



March 2012 – November 2012



Stirling High School
"Tempori Parendum"

1. What did we want to do?



- We needed to engage young people in the development of SEWeb for it to fulfill its purpose.
- We could have undertaken focus group research with young people, but we wanted to **actively engage** young people in outlining how they thought SEWeb could support them and their peers to **enjoy, understand, protect and improve** Scotland's environment.
- We also wanted to give them a valuable experience, building a relationship with both the young people and their school for the future

2. Why work this way



We chose to work with Space Unlimited, a Scottish social enterprise who are experts in using youth-led enquiry as a catalyst for change.

Their methods **build resilience, confidence and transferable life skills in young people** - all relevant to the demands of the Scottish school system's 'Curriculum for Excellence'

They were able to connect to a local school that wanted to take advantage of the opportunity: for their young people to get a **different experience; to align this work to their 'eco-schools' initiatives; and, to build a strong connection to SEPA and other SEWeb partners**



3. Engaging young people



The first task was to get the young people thinking about what they wanted to get out of the project. They identified the possibilities as:

- an experience of 'real' work
- new skills - particularly around technology and the environment
- an experience for their CVs
- something totally different from school
- and, of course, a chance to 'get out of school'.

This meant that they had defined their own motivation for being involved.

"I want everyone to just have a good time and to be proud of their end product, and feel that they've made something worth while" Pupil



4. Youth led enquiry



From the start of the project the young people were supported to:

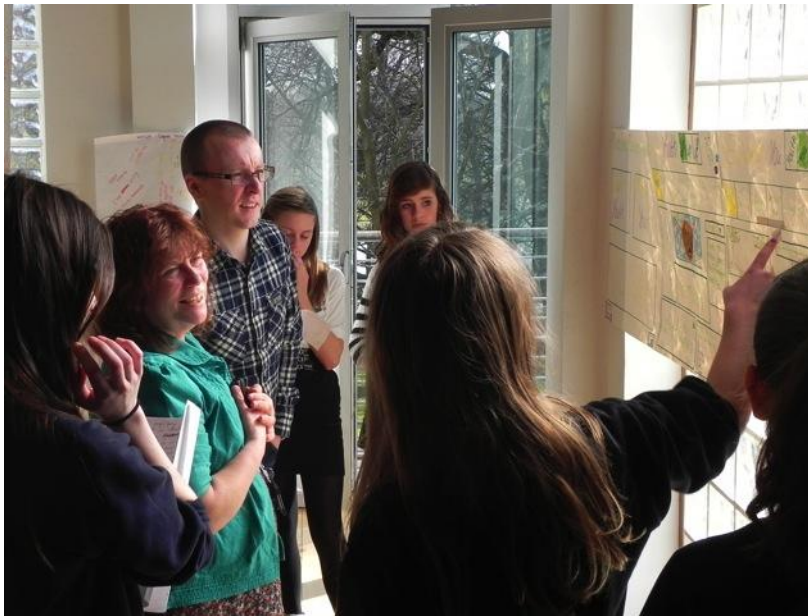
- define the roles for themselves, SEWeb and Space Unlimited
- define their own understanding of 'Scotland's Environment
- think about how they would engage their peers through SEWeb
- think about the journey, and the difficulties, that they might face in trying to lead this piece of work.

Through this process they became conscious of their leading role and started taking ownership of the challenge



"I'm surprised by how much we are allowed to contribute...we're genuinely in control" Pupil

5. Young people leading



- During the project the group sometimes struggled with being in the lead on this piece of work - shying away from their role or expecting the facilitators to treat them like a teacher or parent might. Through non-directive and reflective facilitation techniques the group **came to see themselves as both the leaders of this work and responsible for it's success.**
- *“Being put in charge is just the best thing, being a pupil in high-school we're so used to being told what to do. Being in the driving seat just makes the whole experience a lot better” Pupil*

6. Their BIG ideas for SEWeb



- The young people were honest about their own low levels of interest in the environment, how prevalent these could be in their peer group, and the challenge it presented for engaging with them.
- They thought about how they would engage themselves and generated five 'big ideas' that related to the interests of the different group members.
- The five big ideas were: an **online quiz** with fun facts; a **Facebook page**; a mobile **phone app**; a **computer game**; and, **new pages on the website**



7. Engaging stakeholders



- The group set up a 'market stall' for each idea with all the stalls discussing **the links between the ideas** and **how they would complement the SEWeb site and network.**
- Some talked about **designing their work to be user sustained** so, when the funding to maintain these products ends, they would continue to work for the benefit of Scotland's environment.

"I'll tell my colleagues about how effective this way of working is and the powerful, thoughtful minds of the young people...I wish more colleagues had been here to hear it from the young people themselves"

Stakeholder

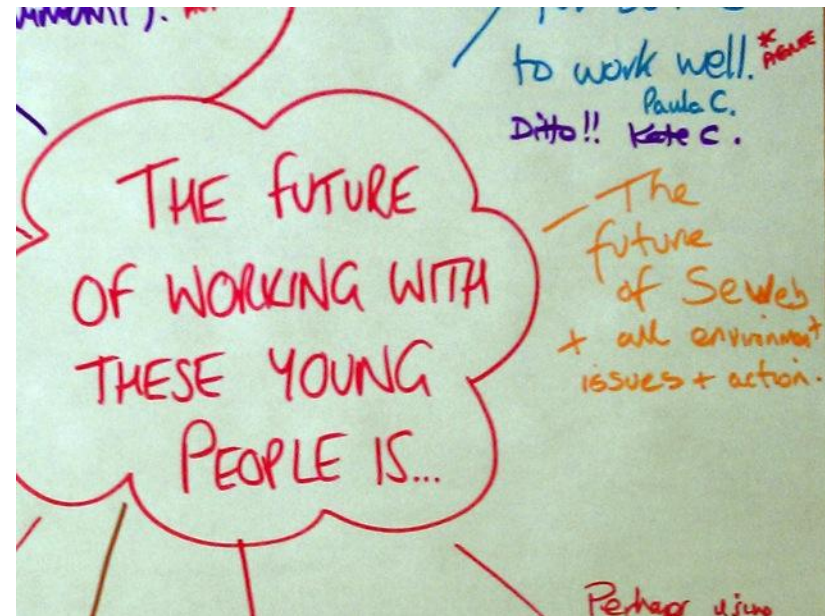
8. What next?

Positive feedback from guests, along-side the young people's enthusiasm to continue the work, meant we had to support that to happen. This was important so that:

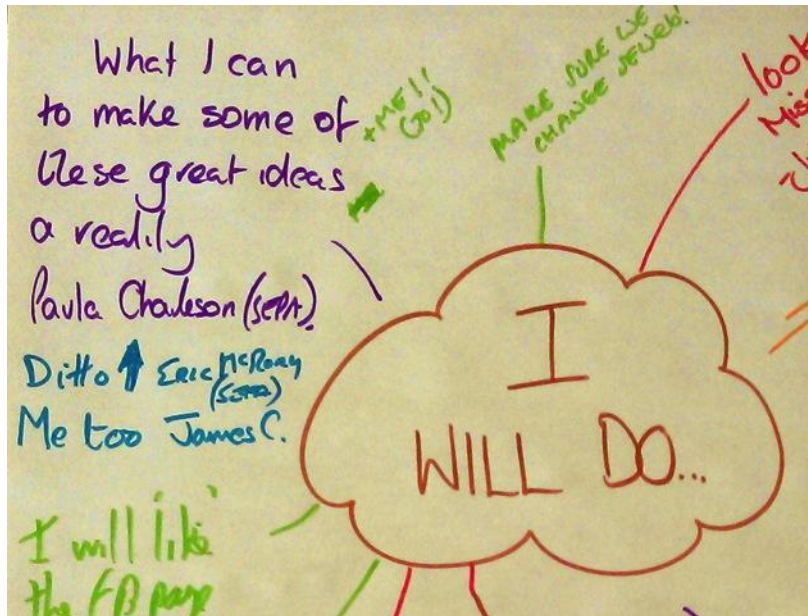
- the products were designed as envisaged
- the young people could finish their work, getting further skills and experience
- their increased level of engagement with SEWeb, and the products, could make them a valuable partner in dissemination of the learning and outputs from this approach

“Working with these young people is essential for SEWeb to work well”

Stakeholder



9. Utilizing the network



- Our wider work on SEWeb introduced us to Abertay University. Knowing of their **skills in web, game and 'app' development**, we took the opportunity to discuss the project and the young people's outputs.
- Abertay offered to use their 'out reach' programme to find some volunteer staff and students who could work with the young people, to **make their ideas a reality**.
- Space Unlimited facilitated this **collaborative working**, providing neutral guidance and support to all participants - meaning the volunteers and young people could **focus on their own roles, needs and aims**

10. Setting up co-production



- The co-production sessions ran on Saturdays, which meant some of the original group could not attend, but other young people chose to participate.
- Due to the inclusion of people new to the approach, Space Unlimited worked with both groups to revisit why this work was taking place, the outputs and outcomes from phase one, and to **understand the motives for being involved**.

“I want to experience working with young people when I’m the expert who can help them make their ideas real” Volunteer



11. Co-produce prototypes



- This collaborative work presented a number of challenges.
 - The **young people had to maintain control** of their ideas while tapping into the knowledge and expertise of the university volunteers.
 - The **volunteers had to use their experience to guide** the young people without leading them or taking over.
 - The group worked together to set the tasks they'd achieve each day and were led through reflective learning in order to **adapt their approach as the work progressed**

12. The prototypes



- The young people were very clear about what they wanted to do. They decided to make **the quiz a part of the mobile app**, helping build understanding of the environment in a fun and informal way.
- Then they split into three teams to develop:
 - **prototypes of the game,**
 - **mobile app and**
 - **additional SEWeb pages** - a new **landing page**, the youth section called **'SEWeb Youth'** and a user generated page called **'SEWeb You'**.



“Facebook isn't where you go for 'Eco stuff', just where you go to see what's happening with your mates, - so that's how we should use it” Pupil

13. The other benefits



- For the young people: **new confidence**, already being applied elsewhere; **new skills** in self-management, communication, teamwork and leadership; and, **commitment** and **responsibility** for, an experience they described as a *“once in a lifetime opportunity”*
- For the school: the value of being a part of a significant partnership project with the SEWeb team, Abertay University and Space Unlimited. For the university volunteers: the experience of working with young people in a non-directive, and genuinely collaborative way.



"I got a massive confidence boost...I mean, now when I speak to people I don't turn purple anymore, I just kind of, stay normal coloured!" Pupil

"It's great the kids have been able to have this experience, some of them have changed so much...James is just a different boy here" Teacher/Parent

"I don't think that this kind of collaborative work has been done before, with young people this young, anywhere" University Staff

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Stirling High School
"Tempori Parentum"