and movement. This is repeated throughout the circle, with each person adding to the sound and movement from the previous person. Eventually, it becomes like a dance. You can make this more difficult at the end of the exercise, by getting each of the participants standing in the circle to face out-ways, and they will realise that they recall the movement and sound by looking at each of the participants. When they can't see them, it is much harder to recall the sequence. You can also play with this exercise by shuffling positions of the people in the circle and getting them to recall each of the sounds and movements. This can be lots of fun and an exercise that demands constant focus. It can also be a great physical exercise and act as a good vocal warm up.
- 'One Truth – One Lie' out of all the warm up exercises I have facilitated in the prison setting, I think this is the most successful in terms of being fun for the participants and developing a warm group dynamic. You ask the participants to think of one truth and one lie about their lives. They then present the two facts to the group and people have to guess which one is the truth and which one is the lie. This exercise gives participants the opportunity to tell people something positive about themselves, like their former achievements, while also getting everyone engaged in trying to work out what the lie is. It is a very simple but effective exercise. Make sure to start with someone in the group that feels confident speaking out. You may want to start the exercise by telling one lie and one truth about yourself. That helps frame the activity and gives an example of how the game works.

Exploratory Section

This is the main 'meat and veg' of the workshop and where the real creative exploration takes place. Once you have negotiated with the group the theme of the workshop, or have selected a theme yourself, then you need to employ the best artistic format to explore the area together. There exists such a rich and varied selection of artforms that are suitable to use in the prison setting and this gives you, as the facilitator, lots of options. In the warm up section, try and get a sense of what artistic experience is in the room. I am always surprised at the number of participants who are very accomplished musicians, visual artists, creative writers etc. You will also get a number of people who are very hesitant and will declare that they have absolutely no interest in the arts, however by the end of the workshop(s), that tends to have changed. Everyone is affected by the emotional power of the arts, be that responding to a piece of music, painting, poetry etc. The arts are everywhere and we engage with a variety of forms in our everyday life. Very often, what your workshop needs to do, is to demystify the arts and arts production. The counter culture revolution of the mid to late 20th century in the western world identified the structural inequality concerning access to arts production and how it had been associated with 'middle class' advantages. Arts programmes in prison settings in the early 21st century could be seen as a direct result of such social insurrections. A whole movement of grassroots arts provision has become common place in the UK, with central funding available from organisations like Arts Council England to support such programmes. It is important to note that not all people will have former experience of arts participation/production and that you as a facilitator need to be aware of that. One of the privileges of working with a group of learners in a prison setting, that may not necessarily have wanted to participate in an arts workshop is that, sometimes, by their participation they stumble over a previously unidentified talent that they have. This unearthed talent may be further explored upon release and help the individual critically and legally engage in society by having a focus to pursue.

Once you have agreed on a theme and you have an awareness of what talents/interests reside among the group, then you need to select the artform that will enable the most fertile exploration of the theme. Here is a short list of certain forms of artistic expression that may be suited to your practice:

Storytelling

Everyone has a story to tell. It is very interesting if we look at the usual structure of a story, it has a beginning, a middle and an end. This structure is a direct mirror of our life cycles, where we are born (beginning), we live our lives (middle) and we

die (end). So, if every one identifies a moment in each of those phases we have a story structure immediately. Where were you born and who was there? What did you do for your 21st birthday and who was there? What age do you see yourself living to and who do you want to be in your company at that age? These are three very simple questions but ones that can illustrate to the participants that the power of story construction and telling is within them already. It is always very important as a facilitator in these settings, that you are conscious of the use of the autobiographical in creative exercises. It is paramount that you protect your participants and not expose them material they are reluctant to deal with during the workshops. You need to be mindful of such issues and only select exercises that keep everyone in the room, safe and comfortable with the material you are exploring.

- This part of the workshop can begin by posing the question – ‘Why do we tell stories?’ There will be lots of answers: for educational reasons, gossip, entertainment, communication etc. You can then ask the group to list the styles/genres of stories that they are familiar with and why? Make a list of the genres mentioned like comedy, horror, documentary, etc and ask them to come up with an example of a film, play, book, etc. and why they think their chosen examples reflect the particulars of that genre.
- Put them into pairs and give them a genre and ask them to come up with the ‘bones’ of a story – the ‘bones’ refer to the key moments that propel the action further. Then get them to retell their stories to the group, discussing each one on completion.
- You can ask each of the participants what was their favourite childhood story and what format were they first introduced to the story (book, film, relative retelling the story, etc).
- You can talk about the different ‘gateways’ we use for entering into a story and getting the reader/listener/audience hooked. Like, ‘Once upon a time’ or ‘In a faraway land’, or the use of a signature tune for soaps, etc.
- ‘Fact or Fiction’ - Storytelling is a really interesting format to use as it blurs boundaries between fact and fiction, and every story we tell has elements of both fact and fiction within them. It is well known that even the retelling of a factual historical event will encompass fictional elements, whether that be evident in an exaggerated retelling of the event, an ‘embroidered’ enhancement of the actions, or indeed a bias reading of the event on behalf of the teller. The boundaries between fact and fiction will always be an interesting topic.

Working with adult learners in prison brings with it a sensitivity to their past stories, therefore the tactic of drawing on a fictional character, will always give participants the opportunity to see themselves and their own life stories within the character but creating a safe distance by framing the character within a fictional lens. This is a very important protective strategy and one that really works, in my experience. The participant can see their own actions, and the consequences of their actions, in that of the fictional character, with the hope of informing future behavioural choices. The fictional will always provide a security blanket for vulnerable people when it comes to autobiographical storytelling.

- Depending on the theme chosen, you may want to bring in a stimulus, such as an image, that reflects something to do with the theme. If, for example, you were to use the theme explored in the 'Forgotten Futures and the City' project where we use the idea of the future of the city as the means through which participants consider their active role as citizen, you could then bring in an image of a homeless girl for example, and generate a story from that image. Asking questions, like 'who is this girl?' 'How did she become homeless?' 'What age is she?' 'What is the relationship with other people in her life', 'What does the future hold for this girl?' 'How precarious is it for the girl to be living on the street?' In pairs you can ask the participants to come up with a storyline for the girl. They spend 10 minutes writing up her story and then tell it back to the group. You can also develop this approach even further by asking for a volunteer to sit in the middle of the circle in a position that depicts the homeless girl (maybe sitting in a doorway, cold with her arms around her knees and her head down). Then ask another volunteer to take up a position in relation to the girl. There is no dialogue at this stage. Ask the people in role to freeze, creating a picture. Then ask the rest of the group to come up with a story as to who these people are and what their relationship is. You can add another person to the picture and so on. Once the picture created is interesting, you could ask the participants to think of a line of dialogue (like a speech bubble) their character might say in that moment, and get them to play it back to the group. Once that is done, you can then break up the group and get them to create 3 images in sequence: the first still image depicting the day the girl was born and who was there; the second image of her as homeless; followed by a third image of her 10 years after her being homeless. This final image depicting how her life has turned out. Then get each duo to present their images in sequence. Should some of the images presented be very powerful, encourage the participants to improvise a scene around it. This is a really effective way to introducing the power of the image and how we can decode images, and develop them into a dramatic representation.

- Another approach would be to bring in an old image of the city, or street/building in the city, and a contemporary image and ask the participants to comment. Then ask them what they think the future of the city would look like. Ask them what their ideal city would be and what kind of citizen would they like to be in it. It is good here to talk about the politics of any given city and the role of its people, the council, local and central government, etc. Discussion based questions are effective, for example, what is active citizenship? What would your ideal city look like? If you were to run for Mayor what would your manifesto be? This is also a very good exercise to write up a manifesto. Make a collective list of what the group's utopian city would look like, discussing issues such as public/private space, ownership of resources, municipal buildings and open spaces. Policing is always an interesting topic in a prison setting, along with social amenities and housing provision. It is great to draw up a communal map, and manifesto for the group. You can then, as a storytelling exercise, get the participants to write up a story representing a 'day in the life' of a fictional character from the utopian city created. Ask them to tell the story back to the group. This is where you have the opportunity to work with the storyteller on techniques such as controlled breathing, vocal expression (pitch, pace, pause, inflection and tone) and how to keep your listeners engaged.

All of these exercises can be developed further until you have a full storyline for a performance. If you are working over a number of days/weeks this can be a great way of developing the work while continuously working towards your set goal.

Music

Music is an efficient way to engage with people. It can also help you create an immediate atmosphere when working through the other art forms such as storytelling.

- Start by generating a discussion as to the role music plays in people's lives. Why do we listen to music? What kind of music is there? Get people to list their favourite music/singers and ask them to identify one song that means something to them. Invite people to tell the group about their chosen song. Also, identify who can play instruments in the group, sing, etc.
- Using the 'Forgotten Futures and the City' project as an example, as this project explores active and legal citizenship in the future of Liverpool as a city, you could choose to bring in a song such as 'Penny Lane' by the Beatles. Play it in the

space and ask people to respond. If possible, it is great to have a copy of the lyrics of the song printed out so you can go through the pictures that are created for the listener through the combination of words and music. A complementary exercise is to create a storyboard for a music video that would work for the song 'Penny Lane'. You might want to throw in the interesting fact that Penny Lane was reputedly named after a slave trader.

- Depending on the talent in the room, you might want to run an exercise that invites participants to write their own song, compose their own music. You may even get them to work in pairs or groups and compose a song together.
- Should you have access to instruments, even a recording studio (as is the case in some prisons) make sure to integrate a musical aspect to an improvised or devised piece of work. If you are working towards a production and you have a member of the group who is somewhat accomplished as a musician, make sure to encourage them to take a lead. This can enhance their confidence and self-esteem, if facilitated positively.
- Another exercise that can be productive in the space, is to play a piece of instrumental music, preferably not well known, and ask the participants to write a storyline to it – even lyrics. This can be a good prompt to start a devising exercise.
- 'Soundscapes' are also a very important feature of music. Discuss different soundscapes that surround our lives and what the combination/layering of sounds are, such as a seaside soundscape, or a bustling high street, etc. Ask the participants to engage in creating a soundscape depicting a particular sequence of actions, using only what is available to them in the room. They could work in pairs for this. The aim is to create a scene only through sounds, including use of the voice, but with no language/words allowed. The group will be asked to close their eyes and listen to the soundscape and guess what the scenario is. Creating soundscapes around certain themes can be a great way of getting people engaged and committed to the art project.

Poetry

Poetry can be an effective way of bringing many of the art forms together. While sometimes the prospect of working with poetry can be met with a level of scepticism, I have found it to be a most rewarding art form to work with. Creative writing, especially exploring the 'spoken word' form, can be particularly suitable in the prison setting.

- Again start your introduction to poetry through discussion, asking people what is their experience of poetry - why do we have poetry? What's its purpose? Who does it belong to? How many poets can the group list as a collective and identify anybody who already writes poetry in the group. What is the role of the poet in the city?
- A good exercise is to introduce the group to a classical poem, such as a Shakespearean sonnet, or something like The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe, and draw particular attention to the structure and the content of the poems. Then bring in a more contemporary style poem and explore the poem likewise while drawing comparisons between the different approaches. Then list the different kinds of poetry that are available for an artist to work with.
- RAP (Rhythm and Poetry) – or the Spoken Word is a popular form of artistic expression within the prisons. An exercise you could do is to ask the participants to rework the theme/line of thought of the selected classical poem into either a rap or spoken word.
- Returning to the theme of the Forgotten Futures and the City project, you could ask the participants to write a poem/rap/spoken word depicting their utopian city. You could develop this further by composing music to go with it.
- There are some effective, short exercises available that will help your participants fully engage with any poetry exploration. You could bring in a number of different poems (try and select ones that are connected to your chosen theme) and get people to choose the one that stands out to them and ask them to articulate their response to the rest of the group. If they were to write a poem in response to that poem what would it be and why?
- It can be as simple as identifying one line from a poem and asking the group (spilt them into two groups so you always have somebody to act as audience for viewing the work and to provide feedback) to create a still image in response to it. Then you can develop the scene further by adding dialogue and getting the group to create the immediate scene beforehand, and the scene after. This can be a very effective way to start your devising project and generating a storyline.
- Depending on the confidence and group dynamic, it is possible to add movement and music to some of the creative writing that the participants produce. This can be very rewarding for all involved and a really good exercise for recording a group endeavour, should you have the facilities at your disposal.

Visual Arts

In every group I have ever worked with I have always found at least one person who has an interest in fine art (drawing/painting) or craft work. As people within the prison setting have no access to municipal museums that tend to be the cultural cornerstone of most British cities, it is a very good exercise to select an exhibition/artist that is part of the permanent collection in a city nearby and explore the work, even within the confinements of a prison. Introducing adult learners to art work that is available to the general public locally, encourages them to visit the museum on their release.

- Again, start by generating a discussion on the role of the visual arts in society? Why do we paint, create crafts? What artists do you know? When we think of the city what kinds of public art are we exposed to daily? What's the difference between publicly commissioned art, like the statue Winston Churchill, Virginia Woolf or graffiti?
- Select a painting from a local exhibition, or a picture of a statue (or if you have a small replica of the statue that can be very useful), or some other source, and ask the participants to respond to it. Employing the 'journalist's list' of questions 'who, what, where, when and why' can be a very effective structure to explore the piece of work.
- Continuing on the theme of the city, you could bring in a picture of a piece of empty land in the city (where a building previously stood and is now demolished) and ask the participants if they were to commission a piece of art for that space what would it be and why? Likewise, if there was to be graffiti on the wall in that space, what would it say?
- Maps, especially if you have access to both old and new maps, can be a very interesting exercise in discussion based on comparisons, and projections of developments for the future. You can advance this further by getting the group to work on generating their own map describing their utopian city.
- Linked to the idea of exploring maps, you could also collectively investigate the idea of palimpsests (a manuscript/map/piece of writing) that is constructed out of layers of previous writings/images/grids etc. Give each participant a particular era (like 15th century, 16th century and so on) to map onto tracing paper, and then put one layer on top of the other, with the most recent map on top of the pile.

Movement

Movement encompasses much more than just dance, it also refers to how we use and position our bodies within the space. Depending on how we are approaching the project, you, as facilitator, need to be conscious of the body as a form of creative expression. The image making exercises referred to earlier, will enable participants to understand how we decipher meaning from the relational position of bodies in a space.

- 'Freeze Statues' - Play some music and get the participants to move freely around the space, using up all of the room. Stop the music and ask them to freeze in a position. Then get half the class to unfreeze and look at the other learners in their frozen positions and read what the positions may mean. Then release the first group to watch the rest of the group retake their positions, and facilitate a similar reading of the image. It is good here to introduce the idea of 'levels' and what happens if we place one person standing on a chair, towering over another person who is seated on the ground? How does the positioning of these two people on different levels dictate the meaning? How does the meaning alter if we take the chair away and have them both on an equal footing?
- 'Levels of Expression' – divide the group into two. Ask half of the class to sit down, while the other half stand in a straight line along the far wall facing the audience. As facilitator you will allocate the group an emotional state, such as happy, angry, jealous, sad, and selecting one, get them to go from a very subtle depiction of that emotion to an extremely exaggerated presentation. This happens step by step, with the facilitator counting from 1 to 10 and the participants stepping forward on the count and expressing the level of that emotion. You then reverse the exercise with the other participants.
- Another simple but effective exercise is to ask the participants to walk around the space and when you call out the number 1, ask them to strike a pose (a freeze pose). Ask them to remember the action they have done. Then get them to continue walking around the space and call out the number 2, again ask them to strike a different pose to that number, and repeat again calling out the number 3. Once the participants have created 3 different poses, then you can call out the numbers 1-3 randomly. When you call out the numbers together, you will see how the participants have created a movement sequence. Divide the group in half and get them to look at each other's movement sequences. It can be good to pair people and see how their movement sequences work together. You can then add music and see how complementary the movement sequences are.

- Depending on how relaxed the group is and how comfortable they are working together, you can simply play a piece of music and ask them to respond to it through dance/movement in the space and with each other.

Warm downs/Reflection

This is an important part of any workshop. It is good to do a group exercise at the end which brings the group back into the collective. Some facilitators like to do easy, low energy exercises such as getting the participants to lie on the ground, close their eyes and then the facilitator brings them on a calming, imaginary journey. This is usually done through the power of the spoken word, for example depicting walking along a beach, or travelling by boat over gentle waves, which invites them to relax and engage with their breathing. You can also use some slow music to enhance the atmosphere. Other facilitators like to end on a high energy exercise such as counting 1-10 in a circle, with each number being announced more loudly than the previous one.

The most important thing however, is the reflective group conversation that is facilitated at the end of the workshop. Depending where you are in the programme (first workshop, or final workshop), it is important that you give time to reflect critically on the work that has been produced.

- Ask the participants to think of 2 things that they liked about the workshop. Then ask them to turn to the person next to them and tell them. You can then share thoughts among the whole group.
- Also ask the learners what they would like to improve on, or develop more and what are their aspirations for the next workshop. Should there be more workshops in the future, it is really good to give them a research task, such as a piece of creative writing, learn some script, make props (being mindful of what facilities the learners will have access to), but do allocate an activity that will keep them engaged and invested in the project until the next workshop.
- If you are running a series of workshops, it is a very good idea to encourage the participants to keep a journal, which they write in at the end of every workshop and also during the week, if that is possible.
- Encourage the learners to reflect on everyone's work and what they found to be most effective and why. Try and keep their critical reflections positive. You can finish the workshop by asking if anyone would like to share their written reflection with the group.

It is important that before you close the workshop that you give people an indication as to what the next workshop will be exploring, or should this be a one-off workshop, a big thank you, and direct the learners on how they could develop their work more, or where they may be able to find more information about creative work in the arts. Remember, the most important thing of all is that the adult learners feel able to explore this area of study. As a facilitator, in my view, you are more than anything else a 'demystifier' of entrenched privilege in the arts (the privileged have access to creating and receiving the arts). It is from this premise that critical, legal citizenship is encouraged and potentially realised during and after the workshops. In other words the workshops are about trying to shift an adult learner's consciousness about who the arts are for.

Practicalities

Always integrate breaks, where people can get a chance to have an informal chat about the work, where they can get refreshments, use the bathroom, and replenish their mind and body. It is great if you can vacate the room you are working in for the break, this is not always possible however. You need to work with the prison staff and see what is possible in your particular setting.

Sometimes you can be seen as an 'add-on' and not taken very seriously. The more professionally you conduct yourself, and being fully prepared, should help repel such accusations.

Be mindful that a lot of the time, prisons are understaffed and those staff that are there, very often are working to a demanding and packed schedule. Your appearance on site, can be seen as both a blessing and a disturbance. Either way, you need to be ready for each eventuality and conduct yourself accordingly.

And remember.....

The arts at their best invite us to understand the world we live in, engage critically with it and achieve for ourselves and each other. Let the journey begin.

Recommended Further Reading

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Feedback? Yes Please!

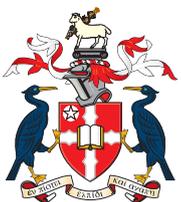
Should you find this manual interesting, useful or have anything you would like me to know, please drop me an email at malonn@hope.ac.uk

It's great to get feedback, and I thank you in advance!

Niamh Malone

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