

A Learning Project

Drama for Learning and Creativity

D4LC

Patrice Baldwin



Drama for Learning and Creativity or D4LC for short, started out as a year-long pilot project in 60 Norfolk schools. Here, Patrice Baldwin describes how it has now become a significant and transferable model of CPD, curriculum development and action research, that is set to spread nationally in partnership with National Drama.

In the beginning . . . The Deputy Director of Norfolk County Council Children's Services, Fred Corbett was becoming aware through his involvement with the 'Teacher of the Year Award' that many teachers put forward for the award were drama teachers or used drama as part of their teaching. This made him predisposed to supporting proposal for a teaching and research project, Drama for Learning and Creativity, when I approached him as Norfolk's local authority Adviser for Arts Development and Improvement. He agreed to me working in up to 20 Norfolk schools at no cost to the school in order to help improve teaching and learning through drama. When all Norfolk schools received the letter inviting them to apply for this free opportunity, 60 schools of all types and phases applied, including a Special School and a Pupil Referral Unit.

Rather than turn around 40 schools away, the Deputy Director asked how we could meet the demand for drama specialist support in all 60 schools. The solution arrived at was that in partnership with National Drama and through the use of drama Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) all 60 schools could become part of what is now known as D4LC Phase 1 (Norfolk).

One of the great things about National Drama (as we all know) is that amongst the membership we have many leading drama and theatre practitioners, so there is a rich pool of expertise across the country from which to draw. As Project Director, I approached Pam Bowell (past Chair of ND) and Kate Fleming (current Vice Chair of ND) to work in Norfolk alongside me on D4LC, as core D4LC consultants paid for by NCC. As a local authority adviser I was able to also draw in the services

National Drama dares to inspire our children. It plays an important and necessary role in championing creativity in education, which can be a bigger driver for change and renewal. Drama in education develops self belief in young people, whilst nurturing and supporting their potential, the limit of which is often determinate on other's faith in them. The Drama for Learning and Creativity Project is a specific example of enabling young people to use their imagination and creativity as a stepping stone to reality: encouraging future generations to imagine and create a better world.

Jude Kelly

Chair, Culture and Education, London 2012.

*Artistic Director, South Bank Centre
Patron of National Drama*

'Everybody wants creativity in classrooms and this project will show a whole range of innovative practitioners achieving just that. Drama teaching methods have so much to offer learners and teachers – with NESTA's help, D4LC can spread that message.'

Grant Bage

NESTA Learning Director

The effective teaching of drama engages pupils, deepens their responses to literature and develops their thinking and communication skills. We welcome this initiative's focus on exemplifying how drama can be used in English and across the curriculum to encourage creativity in teaching and learning.'

Statement of support for D4LC from the QCA English Team

What the Children said

...it helps your brain know things more – because you do it....it puts me in their shoes and I know how it feels...

Drama is my favourite subject because it lets my imagination fly.

My writing has improved because I can burst my imagination onto the page.

What the teachers said

This may be a small part of a huge research project but for me it has been a personal journey of discovery.

I wouldn't have attempted this before D4LC or even thought of doing it. I am now much more prepared to take risks and be flexible and am much more confident than I was before. I am looking for creative approaches to my teaching and using them whenever I can.

The children are so committed in drama and are working so hard. There has been a chance for some to shine who haven't before.

of five ASTs (2 secondary and 3 Primary) and use D4LC to link them with schools and contribute to their own professional development. D4LC also employed a local theatre educator, Dave Farmer (ex Director of Tiebreak). The involvement of a theatre educator reflects the fact that ND is an association for drama and theatre educators and is committed to working developmentally with both in partnership. Melanie Peter, a Special School drama specialist was brought in to work specifically with Fred Nicholson Special School.

Spreading the word

In August 2005, a funding bid by ND to the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) was successful. This enabled an ND research project to be supported as part of D4LC and paid for external evaluation of the project. It also enabled the outcomes of the research (and examples of D4LC practice) to be disseminated nationally through subsidised ND Conferences across the UK in Spring 2007. Also Creative Partnerships willingly supported the bid to NESTA, agreeing to set up a national Dialogue Day with National Drama, to jointly share drama action research projects, to take place on February 2nd 2007 at The Sage, Gateshead, with a keynote from Dorothy Heathcote.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and in particular Mick Waters, were also very supportive of D4LC and have given it a platform several times at English 21 Conferences. They too supported the bid to NESTA and agreed to support a dissemination event for key agencies. Key agencies and creative organisations attending the dissemination event at QCA, and are therefore aware of the D4LC model and research outcomes include:

- QCA
- National Primary Strategy

- National Secondary Strategy
- Department of Culture Media and Sport
- Specialist Schools and Academies Trust
- Arts Council England
- Creative Partnerships
- RSC Learning

D4LC has also been briefly presented to all subject associations at the DfES Subject Associations meetings, as it is a cross-curricular project and open to possible co-development work in partnership with other subject associations in the future.

Norfolk developments

Whilst D4LC is poised to spread nationally following the UK Conferences it is also being developed still further in Norfolk. D4LC Phase 2 will start in September 2007 (again in partnership with National Drama) and is likely now to be mainstreamed through the National Primary Strategy in Norfolk to give all their schools the opportunity to start to or continue to engage with D4LC as part of their school improvement and standards agenda. Drama is seen as an important part of any teacher's toolbox and a powerful and effective way of engaging a broad range of learners across the curriculum as well as within English. However, it is recognised that for teachers to use drama well they need to have access to high quality drama CPD and support.

As well as continuing support from QCA, discussions have also begun with the General Teaching Council to explore whether or not future D4LC teachers might be able to have their drama action research recognised and verified by the Teachers Learning Academy. This could support D4LC teachers by providing evidence for their Performance Management targets.

And beyond . . . ?

We all know that many local authorities no longer have drama specialist advisers and that access across the UK to specialist drama advice and support is patchy. Drama is coming back on the agenda of many schools and many schools are accessing a disparate range of support for their drama development. This may well be of good quality, but there are advantages to working with the leading association, National Drama. It enables local authorities or clusters of schools to access a strong team of established and reputable drama specialists who can work strategically and developmentally for intense periods with local drama ASTs, advisers and consultants to initiate, and then, through 'light touch,' sustain the D4LC initiative through an ever widening national network of D4LC practitioners.

Norfolk teachers have benefited from the local authority continuing to provide a cross phase, long-term drama course (a weekend and 6 evening sessions of 3 hours). At present it is not accredited but this is being explored. During the pilot project 27 teachers involved in D4LC were given subsidised places on this course (led by Rob John and Patrice Baldwin) and this specific subsidy will continue in Phase 2. Whilst recognising that not many local authorities have long term drama courses, any local authority might consider subsidising places linked to D4LC on any drama courses that are running concurrently in order to further strengthen the potential impact of it. To this end, there will be a day held for local authorities about D4LC on June 19th 2007. Again, Mick Waters has kindly agreed to speak and lend his support to the day.



D4LC: a brief rationale

The brain is wired to learn through multi-sensory experiences, including imagined experiences that may be enacted with others. We employ imagined experience throughout our lives as a way of stimulating emotion, of empathising, of making sense of experiences and playing out 'what if?' scenarios in our minds and hearts (and through drama, our bodies also). There is an urgent need for teachers, head teachers and key agencies to recognise the importance of imagined experience to learning and to the development of both learning and creativity. They should also recognise that drama (which has its roots in dramatic play, can flow across subject boundaries) as a teaching and learning medium, is congruent with what we currently understand about effective learning and the holistic development of every child.

The role of an empathetic adult who plays alongside a young child with a learning agenda has long been universally valued and understood. Whole class drama brings this dynamic relationship into a school

setting and offers a well structured and infinitely flexible development of this natural, humanistic, child-focused learning and teaching approach, with the teacher as a facilitator, enabler, co-participant, support and guide for personalised learning. Drama can equally be designed to flow across subject boundaries or to develop learning within them.

Drama for learning across the curriculum is not new but it has never been developed strategically and nationally. It particularly struggled for recognition and development, with the advent of the first national curriculum and then soon after, the National Literacy Strategy, which initially lacked a speaking and listening strand and offered prescriptive teaching methods.

The heyday of 'Drama in Education' was in the 1960s and 1970s and it was part of the era that the national strategies set out determinedly to move teaching away from. It is vital that we recognise that using drama in the 21st Century must not be seen as, 'going back to the 60s'. It is going forward with a more rigorous and defined



planned more whole class drama with teachers as co-participants in role.

January 2006 – April 2006

All 120 teachers (including the 28 D4LC Research Teachers), received a Spring Term visit from their consultant or AST. The teachers who had volunteered to carry out action research met with the core team, myself, Pam and Kate to discuss and refine their research questions. Pam and Kate visited Research Teachers in schools and supported them in lessons, as well as discussing the lessons with them in relation to their research questions.

The research questions

The initial questions evolved and often changed. Initial questions included, for example:

- Does whole class drama engage children of all abilities?
- What is the impact of drama in developing children's thinking, language and approach to writing?
- How can role play encourage literacy and develop writing skills?
- Can Drama provide opportunities through which children can articulate reasoning and consolidate learning in mathematical conceptual thinking and understanding?

Research evidence included:

- The drama in progress: digital photographs; video footage; Sound recordings
- Materials produced as a result of the drama: writing, documents: drawings/images of displays; artefacts
- Pupil Voice: Verbal/written – in and out of role
- Teacher Voice Verbal/written – research diary

Summer 2006 and continuing

In the summer term, Kate, Pam and the external evaluator carried out

understanding of learning (that is congruent with learning through drama) and with teachers being much more knowledgeable about the curriculum and far more skilled at curriculum planning.

Now is also at a time when schools are struggling to juggle (or integrate) teaching for and with creativity without letting standards slip. The National Strategies have evolved, with a greater emphasis now on speaking and listening, slightly more emphasis on drama and less prescription about teaching methods. In the wake of *All our Futures* and with the current focus on Excellence and Enjoyment and with the KS3 curriculum able to become more like an extension of that offered by good primary schools, the time has come to consider ways of bringing together the standards agenda, the creative curriculum for the 21st Century and whole class drama as pedagogy and as a curriculum model. Norfolk County Council Children's Services and National Drama have already started to do

this in a sustainable and networked way through the Norfolk D4LC pilot.

The Launch of D4LC: a short timetable

The project was launched officially in October 2005 with a free Norwich Conference. The 120 participating teachers, listened to a keynote from Joe Winston, joined workshops and met their consultants and ASTs. Fourteen of the schools volunteered to become Research Focus Schools, supported by Pam Bowell and Kate Fleming.

November to December 2005

The consultants and ASTs visited the schools, arranging in advance through phone calls and emails the focus for the lessons that they would lead (if required) during their first visit. Teachers were also attending local planning meetings. It was evident in the early stages that many teachers were reluctant to actually let children get up off the mat and start moving around. However, as they became more confident, they

analysis of the teachers' research logs and supporting materials. Many of the outcomes are being shared at the D4LC Conferences across the UK in Spring 2007. The Project DVD (available at the Conferences and through the ND website from January 2007) has a section within it with Research Teachers talking about the outcomes and their commitment to the project and their passion for teaching shines through.

So what did D4LC schools get and give?

Each of the 60 participating schools in the pilot was asked to designate 2 teachers as D4LC teachers. It was made clear by the local authority that the head teacher was expected to actively support the project throughout. Head teachers were asked to ensure that the same 2 D4LC teachers were available throughout. Consultant visits were not to be shared out amongst several teachers, as this would weaken the impact. The involvement of at least 2 teachers in D4LC ensured that there was ongoing dialogue, mutual support and exchange of ideas likely within the school as the project progressed. If only one teacher in a school is involved in whole class drama (a key element underpinning the project) then they are more likely to feel isolated and unsupported between D4LC planning meetings with teachers from other schools and between consultant visits.

D4LC is about teacher development as a route to curriculum development and more creativity for both teachers and children in schools. It is not about someone else doing the drama for a school with teachers just observing. Therefore under no circumstances were consultants to teach classes without co-participating D4LC teachers present and the consultants were not to work with a supply teacher in the absence of the D4LC teacher. D4LC is a collabora-

tive and developmental venture designed to lead to sustained school improvement.

A unique and evolving resource of planned lessons

All teachers had been asked to submit a lesson for sharing and publication (using an agreed proforma) by the end of the pilot period (April 2006). The majority of teachers did so. All lessons submitted appear unedited online on the website at: <http://www.norfolkesinet.org.uk/pages/viewpage.asp?uniqid=4178>

A selection of these lessons (edited by the Project Director) form part of the D4LC ring-binder publication that is available for purchase with the DVD (see the advert or contact D4LCadmin@nationaldrama.co.uk). Edited exemplar lessons from Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are included in this edition of 'Drama'.

A discussion forum is being set up online that will go live in January 2007 at <http://www.d4lc.org.uk/forum/>

The UK Conferences in Glasgow, Belfast, London, Gateshead and Cardiff will make delegates aware of this free resource that is available to all teachers worldwide for topical and ongoing discussion linked to drama for learning and creativity.

As D4LC spreads both nationally and internationally, many more lessons will be submitted, gathered and shared electronically. The D4LC ring-binder publication is designed to enable other downloaded lessons to be printed and added to it at any time as the project evolves. This provides a unique and evolving resource that is contributed to by practising teachers, consultants and ASTs and by National Drama.

The impact of 'Drama for Learning and Creativity'

The entry and exit questionnaires are evidence that an increasing number of schools now use Drama regularly

as a methodology. Over 90% of schools surveyed state that Drama is an influence on their development plans. Drama is now a significant priority for over half the schools in the survey, an increase of over 15%. 'Drama for Learning and Creativity' influences head-teachers as well as teachers. This suggests that the schools in the survey are developing both the policy and practice of whole class Drama teaching, with over 80% of the primary and middle schools surveyed now having a teacher responsible for Drama.

Over 90% of the teachers surveyed report an increase in their confidence to teach Drama. The teachers' journals show that pupils respond positively to what whole class Drama offers them as learners. There is consistent evidence that pupils think that it provides them with a depth of affective and cognitive engagement with their learning.

By the time of the end of the project over 95% of the teachers surveyed are working with Drama in an increasing number of subjects. Teachers now work in the classroom with a significantly increased range of Drama conventions. Teacher in role, hot seating and thought tracking are becoming far more evident in teachers' work. As a result there is a different Drama 'diet' emerging. This has the potential to broaden children's learning opportunities, both in Drama and across the curriculum.

Drama is now viewed to be a means to develop pupils' thinking. It is associated with creative thinking, communication and expressive skills. Examples from three projects show that pupils take part in speculation, hypothesis making and testing, searching for reasons and making justifications rather than looking for the 'right' answer. They experience standing in another person's shoes and the exploration of other viewpoints than their own.

D4LC UK ?

D4LC shows what can be achieved by true partnership between a local authority and National Drama. Other local authorities may wish to work with NCC and ND to develop D4LCs. The Project Director is being made available by Norfolk County Council Children's Services to advise, support and direct other D4LC named projects by arrangement in partnership with the National Drama core team.

Alternatively authorities may wish to create other original projects with and through National Drama. A local authority can provide access to schools and an existing infrastructure. National Drama can consistently provide sufficient subject specialist expertise and regular subject association access to the key agencies for presentation of outcomes and lobbying.

Norfolk County Council Children's Services has hard evidence of the significance and positive impact of D4LC in its participating schools, both in terms of teachers' raised confidence and pupil outcomes. NCC is therefore supporting D4LC Phase 2 (in continuing partnership with National Drama). It will commence in September 2007/8 with a Phase 2 Launch Conference in Norwich. Phase 2 will involve the recruitment and development of up to 10 leading teachers of drama in Norfolk, through the National Strategy, to ensure local sustainability and increase Norfolk's capacity to continue to provide high quality drama in an increasing number of its schools. It is envisaged that every Norfolk school will have the opportunity to engage with D4LC if they wish to.

A local authority can provide access to schools and an existing infra-structure. National Drama can consistently provide sufficient subject specialist expertise and regular subject association access to the key agencies for presentation of outcomes and lobbying



D4LC is attracting international interest

D4LC was presented to 32 countries at an international National Drama Conference in Winchester (April 2006) and at the first European meeting of IDEA (International Drama Educators Association) in December 2007. D4LC was also presented at the IDIERI drama research Conference in Kingston, Jamaica in July 2006. It will be presented in Vienna at the 16th World Congress for Drama in Education and in Hong Kong at the IDEA Congress in July 2007. The D4LC outcomes have been selected for presentation in Paris at an Arts Research Symposium organised by the French government in

January 2007. There are plans to develop a European D4LC, possibly in Poland and Norway a project inspired by D4LC is planned in Iceland.

In fact, the Norfolk project provides a model of Drama for Learning and Creativity which can inspire educators everywhere.

What does Creativity look like in a drama lesson?

During the pilot project, teachers received email support from the Project Director that encouraged regular focusing and re-focusing on creativity as a process and outcome of drama. Teachers were asked to keep in mind the NACCCE definition of

creativity presented in *All our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (1999) 'Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are original and of value.'

This could itself be a definition of drama. Teachers were sent an adaptation of the QCA Creativity materials that had been rewritten and annotated by the Project Director to help them specifically focus on creative attitudes and behaviour in drama.

Imagination and purpose in drama

Imagination is definitely a key part of both drama and creativity. But is all drama creative? When teachers totally direct the actions and words in drama or theatre, are the children themselves actually being creative? Is the teacher? Supposing someone imagined a scene but did nothing to share it or show it dramatically, would this be creative and would it be drama? Maybe no one has

conjured up an original scene like this before but if it has not been given a drama/theatre form through which it can be communicated to others as drama, then is it drama or creative thought?

Creative people are purposeful as well as imaginative, so maybe we can say that the idea becomes creative in drama when the idea/scene/image/words are given a dramatic form and purpose – when it moves into original action and not just thought.

Originality

What do we mean by originality in drama? Original in relation to the children's previous drama work or in relation to other children's work?

When whole classes are working together to create a drama the work will be unique if it expresses the pupils' own thoughts and feelings or their own, original interpretations of other peoples thoughts and feelings. Skilled teachers can help pupils

tackle questions, solve problems and have ideas in drama that are new and original to the children themselves even if others have arrived at them previously. This makes the children's ideas original to them and an outcome of genuinely creative behaviour.

Value

All our Futures states that imaginative activity can only be creative if it is of value in relation to its purpose. Teachers need to help pupils to critically evaluate (e-value-ate) their drama and that of others. This may involve asking questions such as, 'Did it work as drama for you as participant and as audience? If so/if not, why might that be?', 'Did the drama give an appropriate form to your own ideas?' 'What did you learn in/through the drama?' 'What are you better at now?' 'Did you feel engaged? Why?' 'Is it aesthetically pleasing? How might it be still more so?'

Some questions to ask about your drama

Sometimes teachers' and pupils' views about what is worthwhile and valuable may differ but evaluating together can give an insight into what other people value and why.

1. Can you see evidence in your drama lessons (or outside as a consequence?) of pupils becoming:
 - more interested in creating drama for themselves
 - more open to new ideas
 - more eager to work with others
 - to explore ideas and drama forms
 - willing to work beyond lesson time when pursuing an idea or vision in or through drama eg. carrying it on in the playground afterwards or still talking about it or re-working it
2. Can you see a difference in levels of pupil engagement and motivation in the drama itself or as a result of it?
3. Can you see evidence of raised levels of pupil's achievement in the drama or as a result of it? Is this at the time, soon after, much later?
4. Has the children's confidence and self esteem improved?
5. Is drama helping your pupils to behave creatively to:
 - make connections
 - have their own ideas
 - communicate
 - work well with others
 - solve problems
6. When pupils are thinking and behaving creatively in drama, you are likely to see them:
 - questioning and challenging in and out of role
 - making connections and seeing relationships
 - envisaging what might be (verbally and in action)
 - exploring ideas, keeping options open
 - reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

Drama Lesson One

Stage: Year 1.

Length of lesson: 45 minutes.

Subject links: Religious Education, English

Resources: Large pieces of paper, felt tip pens, writing books, pencils.

The aims of the lesson

- To know and understand the story of Noah's Ark
- To feel empathy for the people/animals affected in the story
- To be able to write a short letter using ideas from the story.

The Lesson

The teacher wanted to... try a technique that had been recommended by the Project Director – to find a suitable time to freeze the drama and give the class more information, or narrate the next part of the story to move the drama on. She also wanted to give the class the opportunity to think in role and consider how their character might be feeling at a precise moment in the story.

Before the lesson... the class had already heard the story of Noah's Ark and were able to tell the teacher the main points of the story. She told the class that they were going to do some Drama, and reminded them of the 'Drama Rules', which is their drama contract. She told the class that she would be using a shawl as a 'drama prop' (signing the role) and that when she wore the shawl she would pretend to no longer be Miss Hilliard, but when she removed the shawl she would be their teacher again.

The teacher began the lesson by... asking the class to sit in a class circle. She put on the shawl and addressed the class as Mrs Noah, welcoming the 'animals' to a 'short meeting'. As Mrs Noah, she explained the problem – that God had told Noah that he was going to send a flood and that Noah should build an Ark to keep his family and some of the animals safe. She explained to children, who were in role as the animals that this was a big job and that, as Noah and she were both quite old, they would not be able to do it by themselves. She asked the group if they knew what she could do.

The children then... stepped into role very easily and began saying that they would be able to help, and quickly identified which animals they 'were'. Mrs Noah (TIR) asked the 'animals' if any of them knew how to build an Ark, what skills they could offer and then sent them off in small groups to get ready to start building.

One child M, posed a problem when she said that she was a goose and had a family of eight chicks, whom she didn't want to leave behind. I called the animals back and asked M to share her problem. Mrs Noah asked the group what they could do to help solve this problem. One animal suggested that M the Goose stayed behind with her family of chicks. This posed a moral dilemma. M said that she didn't want to do stay behind as she would then drown in the flood. I asked the group if they had any other ideas about what M could do. No-one had any further suggestions so the teacher considered it was an appropriate point to pause the drama.

The teacher out of role then... asked the class if there was anyone they could think of who might be able to help M the Goose in the drama. Some pupils suggested asking God for help. Maybe he would let M take all of her chicks onto the Ark with her? Would there be space? The teacher re-started the drama at this point.

The teacher in role then... as Mrs Noah asked M the Goose to find a way to get God to help her. A small group gathered who said they would be able to help her to write a letter to God to ask him to let M's family be saved. Another group decided that they were going to try to stop the flood and set off the make some posters, saying 'No Flood!' The others in the group began 'building' the Ark. During this time I went from group to group, as Mrs Noah, asking the animals how they were getting on, what they were doing etc. This supported the children's continuing engagement with their roles whilst in groups.

The teacher then... froze the drama and told the story beginning with the flood, the ark leaving and Noah trying to find dry

land. She walked to each group of pupils and asked them to talk about their feelings and concerns at this moment. The teacher had not tried this technique before and was concerned that some of the class would not know how to respond to her questions in role. On reflection the teacher thinks she may at this point have deliberately chosen those children who she knew were the 'safe' option and most likely to contribute and who would be good role models for the rest of the class for next time.

Towards the end of the lesson... the group of 'animals' who had built the Ark started to get the other animals ready to leave (those smaller groups that had been making 'No Flood!' posters and written a letter to request the Goose family space on the Ark).

The teacher took off the shawl and asked the class to come and sit down. She asked M's group to show the letter to the rest of the class and they read it together. She asked the class to think about the rest of the animals and how they might feel if they were left behind.

The children realised that the lesson was coming to an end, but did not want to leave it at this point. The teacher put the shawl back on and told the group that they needed to voice their opinions about what was taking place as M had done. She told them that they would all be able to write their own letters in order to do this. Knowing that as soon as they were back in the classroom they would be allowed to do this spurred the class to write once the drama lesson itself was over, as they remained engaged dramatically when working/writing in role.

In this lesson there was evidence of creativity when... some of the children decided to change the direction of the drama, introducing and accepting the character who 'didn't want to leave her chicks behind'. Even though the class had heard the original story of Noah's Ark, they did not feel the need to stick to the storyline but developed it creatively and empowered the characters that they were

portraying. The pupils were also thinking creatively in dual roles – they empathised and spoke ‘as if’ they were the animals and used and developed human skills such as letter writing, creating posters etc. whilst working in role as animals.

In this lesson there was evidence of learning when... the pupils chose to work in ‘character’ groups rather than usual friendship groups, which is demonstrating progression in social skills and their ability to make connections between their ideas. The class showed that they were beginning to understand body language and what was required of them to move the drama on. When M posed her problem to the group she showed a lot of her emotion through her body language which led some of the others to reflect that in body language and show their own empathy. They began to portray and mirror similar character traits and emotions.

The class demonstrated prior learning from previous drama sessions about how to behave in role. They took the ‘meeting’ very seriously and responded as characters

rather than as children. There was full engagement and no giggling or silly behaviour.

The fact that M had offered a problem within the drama and other children built on this showed that they were beginning to take risks and are learning to be supportive and tolerant of each others’ thinking and feeling.

The class have also begun to work in strands, although everyone in the class was working on the same story, they had taken on different tasks within a single class fiction and were working on elements of the story that were most important and relevant to them.

Drama strategies and conventions used

- Teacher in Role
- Role-Play
- Still image

Why use drama?

Using Process Drama gave the class a meaningful and engaging context for their letter writing. In role, the class had worked out why they needed to write a letter, who

they were going to write to (purpose and audience) and had built up a bank of ideas about what they wanted to say (content).

To meet the Literacy objective the letters would have needed to be redrafted, as the class wrote their letters in ‘animal speak’, however the drama session gave them the thinking time they needed to be able to write freely. Using Drama gave the class ownership of the story – although they stuck to the basic elements of the Noah’s Ark story, they felt able to take it creatively in their own direction and give the characters their own personality. By only giving the class part of the story at the beginning of the session, the children needed to become active learners and participants rather than simply passive listeners and verbal responders.

The class were given responsibility for the Drama session as co-participants with the teacher in role and were able to shape the story towards where their interests lay. The teacher’s role changed from teacher to facilitator and she willingly relinquished any individual ownership of the outcome.

Drama Lesson Two

Stage: Year 6

Length of lesson: 65 minutes

Subject links: English, PSE, Geography

Resources: Information from the Diocese Web-site, prepared prompt cards for staff, sticky labels.

The aims of the lesson

One use of drama has been to raise standards in writing. We also had to fundraise for the Diocese Lent Project 2006 to build a Primary school in the Mellawassal slum, Madurai, South India.

Our aims:

- To use ‘Teacher in Role’ to raise awareness of the issues involved in the year 6 fund raising project
- To lead the children to plan who they could write a formal letter to in order to ask for contributions to the fund raising

Our objectives:

- To remind children of the drama contract
- To briefly warm the children up using a favourite game ‘Mix and mingle’
- To set the scene for the drama through role play by teacher and teaching assistants
- To involve the children in the drama, to develop suggestions for how we can help the deprived communities
- To make a decision about how we can raise sponsors or money
- As a follow-up in English, to write a letter asking for permission to do an activity or to invite sponsors or support.

The Lesson

Before the lesson... the teacher prepared support staff by giving them prompt cards with a character on and some facts and

comments that would help them to role play a particular character.

The teacher began the lesson...

by playing Mix and Mingle (2mins) and then initiated drama with T and TAs in role, discussing the problems of the village (2-3 mins). The characters were a child working in the slums collecting rags, a child who has had the chance to go to school as a result of the Trust’s help, a mother of some of the children living in the slums and a field worker helping in the slums.

The teacher then... came out of role to fill children in on what they have seen, give details of the environment and the purpose of the activity which was to get into the setting and begin to feel what it was like for the different people involved.

The pupils were invited to join in as a character who might be involved in improving the environment in the slums –

eg. more children from slums, English children, English schoolteacher, teacher from new schools already built, health workers, architects, builders, lorry drivers for the deliveries. The use of character stickers helped the children to be clear who they were talking to and what their viewpoint might be.

Following this role play, we went on to 'Still Imaging' to get children to capture one of the points that had been discussed in their groups. One or more images were recreated. We then went on to 'Thought tracking' by touching the children on the shoulder whilst in their image, so that they could share their character's thoughts and offer an insight into their viewpoint. This was not originally planned for but it worked really well.

At the end of the lesson... we split into 4 groups in order to discuss what we could do to help. Smaller groups enabled less articulate and confident children to feel more confident to contribute. We came back into a class circle to share ideas on how to fundraise for the slum area and to find out how they felt about the drama session.

After the lesson the children each planned a letter they would write and then for homework, took 35 mins to write a polite, formal letter, set out correctly explaining what they want and why they want it from the person/people they are writing to.

The teacher and teaching assistants said... 'The children responded so well to the staff in role. The prompt cards were essential for reassuring my TAs and

enabling them to input accurate information confidently.' *Teacher.*

'I was fascinated by the responses of the children: they were all involved and really thinking about what it must be like for those poor slum children.' TA

'I am sure the fund raising was more successful because the children had really engaged with the children in the slums, as if they had really engaged with them.' TA

The children said...

'I did not realise how lucky we were to have our new school.'

'Doing drama is great fun, you can be someone else.'

'Our Drama contract makes sure everyone can join in and knows how to get on.'

'I'm glad I wasn't a child in the second world war.'

In this lesson there was evidence of creativity when... the children took the starting point initiated by the adults and generated their own questions and answers when in role as the various workers. The Still imaging needed the children to work together, to internalise their experiences and to create an encapsulation of an aspect of their role play.

In this lesson there was evidence of learning when ... the children took their newly acquired knowledge and incorporated it into their formal letters to adults giving information and requesting support.

Drama strategies and conventions used

- Teacher/ Adult /Child in role
- Still imaging
- Thought tracking

Why use drama?

The advantages of using drama were it enabled the children to be taken to Mellawassal within the safety of our classroom. It was enjoyable, good fun and it motivated the children.

The use of 'Still Imaging' in order to focus our attention on an idea and the discussion that followed reflected the depth of thinking that had preceded. When we took the children into 'thought tracking' most children responded and some, including a statemented child, contributed a very thoughtful observation or comment that would probably not have happened through an ordinary classroom discussion.

Through drama we introduced and engaged with the life of the Mellawassal Slum children and considered how their lives compared with ours. The conversation that followed about how much we had and took for granted was thought provoking resulted in the children being highly motivated to raise funds to help pay for a school.

The writing activity that followed was linked directly to our SATS preparation and the children had to each produce a formal letter that had been written out at home as part of their independent homework. They then typed it up (if it had not been generated on a home computer), wrote out the envelope and sent it off. This is not ground breaking work but the motivation to produce a letter was stronger because they were going to benefit if they got a good response. I have made use of the drama to motivate the children and take them into experiences they would not get from sitting at their desks.



Drama Lesson Three

Stage: Year 8

Length of lesson: 50 minutes

Subject links: History / English / Citizenship (bullying / outsiders)

Resources:

Photocopies of 17th century woodcut depicting farming activities

A photo of an old woman in a white scarf

A white head scarf (for outsider)

A winter coat (for witch finder)

The aims of the lesson

- To enact a day in the life of a 17th century peasant
- To understand how persecution of so-called witches was possible
To develop empathy for an outsider

The Lesson

The teacher wanted to... use the students into role of villagers and allow them to meet an outsider and a witchfinder.

The teacher began the lesson by... asking the students to say what they could see on the woodcut. She asked them to describe the clothes and the activities in the scene. She asked them what the people did not have eg. electricity, running water etc. She asked them to decide whether the people had a hard or easy life and justify and explain their answer.

The teacher then... asked the students to form families of young and old characters. She helped them choose 17th century names and asked them to create their homes – a clear door in mime, somewhere for a fire, a bedding area with imagined straw etc. She asked them to make decisions about where food was stored and where their land was and to lie on their straw bedding in the night. She asked them to show her what their character did as the cock crowed and it became light. She took them through different parts of a day on the land, guiding decisions where necessary. Once the students were busy performing their farming jobs, TIR entered various homes for company.

The students... responded well to the in-role work and developed some activities appropriate to a peasants' lifestyle. All were interested in the teacher in role (TIR) and responded well to the old woman in the white head scarf. Some gave her eggs or milk.

The teacher then... brought the students out of role. They returned to a circle of chairs. The teacher asked them to comment on their activities and labours. She then added an extra item to each families' story; Your family has lost two cows this month – both dead... Your apple tree blew down in a great storm three weeks ago etc.... She asked them if they knew why these things had happened but immediately put on the coat and stood as TIR as witchfinder.

The TIR as witchfinder explained why he was in the village and asked them if they had seen anything or anyone strange. One student mentioned the old woman in the white head scarf. One boy was angry that she might get the blame. Many students wanted to know if she WAS a witch. The witchfinder encouraged them to help him get rid of evil from their village. The students discussed whether or not the old woman fitted the witchfinder's description. The teacher gave each student a picture of an old woman with a white scarf.

The teacher then... set a writing task: *My character (named ...) saw the old woman doing / saying etc. He thinks she is a witch / not a witch because...*
Own name: My own opinion of this is...

At the end of the lesson the teacher... praised the class for their involvement, perceptive observations and their team work in role. She praise those who had defended the old woman and /or shown kindness. She told them how awful she thought the witchfinder was.

After the lesson the children... asked if the old woman could come back again. Some wanted to know for sure whether

she was a witch or not. They clapped the teacher in role.

The teacher said... *'Some could definitely see and understand how events were being manipulated. One boy in particular kept defending the old woman. One group of three agreed with the witchfinder and then with the boy and then with the witchfinder again. They wanted to throw her out of the village just in case but not harm her. All the students were fully accepting of the TIR work and their behaviour was easy to manage whilst in role.'*

The children said...
'Can the old woman come back again?'
'Is she REALLY a witch, then?'
'Don't be so stupid, she's just an old woman – she's probably got Alzheimers or something'
'I like doing history like this'
'You were good, Miss. You stayed in role.'

In this lesson there was evidence of creativity when... the students created their own 17th century peasant, cottage and daily routine, as well as when they were interacting via improvisation with the TIR

In this lesson there was evidence of learning when... the pupils engaged with the woodcut and showed their characters miming appropriate tasks, as well as in the group discussion of the old woman. There is evidence of opinion and explanation in the written responses.

Drama strategies and conventions used

- Daily routine of a character
- Teacher in Role
- Spontaneous improvisation

Why use drama?

Active drama brings history to life. Students stepped into the skin and shoes of 17th century peasants and had clearer experiences via physicality and activity. Drama engages a wide variety of learners. For a low ability history group drama can be a dynamic motivator.

D4LC

In this section, the two drama consultants on D4LC, **Pam Howell** and **Kate Fleming**, give their personal responses to the project.

Reflection on two research schools

Kate Fleming

The D4LC project continues to generate in depth discussion about teaching and learning. It highlights the importance of creativity within this combination, and the crucial role imagination plays in high quality thinking. It reveals a tension in classrooms between the assessment driven curriculum and the recognition that affective learning is potent and an integral part of the cognitive domain. Surprisingly perhaps, it reinforces and sharpens the awareness that, as our culture changes, so does the way in which children learn, and consequently the way in which we teach. Learning and the desire to learn both in and out of the classroom, during and after school, can no longer rest complacently in academia.

The examples, here, of evidence collected from two very different schools point to this very much wider definition of learning. In the two schools, an inner city infant and nursery school and a learning support unit in an urban primary school, problems in learning were identified as emanating from social, economic, intellectual and creative problems. The inability to play imaginatively and collaboratively seemed to be an indicator of these problems and was identified by the class teachers as an area for improvement in their classrooms. These became the basis for their respective research questions:

- How can role play encourage literacy and develop writing skills?

- Can Drama help these children to function more effectively in society?

The imaginative play areas

In the Infant School, the reception class teacher believed that creativity is synonymous with happiness and that children are naturally 'wired up' to play and this provided a firm basis for her planning. The development of imaginative play areas encourages emergent writing activities, giving the children reasons to write and draw, to think creatively 'out of the box' and develop their curiosity. In role as explorers who were asked to help in an exploration adventure by teacher in role, the children were stimulated and excited to embark on their mission and discover the imaginative unknown.

The jungle, the mud hut and the igloo provide the imaginative play space of distant lands to allow them to recapture their sense of play and begin to make significant literacy progress. When the tigers asked the monkeys if they could swing from tree to tree in their sleep, the boys made signs for the mud hut and the monkey got stuck on the question 'Do you lay eggs?' one knew that creative imaginative play is alive and working.

In the Learning Support Unit, *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde set the scene for their imaginative play area. The children's responses revealed both known and unknown weaknesses, shortcomings, problems, and how disadvantaged

they were in comparison with mainstream children. They found it hard to co-operate, collaborate, and think beyond themselves. They struggled to become another person, many only wanting to be animals or small children: empathy seems impossible. Their responses were often violent, reducing the action to guns, killing and fighting. Many children, especially the boys, wanted to make the giant an evil monster, a werewolf or a nasty cruel character who eats children. At first, they seemed incapable of adopting the giant's point of view. Would the drama be of any benefit, here?

Language development

The opportunity to suspend disbelief and to make an imaginative leap into the make believe world through dramatic play did help them to appreciate another person's perspective, how they might be feeling, thinking, and the kind of language they would use. In both case studies literacy improved. In the Learning Support Unit, Drama enabled the children to access parts of the curriculum hitherto beyond them, or presumed to be beyond them, developing their fragmented language skills without being restricted by the written word. Their writing did improve as they had more ideas about what to write, a richer vocabulary and more focus and concentration. Purposeful writing opportunities through structured dramatic play also stimulated the younger children. The experience

of imaginative role-play motivated the need to write, draw, make marks, and commit to paper with confidence.

Problem solving

Months into D4LC four reception children were playing outside as 'Traction Man and his friends' trying to rescue a paper bag caught in a tree. Their play shows imagination, they are letting each other speak and waiting for replies or confirmation of their ideas:

- F. *I've got super tracking hooks on my pj's. I can save the paper.*
- D. *I am Traction Man.*
- K. *I am super hero. We need power to solve this problem.*
- D. *We need fire in our shoes. It's a problem.*
- K. *I have special fire power to get us down the fence. I'm getting some! Two for me and two for D.*

They are problem solving, working things out together in role as Traction Man and his friends. Their imaginative work is collaborative ('We need power to solve this problem'), something that enables them to go from their existing thinking and towards a recognition of the importance of sharing as a way to develop ideas. They learn that a joint approach to 'this problem' gives each of them a sense of satisfaction that also develops them as learners.

A space mission drama

By allowing the children to talk and listen to each other and to work together to solve problems, the Drama gave a purpose for working together rather than fighting with each other. What better learning for citizenship? Through the Drama the children are invited to use the imaginative opportunity to go on a mission to an unknown planet to create a new community in space: to build a caring, exciting, peaceful, self-sufficient place in which to live and

where they are valued.

This is a poignant offer for children for whom this planet offers little; they have the chance to get it right this time. Their Drama 'occupations' nearly all linked with their own interests – water safety expert, fire fighter, nurse and palaeontologist. They chose appropriate spaces in the classroom for their space station areas: the computer became the control deck, the soft chairs the sick bay, and the cooling area the kitchen. The shortage of staff in the sick bay necessitated a 'first aid course': a real learning experience linked with Science and a meaningful context to teach essential life skills. All done in time to cope with a fire in the engine room on the space station! A teacher recorded that, 'all of the children seemed completely involved when in the Drama, some of them quite emotionally involved'.

Positive behaviour management

Behaviour management in both classes was generally a cause for concern, but the teachers found that the Drama created a structured environment which encouraged the children to focus, stay on task, and develop their concentration. They found that rather than Drama being a 'free for all' where chaos reigns and everyone does what they like (a sixties legacy finally to be blown apart), the rules within Drama helped behaviour management, encouraged the children to control their own behaviour and gave reasons for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

On the space station all guns and ammunition have to be locked away for safety reasons thus reducing chances of violent behaviour. Whereas previously the children seemed to resent being asked to put pen to paper they now marched happily off to Africa or the Jungle to explore and willingly wrote, because it was necessary for the explorers to record their findings.

Summary

The level playing field which the Drama landscape provides enables the children to participate equally whatever their cognitive ability. It encourages creativity in all children and an environment conducive to learning. The teachers found that the Drama engages the children, captures their attention and motivates them to work together to solve problems, and to appreciate the value of collaboration. This affects their behaviour because they know that what they did affects the team project, they sense the interdependency and their contribution to the success of the mission whether it is rescuing a paper bag or in setting up a community in space. Working in an imaginative framework deepens empathy, develops creative thinking and the need to absorb information and conceptual understanding:

'Children enjoyed learning about what an astronaut wears and added some of their own information.... We had a really detailed discussion about how to solve the problem of the loose panels' (Teacher's journal)

The reception children and those from the Learning Support Unit are from two contrasting but challenging environments. What they all need is the support and encouragement to become positive learners - who see and believe in each other as learners. Drama creates opportunities that feed into their development and their knowledge of learning. And it was this the two teachers found potent and exciting in exploring their research questions and what confirms their dedication to the use of Drama activities in their teaching. The drama clarified their awareness of the need for all children across the whole educational spectrum to work affectively across the curriculum: bringing to the forefront the fact that, in good practice, every child really does matter in the 21st century.

D4LC

The better the drama, the better the learning

Pam Bowell

It is a welcome development that the National Strategy embeds a greater expectation of teachers employing a range of drama strategies across the ages and phases. One of our project objectives has been to build upon this good foundation and offer a programme of support to enable colleagues to extend and enhance their confidence in using drama for learning and creativity so that they might move to a stage beyond the basic use of strategies such as 'hot seating', 'still image' and 'conscience alley' into whole class dramas. This has been especially important for our Key Stages 1 and 2 participants where the majority of teachers have had little in the way of previous ITT or CPD in drama. Some teachers found the process challenging, to say the least! However, the exciting and rewarding outcome for the D4LC team has been how brilliantly D4LC teachers have risen to that challenge and have taken to process drama rather like ducks to water. With the support of the project, they have been able to see the benefits for the children in their classes and have recognised how very far whole class drama goes towards fulfilling the spirit of current government priorities in their own practice:

'Excellent teaching gives children the life chances they deserve... Enjoyment is the birthright of every child. But the most powerful mix is the one that brings the two together. Children learn better when they are excited and engaged – but what excites and engages

them best is truly excellent teaching' (Excellence and enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools, DfES 2003)

And as part of this, they have also had the chance to see that drama can provide a powerful process through which their belief in creativity as fundamental to successful learning can be put into action.

D4LC and OfSTED inspections

One serendipitous product of D4LC has lent further support to this. By chance, several of the D4LC schools had OfSTED inspections during the course of the project and in each report, the lessons observed that included whole class drama were uniformly commended for the quality of teaching and learning in evidence – several being deemed 'outstanding'. These events gave the individual teachers and schools involved a great deal of confidence in what they were doing as their efforts were recognised in this crucial manner. Moreover, because of the D4LC support network, in which the project teachers regularly met to share experiences and good practice, the news of OfSTED approval spread through the group and provided a boost to confidence for everyone, including the D4LC consultants!

What the inspection visits happened upon were D4LC schools using drama across the curriculum, not just within literacy. This was, in effect, a snapshot of what was happening across the project generally

as another of our aims for D4LC was to promote how whole class drama enriches teaching and learning across the curriculum. In fact, within the action research focus schools, although a significant number chose research questions initially centred on drama's effect on aspects of development in literacy, many also chose to examine the potency of drama's role in a broader range of curriculum areas and still others evolved in this direction as the project unfolded.

Cross-curricular links

Through D4LC, teachers who had had relatively little prior experience of process drama had the opportunity to recognise its cross-curricular potential. Working with project consultants, and being supported by them in their own classrooms, helped participants to recognise the content-rich, layered nature of drama and gain confidence to capitalise on the multi-faceted learning opportunities embedded within a well-structured drama.

So, among other places, lessons took us on expeditions to the rain-forest and tropical islands, to other planets, to different periods of history and to fantasy worlds. Whilst stimulating writing might have been the prime motivation for some of the dramas, others used the drama to engage children in PHSE, history, creativity, problem-solving, scientific and mathematical understanding.

Moreover, the evident enjoyment and engagement with their learning demonstrated by the children gave

further encouragement to the project participants to develop their drama work, further.

Positive responses from all

The voice of the child as well as that of the teacher has been actively sought as part of D4LC. The delightful assertion by Ryan, aged 6, that 'drama helps me learn because it helps my brain', is typical and appears in various wordings in just about all of the pupil questionnaires.

Such positive feedback from the children, coupled with the teachers' own on-going evidence of enhanced pupil performance, was persuasive and many teachers, especially in the action research focus schools, were motivated to examine more deeply the way in which drama works, as the project unfolded. Suspending disbelief within the protection of 'make believe' allows risks to be taken, ideas to be mooted and discussed, consequences of actions to be revealed, decisions to be made, emotions to be explored and provides the mechanism for self-expression and imagination to flower.

D4LC teachers have embraced this process, recognising that working in role with children inside the drama means that they are working in creative partnership with them. As the project has unfolded they have developed their confidence in taking risks and allowing their classes the opportunity to take responsibility for helping to shape the direction of their own learning – with increased motivation towards learning and the enhanced learning outcomes generated by a sense of ownership, the happy consequence.

One reflection, it is the total D4LC package that has been the key to the success of the project. Any single element, whether the launch conference, the regular twilight sessions or the visits from a consultant or an AST, would have been beneficial to some degree, but in combination the rich mixture has provided

the greatest chance for on-going good practice to be embedded – both in the work of the individual teachers and also more generally within the participating schools. The numbers of schools committed to continuing and expanding drama practice in the light of D4LC is telling. The comment from one Head, exemplifies what is being put in place in a significant number of D4LC schools:

'It's now a priority target on the School Development and Improvement Plan with a budget and a timetable.'

D4LC and real evidence of success

Those of us who have been teaching drama for a long time could regale all who will listen from now until next Christmas about the effectiveness of drama for learning and creativity. We have a legion of examples from our collective experiences. However, anecdote is one thing, but in this outcomes dominated climate in which we work, evidence is altogether another and a further aim of D4LC has been to provide evidence to support our experiences and beliefs.

With 60 schools involved in the project, the external evaluation process has produced significant and substantial quantitative and qualitative data about the power of whole class process drama as a means to enhance learning and creativity. But, in the end, what is happening with individual teachers in their classrooms brings the reality of D4LC and the achievements of its participants home in a way that is tangible.

So, a return to the logs of two teachers, one with a Year 2 class and one with a Year 7 class, will provide a grounded place to conclude.

The Year 2 class had a number of challenging children and the teacher's research focused on investigating how drama might enable reluctant readers, especially boys.

At the end of her diary, the Year 2 teacher wrote:

Using drama is so rewarding and the benefits are immense. All the children, not just the reluctant boys, are now so motivated in their writing, they really see a purpose and are eager and enthusiastic. Drama can be used across so many different areas of the curriculum and turns the whole class, including day-dreamers, the worriers, the 'I can't do it' kids, into excited, enthusiastic and creative learners. I now have an amazingly confident, expressive and enthusiastic bunch of drama lovers! A class with drama is a happier place.

In her diary, the Year 7 teacher wrote:

In answer to the question 'How does drama influence children's creativity?' I would say 'significantly'.

In answer to the question 'does drama help children learn?' I would say 'Yes! Across the entire curriculum'. Teachers believe it, children believe it and OfSTED believe it too.

There are, of course, teachers who are still wary of drama and the implications for CPD are not to be underplayed. However, D4LC has proven a great success and generated a model that is sustainable and transferable. The hard evidence that the project research has produced reflects this and provides the foundation on which a D4LC teacher wrote:

**'Children love it.
Children learn with it.
Teachers should teach it.'**

National Drama is committed to providing the support for them to do just that.

D4LC - Drama for Learning and Creativity

Innovative - developmental - sustainable - transferable - successful



Whole class cross-curricular drama is highly motivating and enjoyable for children and students of all ages. Through drama, teachers and classes together can safely imagine they are other people in different times, places and situations with issues to explore and problems to solve. Working in role is a powerful way of learning and teaching creatively across the curriculum. This drama resource folder and DVD support schools to successfully develop whole class drama for learning and creativity and to evaluate its impact.



D4LC offers an innovative curriculum approach which:

- supports teachers to develop pupils' creativity and learning
- establishes a network for teachers using drama to teach the National Curriculum
- extends teachers' practical knowledge of a range of drama strategies and conventions
- supports and encourages action research into drama's impact on learning and creativity
- provides successful drama lessons across subjects and across key stages
- gives access to specialist drama support through the leading drama subject association, National Drama and through Advanced Skill Teachers
- generates a growing bank of drama lessons and D4LC updates contributed by teachers across the UK.

The D4LC folder and DVD will be of interest to all teachers, schools and local authorities wishing to promote teaching for and with creativity through working in role. It sets out a rationale for the use of whole class drama throughout all phases of education and links it firmly to school improvement and the Every Child Matters outcomes.

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