

## UK (Innovation Unit)

**Matthew Moss High School**

*The “My World” curriculum at Matthew Moss High School targets students in grade 7 and 8, who spend one day per week throughout the school year on project work. Teachers introduce the projects to the students, and then students work self-directly forming teams, gathering possibilities and writing a project plan for approval, before conducting the project. The teachers act as facilitators, presenting in-time lessons or suggesting additional sources of knowledge (e.g., lessons in other departments). There is regular ongoing feedback, and a final exhibition of results to teachers and parents is part of the assessment. Students receive individual written evaluation reports.*

**Main Focus of Innovation:** LEARNERS, CONTENT, ORGANISATION

**General Information**

**Name of the ILE:** Matthew Moss High School

**Location/Address:** Matthew Moss LaneMarland, Rochdale, OL11 3LU

**Website:** <http://www.matthewmoss.co.uk/>

**ILE submitted by:** Innovation Unit (England)

**Rationale**

*Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning challenges?*

The 'My World' Curriculum at Matthew Moss High School should be included in the Innovative Learning Environment project because it is a significant, sustained and thoroughly scrutinized innovation firmly aligned with the defining criteria and, indeed, values of the programme. It radically reshapes the structures of the traditional classroom to create a learning environment which affords learners both authentic ownership of their learning and engagement with significant and meaningful challenge. Within My World learners can explore, grow, fail, learn and thrive.

Our ILE is integrated into the full-school year, is cost-effective enough to be replicated, and enjoys a broad organisational foundation that includes the majority of teaching staff.

My World is built around a number of challenges resulting in a public exhibition of learning. These projects such as launching an egg as high as possible and returning it to earth without breaking, responding to a natural disaster, investigating your family's history of migration, and pursuing an enquiry provoked by a personally meaningful object. These extended projects feature radical uses of time, learning space, and student-teacher collaboration.

**Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE**

*What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)*

The core learning aims are to develop learners' skills, understanding of themselves as learners, and inclination to employ this learning power throughout their lives.

The knowledge and skills to be acquired include problem solving, collaboration, communication, self-motivation and self-management. The attitudes to be acquired, or indeed rediscovered, are the dispositions to engage with challenges, to reflect meaningfully on actions and behaviours and to seek change for the benefit of all.

**Learners**

*Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?*

All Year 7 and Year 8 learners (360 young people aged 11-13) take part in My World, which occupies over a day per week throughout the school year.

My World gives learners sustained and significant opportunities to develop their capacity to positively and pro-actively engage with the learning challenges presented by rapidly-increasing rates of change in the 21st Century.

**Facilitators**

*Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?*

The My World team is composed of over twenty full-time teachers at Matthew Moss High School, including all the members of the school's Senior Leadership Team. Leadership is distributed and is coordinated through the research and discussions of the Year 7 and Year 8 My World teams, together with several 'Learning to Learn' teams. This network of teachers uses on-line resources such as forums and blogs to supplement the predominantly face-to-face involvement of teachers/facilitators with others within the learning community, helping the practice developed in My World to permeate the school.

Throughout My World, the traditional role of “teacher”, long established as the centre of agency within the classroom, is being replaced by the new professionalism of the “pedagogue”, the adult who skilfully creates the conditions for learning through mentoring, coaching, provoking, scrutinizing and co-constructing the learning experience with the student.

### **Organization of the ILE**

*How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?*

Teachers are assigned two 100 minute periods with a single group, with the freedom to shape that time according to the needs of the class, and to collaborate with staff across the school. Learners and teacher-facilitators interact very differently from the norm: instead of traditional transmission with teachers presenting and explaining whilst students listen, take notes and perform exercises en masse, the practice, increasingly, is to introduce an open or close-ended project to a class or group of classes, culminating in exhibition events to which the surrounding community is invited. Learners then gather possibilities, form teams and plan their project route, following their own learning journeys. Throughout this phase the teacher operates as coach, mentor, facilitator and provoker.

For the next critical step, the teacher adopts the more formalised role of a highly-challenging scrutineer, to whom teams present their project plan for approval. Once a project is approved, teams pursue their learning, with the teacher presenting just-in-time lessons for teams, alongside other methods of drawing-down knowledge at the point of need, such as joining lessons in other departments, lectures from visiting speakers, Skype conferences and on-line resources such as YouTube, VLE resources and iTunesU.

Exhibition and assessment is conducted through vivas, exhibitions, or on-line presentations.

Once the project has concluded, the thorough and meaningful review of this experience is a significant part of the student’s experience, and requires considerable expertise on the part of the teacher.

Moreover, review and feedback is centred on, but not limited to, discussion of the seven Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) dimensions and is regular and ongoing. Indeed it is the timing and quality of these learning conversations which forms a large part of the new professionalism being developed by our staff. Transactional Analysis theory is also widely used to inform reflection on the quality of interactions and the effectiveness of learning behaviours.

### **Learning Context**

*In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?*

The traditional organisation and control of resources by teachers is undergoing radical change within the ILE, with learners afforded the agency to organise their own resourcing, including ordering materials and equipment directly from suppliers using the school’s procurement systems, and using these materials to design and build physical artefacts. Students and teachers are using video to capture learning and aid reflection on the learning journey. The Effective Life-Long Learning Inventory (ELLI) is undertaken by every learner within the ILE and, again, operates as a powerful tool for reflection. We are beginning to use blogs and forums as tools for learning and reflection, and use YouTube as a portal for the exhibition of learning.

The physical learning environment at Matthew Moss is that of a “traditional” UK school, however the building is exploited in non-conventional ways, with learners given freedom to use the spaces flexibly in the manners which best suit their learning needs at the time. Thus learners may chose a space a significant distance from their designated classroom, an example being a group of three learners who have chosen to assemble a car engine in a utility area behind the school.

The learning takes place primarily in school, with parents involved mostly through attending the exhibitions on learning which form part of the assessment. The school is purchasing a portal so that parents can take their own online ELLI test in order to create a further level of engagement in the learning culture. Other community partners, for instance governors, councillors and business leaders, also take a central role in assessment by viva of My World learners.

### **History of ILE**

*Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?*

The My World ILE was initiated through the research, experimentation and reflection of the Learning 2 Learn (L2L) group of staff at Matthew Moss High School, a large and fluid body of colleagues driving professional development within our organisation.

My World was developed in order to create the curricular conditions for the entrenched habits of “teachers” and “pupils” to be superseded by new relationships and behaviours promoting the development of real, robust and meaningful learning power and agency.

These reasons, and the purpose of equipping learners with the skills, dispositions and values they need in order to engage positively with the unknown challenges of the future, are core principals of the mission within the My World ILE and Matthew Moss High School as a whole.

### **Funding of the ILE**

*How is it funded?*

Matthew Moss is a state-funded school, and the majority of its money comes from the local authority. In addition, it is receiving grants from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation’s Learning Futures project, and the Creative Partnerships organisation.

### **Learning Outcomes**

*What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?*

Outcomes evidence and assessments includes individual reports for every learner, on-line ELLI data for the cohorts and records from external viva assessors detailing the quality of learning encountered.

**Documentation describing or evaluating the ILE**

*Is there documentation on this learning environment? Is there a website? Films? Research reports or evaluations? Other forms of documentation? (please supply references or links)*

There is significant documentation describing and evaluating the My World ILE, including thorough reports from Dr Ruth Deakin- Crick on behalf of the Learning Futures initiative and research commissioned from Tim Small of Vital Partnerships. Gene Payne, on behalf of Learning Futures, has also created video resources capturing the philosophy and practice of the ILE and school itself has gathered significant photographic, video and paper evidence of the learning taking place.

Our My World ILE is an expression of a long standing, whole school focus on innovation in learning, a journey documented in a chapter of the Brin Best book “We Did It Here: Inspirational Stories of School Improvement and Classroom Change”

*Many schools claim that they are ultimately places of learning, but none has surely embraced this notion more passionately than Matthew Moss High School. It proclaims loudly that this is a school where creative teaching and learning approaches unite all staff and students.*

The learning agenda driving our ILE is core work, not a peripheral add-on and Chris Watkins, Reader at the London University Institute of Education, has commented that

*Matthew Moss is amongst only a handful of secondary schools who could honestly be described as becoming learning-centred.*

**Other information you consider to be relevant to describe the ILE**

My World is the culmination of the shared conversations, experimentation, thinking, reading and reflection of those within our organisation and it is this collaborative evolution which is the source of My World’s authenticity and strength. It is for and owned by everyone and is making a massive difference to the ways in which we are learning as a community. And our community is now further widened through our invaluable relationship with the Learning Futures project, whose challenge, support and scrutiny is further informing and accelerating the development of our My World ILE in highly significant ways. To link up internationally to share our learning and widen this key discourse is an exciting and highly meaningful proposition for us. We have much valid and authentic experience to share with the OECD/CERI ILE learning community.