

Last month I had the honor of presenting **TEEN TRUTH LIVE** to students at several Oklahoma A+ Schools in Oklahoma City. A+ Schools strives to infuse creativity in every facet of education, a concept that I felt was important enough to document as a film. So after a short pitch over the phone and a written proposal, we received the generous support from the Oklahoma-based Kirkpatrick Foundation to shoot a short documentary about the importance of creativity (from the youth perspective) as long as it could be screened at the Creativity World Forum just two days after we finished shooting it. No problem, right?

I figured the best way to make a film about creativity was to make the process as creative as possible. Since JC was also going to be on the road speaking and unable to help produce, I enlisted the help of long-time friends, editor Shane Williamson, composer Darren Fung, Sound Designer, Kyle Stanfield and Visual Artist, Vince Scotti.

While a few members of my crew were skeptical about the short time frame and the fact that they were 2,500 miles away, I convinced them that we would find a way to make it work. Collectively, our team devised a concrete timeline and a means of sharing files over the Internet. Each of us would bring a different piece to the project but would work cohesively together even though some of us were on location and others were in Montreal.

Over the course of the three shooting days I started to see that our process of creating the film was exactly like what was occurring inside the classrooms at A+ schools. We saw students creatively collaborate to express themselves and solve problems, and as a result, increase the value of the work and enrich their learning experience. This practice ultimately enabled the students to explore creative ways of expression and problem solving while simultaneously discovering more about each other. It gave them confidence, camaraderie and an outlet to be who they really are.

Oklahoma A+ Schools fosters creativity in a way that makes it a natural part of the learning experience. From the 3rd grade class that did a synchronized song and dance routine to illustrate their classroom etiquette, to 9th graders that sang a rap they composed in the 5th grade to remember the different parts of the respiratory system, we saw just how essential creativity was to both the educational process and student wellbeing.

After 18 straight hours of editing, Shane and I sent the final cut to our friends in Montreal to compose the music, master the sound and finish the animation. At 8am EST on Monday morning the final mix was sent back to us, synched with picture and burned to a DVD that was presented just one hour later to a group of adults (including Sir Ken Robinson) at a roundtable discussion preceding the launch of the Creativity World Forum. Many of the roundtable attendees expressed how delighted they were to have the **STUDENT VOICE** represented at their discussion.

Just before boarding my flight back to Montreal, I called my wife (a 4th grade teacher) and told her how impressed I was with what I saw in Oklahoma A+ schools. I told her how pleased I was with the results of the film and how grateful I was to have been able to have the experience with the students in the A+ schools. It reinforced for me that everyone is creative - we just have to make the space for it.



**Be sure to check out "Creating Community" - WATCH IT!**