

**The Social Drama of a Learning Experience:
How is drama appropriated as a pedagogical toolkit in
secondary classrooms?**

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for the degree of DPhil*

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They all sat down, took out their books, quills and parchment, and were talking when he finally entered the room. Lupin smiled vaguely and placed his tatty old briefcase on the teacher's desk...

'Good afternoon,' he said. 'Would you please put all your books back in your bags. Today's will be a practical lesson. You will only need your wands.'

A few curious looks were exchanged as the class put away their books. They had never had a practical Defence Against the Dark Arts before...

'Right then,' said Professor Lupin, when everyone was ready, 'if you'd follow me.'

Chapter 7: The Boggart in the Wardrobe

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

ABSTRACT

The thesis presents a qualitative study which examines teachers' and pupils' experiences of drama tasks in secondary school subject lessons other than Drama, where the tasks are incorporated in pursuit of curriculum-defined teaching and learning goals. I take a cultural-historical perspective in my analysis, interrogating the possibilities for meaningful appropriations of drama as a pedagogical toolkit by examining social interaction and communication within the cultural context of the classroom and how these practices may have developed over time.

Set in four secondary school classrooms in the UK, the study focused on the experiences of teachers, (who are not trained drama specialists), and their pupils as they undertook drama tasks as part of curriculum lessons. I carried out a series of lesson observations, supplemented by interviews with participants. Using Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Cole 1996, Engeström 1987, Engeström 1999) as a heuristic tool, I created an analytical framework that explored the tensions between communicative tools, rules of the classroom space, and teacher-pupil and peer relations. This theoretical stance appreciates both the dynamic nature of classrooms and the possibilities for pedagogies of choice. The emphasis on tool-mediated action offers a fresh perspective in that it creates a structured and detailed framework for exploring the subtle and complex process of empathetic thought.

This study reveals some of the ways in which tensions occur and existing and historically-embedded cultural practices are brought to the surface, and reinforced or challenged. I provide extracts from the data to illustrate a concern for an assessment-driven acquisition of curriculum content is a particular constraint, along with varying opportunities for both teacher and pupils to construct a framework for spontaneous in-role action within the dramatic form. The appropriation of communicative tools, although influential in achieving goals, does not always preclude emotional investment in the tasks. Although there are shifts from teacher authority to increased pupil decision-making, the way in which the teacher and pupils operate in these drama tasks reveals as much about the established and reinforced learning and social practices of the classroom, as the way these practices are changed.

The research considers how drama as a pedagogical toolkit has developed historically, and it reveals implications for future study and practice relating to the understanding of drama-as-toolkit within formal educational settings.

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For my parents –
my inspiration and my education

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Aims of the research

The purpose of this research is to explore the ongoing historical development of drama in school classrooms; specifically how drama tasks are currently being incorporated into secondary curriculum subject lessons other than drama in order to work towards specific learning goals.

It is an investigation comprising case studies of classrooms in four UK secondary schools. The participating teachers each described a desire to achieve varying degrees of transformation in the pupils' meaningful engagement with the subject content, mediated by drama. My enquiry seeks to go beyond the individual teacher's and pupil's action, to understand: a) their relationship with others and the environment in, and with, which they interact; b) the culture of established practices in the classroom space that is developed over time. This thesis explores: the teachers' rationales for the appropriation of drama as toolkit; how these rationales manifest themselves in drama tasks as part of lessons; how the participants communicate their ideas; and how they negotiate the roles and responsibilities in the learning process.

1.2 Initial definitions

Drama is conceptualised in this thesis as a 'toolkit': a constellation of tools that has been historically developed for particular purposes, and is here appropriated by the teacher and pupil to achieve learning goals.

Here, drama-as-toolkit incorporates both the process of creating and presenting the in-role work as live interactive events. It also incorporates varied communicative tools that facilitate such interaction. To expand, the form of drama found in these case studies requires work in-role – action as if one were another person. This is perceived to require the ‘tools’ of empathetic thought and a commonly understood sign system relating to dramatic form, such as narrator and audience. It also requires the use of ‘communicative tools’, such as verbal and non-verbal action.

Drama tasks, like other lesson tasks, are contained events. They are defined by the teacher in content and duration, and involve specific tools and responsibilities. Specifically in classroom drama, they are designed to work towards particular learning goals, hence the term ‘task’ is used rather than the more general ‘event’. Appropriation means the way a tool is adapted – appropriated - for a particular learning goal. This and other definitions are expanded on in the Review of Literature and Methodology.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

1.3.1 Review of Literature

The Review of Literature (Chapters 2 and 3) is divided into two parts. It is not intended as an exhaustive account of each of the relevant areas, but to provide a context for the study – its research questions, methodology and findings.

Part One (Chapter 2) focuses on drama as a pedagogical toolkit and firstly discusses the history of drama in secondary classrooms to set the wider context for the findings and trace the development of the toolkit. It finds that historically, in UK secondary schools, drama informally existed in the classrooms of the 1960s and 70s, but, when a more structured curriculum was later imposed, some drama-specialist teachers successfully argued a case for drama to exist as a subject in its own right. In recent decades, experienced practitioners developed and shared models for ensuring progression

in dramatic knowledge and skills. However, the shift of pedagogical focus to developing responsible citizens and collaborative, reflective learners has prompted a renewed investigation into the possibilities afforded by drama as a pedagogical toolkit in other subject classrooms. I introduce the cultural-historical psychological research of Vygotsky as the main foundation to my conceptual ideas. I discuss the concepts of empathy and creativity, which have been cited as essential components of contemporary education, to which drama tasks are thought to make a particularly strong contribution.

Part Two (Chapter 3) introduces the cultural-historical perspectives on learning and development that have informed my research design and analysis and I expand on Vygotsky's views on learning as they are strongly influential in my thinking. I discuss the work of others closely associated with these perspectives, particularly regarding the communicative tools that can be appropriated by teachers and pupils in drama tasks and more generally in their interaction. This research is concerned with teacher-pupil and peer relationships, and so I discuss literature relating to these jointly constructed understandings, focusing the study on the interactive rather than individual experiences of the participants. Given the interactive nature of the drama tasks undertaken in the case study classrooms, this is an important consideration in the broader context of the teaching and learning under investigation. Lastly, I introduce my main theoretical framework, Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), which I deploy as a heuristic for understanding classroom activity.

1.3.2 Research Questions

The main research question is:

How is drama appropriated as a pedagogical toolkit in secondary classrooms?

In order to focus the data generation and analysis phases, this is broken into four subsidiary questions:

- 1. What are teachers' rationales for incorporating drama tasks in secondary curriculum lessons?*
- 2. How is dramatic form appropriated in drama tasks when working towards learning goals?*
- 3. How do teachers and pupils appropriate communicative tools in drama tasks?*
- 4. How do teachers and pupils negotiate rules and responsibilities in drama tasks?*

The Research Questions are discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.2. There, I expand on specific terminology, and explain the aim behind each subsidiary research question.

1.3.3 Methodological Process

The discussion of the first part of the Methodological Process (Chapter 4.3) evaluates the early stages of identifying and recruiting participants. It evaluates ethical considerations and the positioning of the researcher. It then discusses the preparation of material for field work. The second part (Chapter 4.4) addresses the transcription and representation of recorded material and field notes. It then traces the process of thematically coding data and the subsequent fine-grain and cross-code analysis. It then concludes by discussing the reporting of findings.

I take a cultural-historical perspective in my analysis, with the belief that a meaningful deployment of drama as a pedagogical toolkit can be understood by examining social interaction and communicative tools of verbal and non-verbal action, rather than the individual's experience, and in the context of the teacher's developing practices over time.

I view classroom interaction as involving both teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil (peer) relations. The teacher is the primary subject of enquiry, however, both in terms of capturing the essence of the classroom activity, and in maintaining a balanced focus in the research, it is important to also consider pupil goals and their roles and tool appropriation within the lesson tasks. Classroom activity is conceptualised as two overlapping and dynamic systems whereby the teacher and pupils are the

subject of each. The teacher has defined aims for the learning practices and eventual learning outcomes, and they and the pupils operate within a structure of rules and roles that are evolving over time. It is the relations and tensions between these elements that is the focus of my inquiry, taking into account the cultural context and its capacity for change.

1.3.4 Case Studies

This research comprises four case study classrooms spread across four secondary schools in the south of England: one History, one Geography, one Religious Studies and a Creative Curriculum (general studies and 'learning skills') classroom. The teachers, recruited through local contacts, had not had any formal training in drama, nor were they trained teachers of drama, although some had received some experience as part of their teacher professional development. The cases included both co-educational state comprehensive and single sex independent schools. The schools also had different rankings in Ofsted reports and GCSE results. Whilst the schools are different to each other, a similar approach was taken with the field work in each.

As the sole researcher, I spent an average of two weeks observing each lesson within a series that covered a single unit of work (one topic within the curriculum for that year group). The unit of work to be observed was suggested by the participating teacher, and discussed in pre-fieldwork interviews, as being an appropriate example of the way they typically incorporate drama tasks into their lesson activities. Data for the research was generated from observation of these lessons together with further interviews with the teachers and separate focus group interviews with pupils.

The Findings (Chapters 5-8) are presented with each case in a discrete chapter, rather than merged thematically or by research question. Each case reveals a different set of values and practices within their specific contexts and the intention is not to compare the cases per se. In each case I draw conclusions from the analysis of data. As the chapters progress, I also examine the emergent themes on a broader theoretical plane, referencing across the case studies. In the concluding chapter

(Chapter 9), I summarise the findings and develop a conceptual interpretation across the case studies as prototypes (Langemeyer & Nissen 2011, Ellis 2007), as well as discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the research.

1.4 Original Contribution to Knowledge

By researching in secondary classrooms other than drama classrooms, my research is distinct from the frequently-used research site of primary schools (Varelas et al 2010, Fleming et al 2004, McNaughton 1997) and I am contributing to an understanding of the different social space that is the secondary classroom and the more compartmentalised (or specialised) KS3 and KS4 curriculum. Recent research has taken place in drama classrooms (Gallagher et al 2010, Tam 2010, Sæbø 2009) and in the UK has also focused on practitioner intervention or partnership projects in schools (Thomson et al 2006, Sefton-Green 2007, Kendall et al 2008, Jones & Thomson 2008) coupled with the perspective that “drama does have a unique and important contribution to make to children’s social and political development” (Neelands 2009). My review of literature reveals a steadily expanding bank of research exploring the use of drama as a toolkit for curriculum learning and personal development by the teachers of different curriculum subjects, other than Drama and English. This research intends to add to this field by placing different curriculum subjects and classrooms contexts alongside each other in order to objectively discuss recent experiences through the lens of a distinct theoretical framework.

Methodologically, qualitative in-school studies that explore the pupils’ and teachers’ individual experiences can generate data through observation, interviews and written questionnaires or journals. However, O’Toole cites “a shocking gap in collecting and listening to the voices of the ones the partnerships are for” (O’Toole 2010:287). I intend to give voice to these teachers and pupils who “not star gazers looking down from ivory towers; they are contributors who all share in the sweat and toil of daily classroom practice” (Neelands 2011:5).

Research into spoken interaction in classrooms exists – including drama classrooms (Freebody 2010) - and classroom talk tends to dominate the interests of researchers in education (Scott & Morrison 2006). As explorations of physical gestures and use of space are perhaps marginalised, my research contributes to a concern for both verbal and non-verbal interaction. It is not concerned with the minutiae of verbal exchanges but takes the range of communicative tools and places it alongside ideas about the relationships and hierarchies of teachers and pupils, investigating the ‘live event’ as a whole.

My use of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a theoretical framework suggests the distinctive nature of my research in that it is known to have been applied in a few doctoral theses in the field of secondary education (Sellman 2003, Orr 2009, Gilmore 2010) and only occasionally in other research that explores drama in education settings (Boström 1999, Haught 2010). Here it is an opportunity to systematically use CHAT heuristically as an analytical tool to understand the dynamic action of drama-as-toolkit. I have found it useful in both framing my research questions and in the analysis of data when exploring learning goals and tensions in working towards them. The framework has enabled me to make sense of very complex interactions in a closely regulated social space and to identify opportunities and implications for learning.

Finally, it is important to note that, given my own working career, I take the perspective of a drama specialist and drama educator. However, rather than use this research to champion the short or long-term benefits of drama-as-toolkit, I contribute to a continued questioning and re-evaluation of the place of appropriated drama tasks in 21st-Century classroom cultures. I do not set out to judge whether the case studies present examples of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ teaching through drama tasks, but attempt to objectively enquire into what tensions and possibilities exist, and what perspective this adds to an understanding of the historical development of drama as a pedagogical toolkit.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE - PART ONE

'DRAMA IN SECONDARY CLASSROOMS – HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES AND DEVELOPMENT'

2.1 Aims and relevance

This chapter examines the historical development of drama in classrooms. I discuss the varying rationales for the inclusion of drama tasks and how these figure against the backdrop of shifting perspectives in education in the UK, particularly focusing on post-war attitudes. I discuss the changing perspectives of educational practitioners and the potential for drama as a pedagogical toolkit in working towards learning goals. I examine the concepts of empathy and creativity where relevant to drama tasks, in order to discuss the role of imagination and spontaneity given the demands of the curriculum – an argument that runs through the study. This sets the wider context for exploring the values, understanding and motivation behind the appropriation of drama-as-toolkit in the case studies of this research. Lastly, I discuss the possibilities for teachers' and pupils' use of a 'communicative toolkit' – of verbal and non-verbal acts - in drama tasks. This highlights the potential tensions arising from negotiating multiple interpretations by both teacher and pupils as actors and audience, and leads to the next chapter in which I discuss communication in the classroom more broadly.

2.2 - 100 years of drama in classrooms

2.2.1 Overview

Early twentieth century literature concerning drama in classrooms reveals a desire to foster an appreciation of scripted texts and their potential for theatrical performance. Literature from the

1960s onwards marks a notable shift to the promotion of drama being able to facilitate freedom of play and exploration. In these post-war years, this change in focus to the child's self-expression and personal development (Fleming 2008) would seem to explain the existence of drama in the classroom, and separate it from the more academic study of theatre found in universities (Jackson 2007). With the introduction of the National Curriculum, drama was not afforded formal status as a separate curriculum subject, although still an examination option, but was placed firmly as a way of delivering the requirements of the core skills of speaking and listening. Publications directed towards both teachers and researchers, such as *Drama from 5-16* (HMSO 1989) and the more practical guides of Neelands (1984), O'Toole (1992) and Saxton and Miller (1999), reveal an ongoing dialogue and debate about the nature of drama and its potential impact as a pedagogical toolkit. However, it cannot be assumed that the increase in literature regarding drama in education necessarily equated to a widespread increase in teachers across the curriculum actually incorporating drama in their classrooms, nor a widespread increased understanding of its forms and purposes.

The most recent literature and government policy in the field seem to broaden the scope further to address the concepts of creativity and skills for life. The introduction of the Citizenship curriculum has added to the scope for drama with projects in schools and communities re-awakening the ability for drama to powerfully "ritualise human experiences such as power, status, territory and conflict" (Braverman & Supple 2002:17).

The historical development of drama/theatre and education is well documented in theses and in publications such as Bolton (1998) and, more recently, Jackson (2007), Nicolson (2009) and O'Toole et al (2009). My purpose is not to fully replicate their studies but to highlight relevant shifts in policy and practice, tracing the development of drama-as-toolkit specifically in classroom settings and bearing in mind the specific demands of the subjects the teachers are required to lead. I do this in order to provide a context for exploring the values and experiences of the teachers and pupils in each of my case studies.

2.2.2 Defining 'drama' and 'drama tasks'

Drama in schools can take the form of curriculum drama involving the study of theatre techniques and styles but also improvisation and role play (Jackson 1993). The word 'drama' is derived from the Greek word for 'action' or doing (Stinnette 1973). In its early Western form, an actor spoke text as another character (rather than himself) alongside a chorus and in front of an audience (Pavis and Shantz 1996). The taking on of a role, of creating physical action in a different (fictional) scenario or expressing ideas as a different person, is the root of the 'in-role' drama that this research is exploring. In spontaneous improvisation the participants react to each other in-the-moment. This is contrasted with prepared improvisation which has been rehearsed, or with a scripted drama in which the plot, characters and dialogue are largely predetermined by the words on the page although with room for interpretation (Bennathan 2000). The decision to engage in spontaneous improvisation or scripted drama will depend upon the participants' aims and whether the context which they are operating supports it.

Drama in schools refers to tasks undertaken in drama lessons but it may also be incorporated in other curriculum lessons, such as the case study classrooms in this research. In other cases, it might refer to 'school drama', which often involves voluntary participation in a production of a scripted play or musical. As another distinction, theatre (from the Greek *theatron* – seeing place) suggests a prepared presentation in a defined space and of the dramatic genre (Pavis and Shantz 1998). The actors will only share their rehearsed final product and the audience have culturally-mediated expectations of the presentation to evoke feelings such as amusement, joy or sorrow along with a common understanding of the conventions of theatre. The performance is both a prepared and a unique event (Pavis and Shantz 1998).

These events are distinct from drama tasks which focus on a process of discovery, rather than performance. 'Drama' in a classroom context may be used to refer to 'experiential learning' or 'imaginative enquiry' (Bowell & Heap 2010). Here the participants undertake a task or series of tasks

in order to come to some new understanding during their experiences, rather than the focus on a final presented product. This approach is common in early rehearsals of theatre productions but also in drama that does not have a defined completed presentation, such as drama therapy or forum theatre. The approach of practitioners such as O'Neill (1990, 1996) also define components of process drama as including: thematic exploration (rather than random sketch); a happening that does not depend on a script – the script is generated through action; a concern with participant's change in outlook; outcomes not predetermined but discovered; the leader working within and outside the drama (Taylor and Warner 2006). The expectation is also that the group take part in reflection and feedback, rather than relying heavily on a director figure (O'Neill and Lambert 1990). The expectations and understandings of drama processes by the participants are important to consider when exploring drama in a classroom setting in order to understand their actions and experiences. Classroom drama may rely on the leadership of a teacher already connected to the pupils as a member of the academic staff rather than an external practitioner and one who does not necessarily have their resources or professional expertise. This may have a bearing on the activity and outcome of the task.

2.2.3 The drama tasks in the case studies of this research

In this research, the lessons feature drama tasks that involve:

- Scripted in-role work
- Improvised in-role work
- Mime
- Freeze frame

Figure 1, below, summarises these and other tasks that are typically undertaken in classrooms, but it is not an exhaustive list.

Teacher-in-role	Teacher takes on role of a character to build belief. They may respond to student questions as with <i>hotseating</i>
Whole group-in-role	All students assume a role within a given scenario and interact as they believe that character would – their physical actions are improvised but the events and/or the speech may be scripted
Mime	Students undertake a series of physical actions but do not speak.
Freeze Frame	Groups show a moment in time from a longer imagined narrative – as if the action has been paused.
Hot Seating	An individual (in-role) is questioned by others in the group to find out more about the individual’s character they are portraying.
Conscience Alley	Two lines of students create an ‘alley’ down which a ‘character’ walks and listens to their own thoughts whispered by the students as they pass.
Thought-tracking	Individuals (in-role) speak aloud their private thoughts.
Sculpting	A student moulds another into a physical image in response to a word or phrase given by the teacher.
Still-image	Groups create still physical images in response to stimulus; may make fluid transition to a new image through controlled movement.

Figure 1 – Table summarising different drama conventions (Baldwin 2004, Kempe & Ashwell 2000, Neelands 1998)

I define ‘in-role’ as taking on a character other than one’s own, which may be interpreted by a spectator. Even when presented with a script, the participants are encouraged to go beyond what is provided as a stimulus and manipulate their own vocal and physical expression. They are forced to continually compromise and justify their ideas with and/or in the presence of others: co-actors and

audience. This is distinctive from what Jackson (1993) describes as the ‘simulation games’ that grew in popularity in schools and management training centres in the 1970s. They were highly structured scenarios that required decisions to be made in-role but no acting skill was required. They are a close relation to the workshop element of Theatre in Education, however do not involve any preceding or simultaneous performance by an actor.

Neelands stresses that these elements of drama (he calls them ‘conventions’) are the “building blocks” in a structure or process, using the analogy of ingredients in a meal (1997:93). Neelands and Goode (2000) stress that these elements can emphasise the “interactive forms of interchange...of the role of spectator and actor, rather than those conventions associated with performance where the roles...tend to be more clearly defined” (Neelands & Goode 2000:5). They note that each convention can mediate and transform meanings differently and that there are varying degrees of personal risk, skill and commitment required.

In this thesis I refer to drama – as in its incorporation in the learning process - as a ‘toolkit’, which is appropriated and mediates goal-oriented action. This is consistent with the concepts and terminology of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (see 3.4). It distinguishes the approach from the work set to be done by the teacher in the classroom. I refer to this work being set as a ‘task’. The drama ‘tasks’ will draw on one or more types as seen above (Figure 1) and on different communicative tools, such as speech or gesture. What constitutes a ‘task’, as opposed to simply the convention alone, is that the teacher may also define particular characters or scenarios and the task will be designed to work towards a goal.

2.2.4 Early emergence of drama in classrooms

Although theatre for young audiences can be traced back centuries (Jackson 2007), the work of Sussex Head Teacher Harriet Finlay-Johnson (1911) is often taken as being an originator of the use of

drama in modern classrooms (Fleming 2008). Her belief was that the first stage of successful learning is to encourage pupils to desire knowledge themselves and that this could be achieved through dramatisation. However, this was more concerned with the 'acting out' of subject matter than spontaneous improvisation (Bolton 1998). Bolton also notes it is certainly possible that the "wickedness of theatre" in the early twentieth century (Bolton 1998:5) made the teacher who tries to incorporate its methods at this time either very brave or potentially immoral.

Around the same time as the emergence of the ideas of Dewey, Caldwell Cook's publication, *The Play Way* (1917), stressed the importance of play and original thought, most notably the use of dramatisation in teaching literature. In schools, drama was firmly embedded in the study of English where it was something to be written, read or acted out (HMSO 1921). According to actor and director Granville-Barker, a "study of the drama, indeed, should properly begin for the adolescent not from the self-expressive, but from the exactly opposite standpoint" (1922:1) and then "having well studied a play, they really should have gained too much regard for it to be ready to defame it by crude performance" (1944). British Theatre at the end of the Second World War was perceived as being middle-class orientated, safe, and far from creative (Fowler 2005), thus it is unsurprising that drama in classrooms was yet to take hold.

Post-war change in arts education was initiated in 1946 when the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts became the Arts Council of Great Britain, setting up a new policy for public subsidy for the arts (Fowler 2005). In 1948 Peter Slade established his Working Party in Drama Education, promoting drama as something to allow children to play, express themselves and participate in some kind of collective effort. Here it seems that drama in classrooms showed its potential to swing away from the appreciation of theatre to utilising theatre-based rehearsal methods (O'Toole et al 2009) for different purposes in a different setting. However, with the emphasis on the Self and teachers attributing few technical skills to the students, Bolton believes only a limited attempt was made to draw links with dramatic form (1998).

1960s drama educator Brian Way's comparison between theatre, drama and education is important to this discussion of changing attitudes in teaching and learning and drama-as-toolkit. He makes the distinction that "'Theatre' is largely concerned with communication between actors and an audience; 'drama' is largely concerned with experience by the participants" (1967:2). This highlights a distinction between drama as geared towards a performance and drama as a process without necessarily an external audience or final showing. This distinction is an issue that is raised a number of times in the findings of the case studies in this research. Way stresses the importance of the 'scribble' stage in the development of many types of work; one might parallel this in drama with the idea of 'improvisation' being a similar opportunity for testing out ideas in a more relaxed environment that is free from the pressure of final performance.

He furthers his discussion by stating, "Education is concerned with individuals; drama is concerned with the individuality of individuals," and yet tests and examinations tend to be concerned with sameness (1967:3). Drama is championed as an opportunity to develop individuality and originality, and to "practise living" (1967:6). Way also spurred on the development of Theatre in Education as he reacted to his own frustration of taking work to schools where the audience of pupils were strictly segregated from the actors. Hence he set up the Theatre Centre to devise work that began to directly involve the audience in some way (Jackson 2007). He was concerned that elements of the dramatic form must also be mastered before it is deployed elsewhere:

We cannot use number to solve interesting problems until we have experienced and to some extent mastered number itself: no more can we use drama to understand or experience history or bible stories or literature until we have experienced and mastered certain basic aspects of drama itself. (Way 1967:7)

For Way, a person's development is not perceived as linear, as one might move along a 'knowledge' continuum of A→B→C, rarely going backwards, but on various levels in various key areas (Way 1967). Way's theoretical model of the individual (Figure 2, below) takes into account the person interacting with others and their environment. In the context of this research, it suggests a

developmental process link between the internal and external worlds of the person. One can recognise the sense of both process and context inherent in his ideas, with the core ‘discovery’ and ‘mastery’ of resources at the heart of one’s relationship to others and one’s environment.

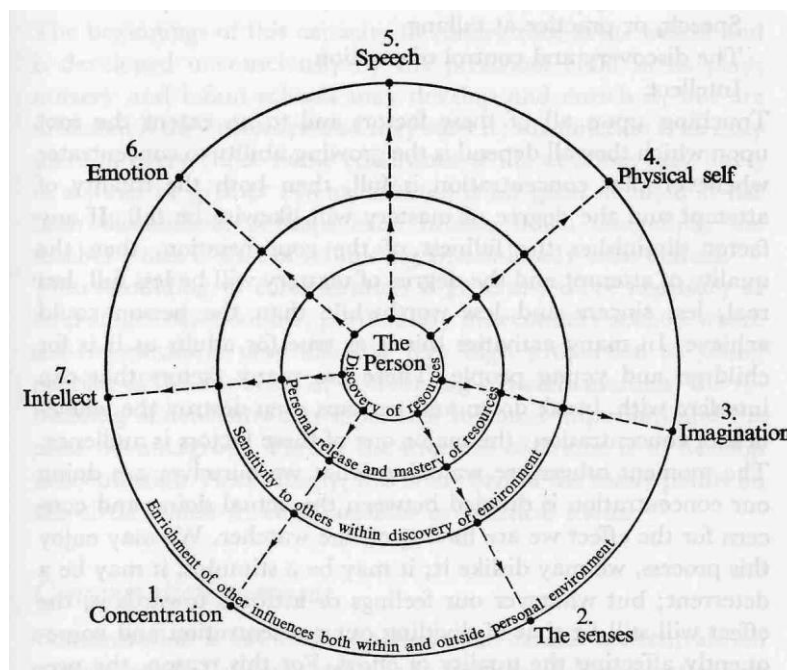


Figure 2 – Way’s theoretical model of the individual (Way 1967:13)

The seven points encompass physical, mental and spiritual attributes, a separate paradigm to Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences (Gardner 1993), which had an impact on teaching in the 1990s. The mention of ‘other influences’ by Way on the outer circle hint at a cultural influence by and on the individual, however this is not entirely clear and neither is a historical development of a person over time, which might be more appropriately conceptualised as a spiral effect.

2.2.5 Social action and empowerment

The publication of the Newsom Report in 1963 and The Plowden Report in 1967, gave further weight to the idea of ‘child-centred’ education (Bolton 1998), the former having reported failures to motivate secondary school pupils (Jackson 2007). Concurrently, the Arts Council made funding

provision for children's theatre in the mid-1960s (Jackson 1993), at the start of two decades of significant growth in the performing arts (1997).

In schools, an examination of the teacher-pupil relationship was prompted in part by the publishing of Vygotsky's work, characterised by the encouragement of pupils to become expert (Wertsch 2007). Similarly, in professional theatre circles, the role of the director as part of the ensemble was reassessed by practitioners such as Peter Brook who recognise the director's need to structure yet respond to the ideas of actors (Hunt & Reeves 1995). These two worlds merged notably in the work of Dorothy Heathcote MBE. She pioneered an early form of her approach, 'Mantle of the Expert' (Heathcote & Bolton 1995, Heathcote & Herbert 1985), based on the idea of meaning making being negotiated by the participants (Bolton 1998). The pupils become experts in an enterprise and have to negotiate problems collaboratively as they arise (Sayers 2011). The addition of teacher-in-role supplies a text that is both verbal and physical/visual to be 'read', interpreted and reacted to by the student-participants. There are two considerations needed here: first, the scaffolding (Mercer 1994) by the teacher of pupil's work compared to simply 'letting them play'; second, the teacher drawing the students' attention to the cultural rules inherent in whatever social context is being explored. Moreover both Heathcote and Bolton "insisted upon carefully structured opportunity for reflection by children in classroom drama work" (Jackson 2007:27).

The concept of empowerment through the facility and ability to discuss and debate takes a hold in the 1960s, both in education and in theatre. A popular example is Theatre Workshop's production of *'Oh What A Lovely War'* (Braverman & Supple 2002), which used sketches and songs punctuated by harshly contrasting images and statistics of the First World War to provoke social and political debate and critical thinking in the audience.¹ In the same era, Augusto Boal developed his Invisible Theatre and Forum Theatre forms in Brazil, influenced by the work of educationalist Freire, whose 'Pedagogy

¹ Other contemporary plays included 'Serjeant Musgrave's Dance' (Arden 1960) or 'Vinegar Tom' (Churchill, performed 1976, published 1978), where the audience is made aware of socialist or social-specific attitudes to an issue but also where hierarchies and traditions are strong influential forces in the drama and are placed under a critical microscope for the audience to consider.

of the Oppressed' was published in 1970. Audiences were invited to participate in the drama in order to feel empowered to change their situation. Boal's Forum Theatre was originally used in factories and work places, specifically for education and development, but quickly spread to other areas of society. It had the action frozen, discussed, re-run and reflected upon in order to seek new possibilities, "which in adapted form offered methods by which young people could exert more control over the problem-solving process" (Jackson 1993:28). A similar "atmosphere of experiment" (Jackson 1993:18) drove the expanding UK Theatre in Education movement, although the 1976 HM Schools Inspectorate reported their concerns at a lack of evidence of positive contributions to pupils' much-needed social and moral education (Jackson 1993).

A similar line of thinking in education was found in the Newsom report, 'Half Our Future' (1963) which recommended developing communication and critical thinking skills as preparation for adult life. It was also developed in the work of educationalists such as Barnes, who called for pupils to "take an active part in learning" (Barnes 1976:28) with exploratory talk and the negotiating of different ideas and experiences helping to form new understandings. For me, the work of Barnes and his contemporaries signals another shift in focus to the language of the classroom, with increased research in the area of teacher and pupil talk (Edwards & Westgate 1994). At the time, there were concerns of the lack of articulated goals (de Castell et al 1986:5) and low standards of literacy (Jackson, 2007:39). This was followed by research into interaction and talk in the classroom, particularly the primary classroom, which also challenged the Piagetian idea of the child as a 'lone scientist' (Alexander 2004:7). It is important to stress that Barnes does not believe learners construct models of the world which are random or completely new. They are reworking previous experiences and interactions. If school learning is social, rather than memorised 'school knowledge' (Barnes 2008), this raises the question of how classroom drama might provide for learners according to these perspectives, hence the third and fourth research questions, which focus on teacher and pupil communication and relationships.

2.2.6 Creativity and the Adolescent

Vygotsky's work was first published in English in 1962. The work of psychologists Dewey and Piaget had already been influential in the field of education in the 20th Century (Dudek 2000), in particular Piaget's theories on a child's development of thought through their experience in the world. Vygotsky's work proved its relevance to the contemporary fields of linguistics and psychology, and had a large impact on educational thought (Britton 1987, Daniels 2001). In considering the development of a child's thinking, Vygotsky focused some of his work on the concept of 'creativity' and the period of adolescence in a child's development, both relevant to research concerning drama in classrooms.

In 'Imagination and creativity of the adolescent' first published in 'Adolescent Psychology' in 1931, Vygotsky distinguishes a child's 'visual thinking' being governed by sense from the intellectual 'abstract thinking' of the adolescent. Around the onset of puberty (11-12 years of age), there is a transition from the imitative and less purposeful child play to an active, personal and yet detached fantasy in the adolescent. Drawing from the work of contemporary German psychologists, Vygotsky sees the adolescent imagination as being caught up with inner desires and the fulfilment of emotional needs (Vygotsky 1998). The importance of this in relation to education is not missed and Vygotsky made reference to investigations carried out in schools at the time.

The intellectualism which used to dominate education, tended to develop the child in only one direction, and its approach was one-sided, because it regarded him primarily as a logician and logicized the entire system of his psychological operations. (Vygotsky1994:274)

As a child's thinking is rationalised, its capacity for creative imagination may decline until it is barely used. On the other hand their thinking may be transformed by reason into intellectual imagination (Vygotsky 1998). Writing in 1965, Moffett voices his concerns on types of tasks, notably reading and writing, that stifle a pupils ability to abstract from their own experience (Moffett 1965). He cites Piaget and Vygotsky in describing the gradual socialising of a child's speech as their outlook

decenters. In order for the content to become less ‘matter’ and more ‘idea’ he believes it is essential to address another, and someone other than the teacher: “one must know the effects of one’s rhetoric on someone who does not...stand as an authority figure” (Moffett 1965:247). The concepts of drawing from one’s own experience, and of audience, are components of humans as social, reflexive beings. Vygotsky attempted “to capture the process through which children make meaning” – or sense – “of their social existence” (Mahn 2003:129), in other words how emotional experiences are internalised and understood, which can be different for individuals. Drama’s perceived capacity to involve the “creation of group meanings” (O’Toole 1992:98) may go some way to addressing Moffett’s concerns but such a process also requires examining as to how it is socially structured.

The term *perezhivanie* (переживание) is interpreted as Vygotsky’s unit of analysis to explore how the one’s environment affects one’s psychological development (Daniels 2008). The word *pere* translates as ‘the process of getting through’ as well as meaning ‘repeating’ and *zhivanie* comes from the verb *zhit*, ‘to live’. Hence the term means ‘living through’ (Kozulin 1991). The word *empathia* was not used in Soviet Russia but *soperezhivanie* was - so meaning ‘the same’ – which makes it about experiencing the same intense feeling as others, rather than merely comprehending, more like the English word ‘sympathy’ (Gladkera 2006). Daniels reinforces this concept by explaining how Vygotsky “understood *perezhivanie* as the integration of cognition and affective elements, which always presupposes the presence of emotions” (Daniels 2008:43).

Vygotsky problematised the work of the actor in rousing emotions in audiences and how far the actor is merely simulating reality (Smargorinsky 2011). Vygotsky’s chief interest is in the cultural development of communicative tools and the reliance on the actor and audience having similar understandings of the expressions that signify happiness, anxiety, frustration and so on (discussed further in Chapter 2.4). Moreover, Vygotsky saw a link between onstage drama and the drama of everyday life (Smagorinsky 2011), where dramatic tensions exist and one is defined by emotional

experiences. These ideas had an impact on educational thought but are also relevant to researching drama as a pedagogical toolkit, and how teachers draw on pupils' personal experiences.

Vygotsky perceived a relationship between mental functions and the development of concepts (Minick 2005). He saw a child's imagination and play as key to understanding the link between their cognitive and social development. Where play in the early years might be reproduced experiences, the development of abstract thought in an imagined space, where thought and meaning are liberated from their origins, allows the child to substitute one object for another – for example a stick for a horse (Vygotsky 1978). Ayman-Nolley (1992) highlights Vygotsky's belief that some departure from reality, through the activity of the imagination, is necessary for the true understanding of reality. In other words a combination of subjective thoughts and realistic thoughts constitute a creativity that is part of intellectual development. Social experiences influence “the development and maturation of both emotional and intellectual development” (Ayman-Nolley 1992:81) and where a child may not be able to distinguish between fantasy and the things he plays with, “an adolescent is conscious of his fantasy as a subjective activity” (Vygotsky, 1998:165).

This perspective on the development of the child can be seen to reverberate into the subsequent decades of educational practice, particularly that concerning drama across the curriculum in secondary schools. The next section expands on recent subject-specific literature and research, and on the concepts of empathy and creativity as core components of the curriculum.

2.3 Drama and the National Curriculum

There is little literature that describes the spread of drama in classrooms outside of the Theatre in Education movement that was itself threatened by funding cuts in the 1980s. Fines and Verrier's book, *The Drama of History* (1974) describes itself modestly as “an experiment in co-operative teaching” and “a striking short manual about an unconventional method of teaching,” reiterating

drama's marginal place in classroom practice. Evans (1984) describes a low level of the incorporation of drama in English classrooms as resulting not from teachers' lack of interest but from a lack of understanding of drama's purpose in education and how to link it to learning goals. The lack of training and guidance that she refers to is a different situation to the large number of recent publications of theoretical and practical guides to drama in the classroom and the number of current UK teacher training English courses that incorporate training in drama strategies. Nevertheless, the target audience still only represents a small proportion of teachers currently or in the future working in UK schools.

2.3.1 Speaking and Listening

The 1980s experienced firm political policies on education that influenced the existence of drama in classrooms (Nicholson 2009). Despite the 'Arts In Schools' (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 1982) report, presented to government to argue for broader curricula and increased arts provision, a concern that pupils were falling below expected standards in literacy and numeracy sparked a return to teaching the 'basics' and the values of traditional teaching (Nicholson 2009). The 1988 Education Reform Act introduced the National Curriculum that included 'optional arts' but refocused teachers' efforts on standards in literacy, even though the Cox Report (DES and Welsh Office 1989), described in-role work as important. As a result, Drama appeared as a subsection of English under the umbrella of targets for 'speaking and listening' skills. Having undergone a series of reviews since its introduction, the most recent inclusion (QCA 2007) does not differ much from the original. However, an earlier version (QCA 1999) lists drama 'activities' as "working in role" and "devising plays", whereas a more diverse list of 'approaches' and 'techniques' is evident here (Figure 3) in the 2007 version:

Key processes of ENGLISH KEY STAGE 3

2.1 Speaking and Listening

Pupils should be able to:

- j. use different dramatic approaches to explore ideas, texts and issues
- k. use different dramatic techniques to convey action, character, atmosphere and tension
- l. explore the ways that words, actions, sound and staging combine to create dramatic moments.

Different dramatic approaches: These include tableaux, hot seating, teacher in role, 'thought tracking' and forum theatre.

Different dramatic techniques: These could include: varying volume, tone and pace, use of pause, gesture, movement and staging, choral speaking, monologue and dramatic irony. These apply to both scripted and improvised performances.

Figure 3: From the English Programme of Study for Key Stage 3 (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 2007)

Communicative tools are also hinted at requiring guidance in point k. Elsewhere it suggests that pupils also “watch live performances in the theatre wherever possible to appreciate how action, character, atmosphere, tension and themes are conveyed” and “participate actively in drama workshops and discuss...the impact and meaning of different ways of performing and staging drama, wherever possible” (QCA 2007). These criteria suggest that not only can drama tasks be undertaken to pursue learning goals, but that a degree of understanding of dramatic form is also required.

2.3.2 Enquiry and Investigation – the contribution of drama tasks

There is limited published research into the use of drama by teachers in curriculum subjects other than English and Drama themselves. Within this small amount of literature there is considerably more in History than in Geography and Religious Studies, the subjects included in this study,

although this literature is being added to over time. First I discuss a sample of literature relating to the teaching and learning of History and Geography.

In researching the teaching and learning of History, Goalen and Hendy (1993) conducted research with two Year 5 groups to measure the students' historical understanding of a topic when one 'experimental' group had been taught using the techniques of educational drama and the other 'control' group were taught using more traditional methods. Although the levels of improvement in understanding were not statistically significant between the brightest in each group and the weakest in each group, the students in the middle ability range of the educational drama group had improved over the control group (Goalen 2001). Further research also revealed that drama "can provide the teacher with situations that help to promote discussion and to clarify ideas and points of view" (Goalen 2001). Students were able to take on the role of 'historian', commentating on and critically evaluating interpretations and evidence.

Referring to her research in a Geography classroom, McNaughton takes a similar stance that "the art-form allows us to go beyond the literal to explore the connotative meanings created through the verbal and physical engagement with ideas" (McNaughton 2006:40). This has strong links with the fundamental process of drama not only empowering the participant to take on the role and perspective of an individual, rather than be distanced/passive, but also requiring feedback and judgement of the action. It would seem to encourage a shifting perspective from merely the acquisition of 'factual' (in itself debatable) knowledge to enquiry and investigation. Goalen notes that the pressures of the National Curriculum threatened to stifle this through increased subject content and pressures from the Right to abandon 'trendy' teaching methods (Goalen 2001). He interviewed Heads of Department who had been known to incorporate drama into their history lessons, and were still committed to doing so, citing the following educational benefits:

- It promotes the acquisition of historical knowledge

- It develops historical skills including empathy and an understanding of interpretations
- It develops an appreciation of history through the high levels of enjoyment and engagement experienced through drama
- It promotes equal opportunities and the development of individual self-esteem

Hewison, writing in 1987 about the heritage industry, was more sceptical about such empathetic experiences, claiming that it created unreal and fantastical notions of the past, conforming to stereotypical assumptions of characters and creating a shallow understanding of the complexities of social history (Jackson 2000). For Jackson, research is necessary in testing out Hewison's criticisms:

If truly educational approaches to history are to do with generating a spirit of curiosity, enquiry and engagement, a recognition of the differences and similarities between present and past, and with showing that history is as much about lived experience as it is about dates, buildings and artefacts, then what function might theatrical techniques have in achieving such educational ends? (Jackson 2000: 202)

In 'Drama in the Curriculum', Somers (1994) makes a number of suggestions of activities suitable for curriculum subject lessons to potentially create "productive experiences" as well as deepened teacher perceptions of the possibilities afforded by drama tasks (Somers 1994:103). Many of these are along the lines of the 'debate simulation', whereby pupils are genetic scientists, town planners, environmentalists, Victorian factory owners, and so on, arguing their case. The suggestion of a task where pupils take on a role to reach a justifiable decision from the point of view of another is still prevalent in teaching guides (such as for Geography, Lambert & Balderstone 2000). For me this highlights the blurred boundaries of role play where pupils may be required to think empathetically, however, they are not necessarily challenged to alter their physical state or suspend disbelief in their normal classroom surroundings. May and Williams make the distinction that:

Role play is more concerned with the rules of behaviour that guide people's actions in social contexts. Role-play exercises are particularly effective in exploring how people *feel* about a situation. In other words, simulations may be successful in revealing something of the nature of the forces which shape history, while role-play can reveal something of the way people feel about such forces.

(May & Williams 1987:12)

The development of an issue-based curriculum infused with empathetic tasks, even simply writing letters, was suggested by Serf as a vehicle to help pupils see the legitimacy of subjects such as Geography (Serf 1989). A goal such as this potentially shifts the focus away again from understanding the nature of human behaviour in an objective manner to fostering a personal connection as a goal in itself.

Somers highlights the potential problem of distraction from the learning goal:

Students must be clear about the nature of the task. The gathering of the groups' evidence and the form of the inquiry must reward an understanding of the principles of [the subject] which underpin the exercise. The drama should not act as a cover for sloppy thinking, or be achieved at the expense of factual accuracy or...relevance. (Somers 1994:120)

This suggests that there may be a strong correlation between the decision to limit the immersion into a fictional scenario and the teacher's concerns for limiting inaccuracies or distractions from the learning goals, as this is their chief responsibility. Somers indirectly touches on a prevailing issue of justifying drama by linking it to specific curriculum goals; that drama may be a "dirty word" (Bowell & Heap 2010). Although drama tasks may have been viewed as contributing to personal and social development (Bailin 1993), the value 21st Century teachers ascribe is a pertinent question.

A second perspective on Somers' comment is that the very justification itself – of personal interest and relevance – may be a threat to other learning goals. This is taken up by Jackson (2000). His research in the late 1990s involved visiting a 'living history' village in Massachusetts, where, unlike the theatre-goer's anonymity, the visitor became onlooker-participant, able to come and go as they pleased and to ask questions of the in-role 'village dwellers'. This more active existence is central to

drama processes, as described above in the fostering empowerment and critical reflection. The only danger of First Person Interpretation, Jackson notes, is that whilst the historical characters seem more 'real', if they are uncomfortable with the notion of a 'performer' working 'in-role', visitors are more liable to leave with misinterpretations or even feel less inclined to ask questions.

A third perspective of Somers' concerns is the potential for multiple interpretations or a lack of objectivity, and the implication that a teacher is required to closely monitor the perceptions of the pupil participant. In other words, the teacher has a more complex role than merely setting up the task and resources. One might not be so concerned if the belief is that there can be a fusion of indicative and subjunctive (as is + as if) worlds (Schechner 1985). Learners may have the ability to be both participant and observer at the same time, generating the most productive learning experience (Witkin's 'Researching Drama and Theatre Education' Conference keynote speech, cited in Jackson 2000). The complex integration of learning styles is surely a difficult challenge as students simultaneously watch, listen, react and interact, at the same time negotiating both fictional and real worlds.

Jackson (2000) observed the work of the Young National Trust Theatre company, which created a Forum Theatre experience for school visits to heritage sites. The students, already primed for their role as groups of characters with a connection to the fictional scenario moved around the site interacting with actors at various points and finishing at a debate to discuss an issue relating to land ownership. The perceived positive outcomes included:

- a strong motivational effect
- a feeling of empowerment, the students given more of a voice and influence
- cooperative working and decision-making
- articulacy
- self-confidence

- an opportunity to ‘feel’ problems and identify more closely with types of characters

A criticism of the event was the distorted view that lower classes had easy access to those in positions of authority and that such debates can/could be neatly wrapped up with a simple conclusion and a celebratory dance in the courtyard. In researching drama in Geography, McNaughton found that the teacher is actually required to fulfil two critical roles in the process: firstly, in leading the pupils through the narrative, whilst responding to the pupils’ ideas; secondly, in the reflective phase by helping to sort and articulate ideas, and deconstruct meanings inherent in the dramatic action that took place (McNaughton 2006).

Walford (2007) reviews the development of simulations in geography education, reaching back to the turn of the nineteenth century. He finds a reinvigoration of curriculum materials in the 1960s, both in the UK and the US, which includes game and role play simulations of industry processes and environmental issues. These were then further developed and disseminated in professional development courses, publications and national projects (Walford 2007). He notes a significant change with the introduction of the National Curriculum, where, as with other subjects, freedom of experimentation was limited by new concerns for assessment. In considering in-role work in particular, he notes the “mental maturing” of empathy, the development of communication skills, and the expression of many different personal views as positive attributes (Walford 2007:61). The teacher, he believes, must encourage and manage contributions, and then, vitally, help relate the scenario to real-life situations and, with the pupils, evaluate the exercise for future use.

Further points for consideration include:

- The narrative structure that drama can impose, compared to actual/natural social interactions (real and imagined) that are often non-linear and more complex

- The degree of skill required in deploying communicative tools, specifically vocal and physical expression
- The amount of knowledge (of character and context) required for a portrayal that satisfies the participant's suspension of disbelief
- The teacher's crucial roles both inside and outside of the fictional scenario

These considerations are influential throughout this research. In particular, I focus on the relationship between the notion of tools and rules, which is framed through Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT).

2.3.3 Empathy in the context of drama and the learning process

Empathy is a key aspect of the curriculum that binds the participating teachers of this research together as they teach subjects that require pupils to understand the perspectives of others. Theoretical discussions reveal an importance placed on the *conscious* appreciation of the creative process in order to achieve the full potential of new understandings from empathetic experiences.

A sociocultural perspective leads me to define 'empathy' as the power of projecting one's own experiences and perspectives into another as object in order to contemplate and more fully comprehend them. If one takes the individual as an inherently social being, this description encapsulates the concept of an externally-informed inner process which is then projected back out onto the world. Empathy as a 'power' also implies a dynamic force that can effect some change, this being the new understanding of others in the world. The concept of a person as an 'object of contemplation' is also reflective of Vygotskian terminology (discussed in the next chapter). Franks (1997), drawing on the work of Vygotsky and Smagorinsky, finds an exciting collective expression of desire to experience other social roles in the drama tasks of 13-year-olds:

A complex desire – not just to *understand* the cultural forms and social forces which surround them in a purely ‘cognitive’ cerebral process – but as a form of understanding which is as much ‘felt’ as an affective force, in and through their bodies. Through this *corporeal* form of understanding, students may achieve some sense of mastery (however fleeting) over the forms and forces which surround them and threaten to hold them subject and powerless to act. (Franks 1997:144)

This ‘corporeal understanding’ is an important consideration for educators who use drama tasks that require a conscious appreciation of the link between internal thoughts and feelings and external action and expression. Pupils may require assistance in developing an appreciation; in other words, it may not be an automatically conscious process and it may require self-knowledge, attention to others and a societal understanding (Arnold 2004). Baldwin highlights the need for pupils to link real and imagined emotional experiences in classroom drama in order “to develop a plausible character” (Baldwin 2004:51), in other words, one that acts and reacts in a credible way according to their circumstances. Importantly, although this is a personal experience for the pupil, it is a “teacher and class mediated experience” (2004:51). Individuals need the mental agility to differentiate themselves from others and engage in the reflective process (Arnold and Hughes 2005), in order to internalise experiences as a key difference to rote learning.

In the UK, “polarized opinions on the merits of ‘empathetic’ approaches” (Jones 2000:300) have been caught up in the debate regarding the teaching of History. They are part of a longer-running development of perspectives on the nature of affective education which stems back to nineteenth century education reforms and the movements of the 1950s and 1960s (Best 1998). Understanding the actions of others as part of studying historical events is merged with a concern for the emotional well-being of the child and another is the development of appropriate moral values concerning both the school community and wider society. Marsden states that only in the 1960s and 1970s, compared to previous developments, did the work of the Schools Council achieve a better “balance between content, pedagogy and social education” (Marsden 1989:523).

Whereas the study of history and literature are cited alongside Personal and Social Education (PSE and its varied acronyms) as appropriate subjects to develop empathy for moral values, empathy is also required as a distinct skill for studying history, such as proposed by National Curriculum frameworks. Harris and Foreman-Peck (2004) consider this in detail. They note the difficulty of historical distance, of contemporary values and concerns being similar but also very different to centuries past. They recognise that “where one has no previous personal experience, the ‘virtual’ experience [is] offered by literature, drama, role-play” (Harris & Foreman-Peck 2004:2); in other words, reading, watching, and doing. Even though they are designed to add to personal experience by virtue of the imagination, they still require actual personal experience to make sense of what is being read, watched or done:

We draw on our understanding of what people generally do and feel to make inferences about what they are likely to feel given the facts of the case and our own personal life experiences. (Harris & Foreman-Peck 2004:3)

The usefulness to teacher and pupils in achieving a potentially deeper and more personal connection with the subject matter is discussed in a good deal of the literature in this field, however there are also questions raised as to the problems. Collier (2006) notes that just as an audience can have an emotional response and be engaged with the action onstage, they also have a conscious detachment, knowing it is separate from reality. The challenges, include firstly how to achieve a sufficient of degree of emotional engagement within the classroom context as well as, secondly, the difficulty in assessing such a subjective and part-hidden experience.

The third challenge is to reflect on the event in terms of one’s own participation, on the action of the group, and then on the relevance to whatever is being explored. To expand on these reflections, one might consider: a) one’s own participation – for example: *what I did, what I thought, how I felt, what my role was and how I interacted with others*; b) the event - *what others did, and the degree of success considering the objectives*; c) the wider context - *what the issues and judgements arising out*

of the event mean in terms of the topic of exploration. Without reflecting after the experience, the connection between personal response and content may not be fully developed, limiting the depth of understanding gained from the task.

Recent publications have considered the problems and processes of the teaching of Citizenship or Social Studies through drama tasks (Braverman and Supple 2002, McGuire 2001, Morris 2001). However, at the time of Vygotsky's new popularity following the translation of his works, the nature of drama and learning processes were also being considered by others. Courtney (1968) draws on the work of Vygotsky and Piaget in relation to drama. He identifies a lecture form of imparting knowledge as the process of teacher delivery followed by action by the pupil. What is more appropriate, and is a fundamental process of cognition, is the perception of an action, the 'doing' of it and then the describing and theorising. This is central to discussing the nature and effectiveness of drama as toolkit in achieving learning goals and leads in particular to the first two research questions: investigating teachers' perceived value of drama-as-toolkit, and how dramatic form is appropriated given the issues raised concerning empathetic processes.

Stinnette (1973) writes more abstractly on the links between aspects of religion and drama, describing liturgy as a recall and remembering through action contrasted with more spontaneous play being able to frame a problem to be solved and put before us something not previously seen. Although one might expect Religious Studies to also be at the centre of a discussion of empathy and learning, a review of literature has revealed limited research specifically into the use of drama in Religious Studies classrooms. In the important 1982 publication 'Drama and the Whole Curriculum' (Nixon 1982) a whole chapter is dedicated to the pastoral curriculum and yet role play techniques are mentioned in three short paragraphs, even though it is stated that "the skills of using role play should be at the finger-tips of every tutor" (Button 1982:70) to explore behaviour.

More recently, Winston (1998) has discussed the contribution of drama to Moral Education. This he views as a problematic area in postmodern climate of moral relativism (1998:4). He believes it is insufficient to merely teach social rules but that shared values can be explored, although there is always the potential for teachers to unwittingly project their own values. I argue that this is a danger not just in Moral Education but more broadly, particularly in the value of knowledge and understanding that is projected to pupils. Research may therefore focus on drama's potential for encouraging explorations of human values and behaviour, but also the potential for shifting perspectives on the ownership of knowledge and understanding, as Stinette began to do.

2.3.4 Cultivating creativity through drama

Twenty years after the emergence of Vygotsky's work, Csikszentmihalyi wrote on the nature of creativity. He states that "we cannot study creativity by isolating individuals and their works from the social and historical milieu in which their actions are carried out" (1998:325). To me this firmly locates the study of creativity within socio-cultural perspectives already gathering momentum at this time. More recent research in drama across the curriculum is strongly linked to projects that were and are prompted by policy directives of the last decade, concerning the creativity of young people.

Following fears of a literacy and numeracy dominated curriculum that drew on limited pedagogical practice (Baldwin 2004), the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education produced a report prior to the new National Curriculum 2000, entitled *All our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (DfEE 1999). It attempted to encourage more arts inclusion and advice for schools on how to promote pupils' creativity. This is not a recent phenomenon, and can be found in the work of Vygotsky, first published in English in 1962:

We should emphasize the particular importance of cultivating creativity in school-age children. The entire future of humanity will be attained through the creative imagination; orientation to the future, behaviour based on the future and derived

from this future, is the most important function of the imagination. To the extent that the main educational objective of teaching is guidance of school children's behaviour so as to prepare them for the future, development and exercise of the imagination should be one of the main forces enlisted for the attainment of this goal. (Vygotsky 2004:87-88)

Daniels et al (2007) highlight Vygotsky's argument that children are not more creative than adults but that they exercise less critical judgement over their imagination. So whereas an adult with developed rational thought might reject elements of their imagination if they do not have the tools to effect an external manifestation – to engage in creative action – a child might not. Adolescents are seen as being at some point along this spectrum.

The 'Arts' have been championed as a key arena to promote this creativity, but what the Arts are, highlights O'Toole, can be as broad or as vague as that which is not an exact science (Sinclair et al, 2009, p. xxiii). In 2003 an Ofsted survey by inspectors, *Expecting the Unexpected* (Ofsted 2003a) identified "good practice in the promotion of creativity in schools" across the UK. The inspection took as its definition of creativity that used in the NACCCE (1999) report, being "imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value" (1999:30). It expanded on this in *Improving city schools* (Ofsted 2003b) by defining four characteristics for inspectors in order to provide "a common starting point for any ensuing discussions and judgements" (Ofsted 2003b:4):

1. thinking or behaving imaginatively
2. purposeful activity directed to achieve an objective
3. processes that generate something original
4. an outcome must be of value in relation to the objective.

The emphasis was on teaching provision that facilitated pupils to be creative, rather than on creative teaching in itself. The report cited positive examples of creativity in lessons, with drama featuring in many of them (Baldwin 2004). How far a pupil-centred notion is an explicit part of a teacher's pedagogy and how that transfers to their appropriation of drama as toolkit in pursuit of learning goals may be significant.

In his 'Manifesto for Schools', O'Toole describes creativity as being "the ability to foresee needs and problems, and respond imaginatively, innovatively, and flexibly to them" (Sinclair et al, 2009, p. xxiii). An increasing number of such definitions find their way into books, journals, newspaper articles and website forums, all within the recent renewed concern, or "national obsession" (Neelands, 2009:176), for a 'creative education' and all seem to be demanding the same opportunities in the classroom: making judgements collaboratively and in-the-moment, based on one's prior experience and present context.

Baker-Sennett et al (1992) describe creative planning processes as a "wedding of imagination and pragmatics" (1992:93), and that "planning is inherently a creative process that involves foresight as well as improvisation in the face of changing circumstances and anticipation to be able to take advantage of unpredictable events" (1992:95). In other words, creativity involves seeing possibilities and problem-solving according to changing circumstances. This might be applicable to in-role work but perhaps also to many types of group work where the resources of humans, objects and spatial relations are utilised to convey certain ideas. That particular levels of trust, risk and engagement are required may distinguish drama tasks from other group tasks. Bundy (2003) notes particular demands in terms of commitment, focus, and surrender.

Twenty-first century initiatives are documented in research reports and evaluations such as: Creative Partnerships (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2010, Bragg et al 2009, Sharp et al 2006); the Royal Shakespeare Company's Learning Performance Network (Thomson et al 2010) and 'Stand up for Shakespeare' campaign (Neelands, Galloway and Lindsay 2009); and Drama for Learning and Creativity (Simpson 2007). These projects have brought UK schools together with professional artists and companies. The initiatives recognise the part to be played by the professionally trained artist/practitioner in developing the skills of the curriculum-based teacher so that they can continue to work in similar ways with their pupils. In a different vein, this research is exploring the experiences

of teachers who are not part of these projects, and have limited experience of drama-as-toolkit, yet are still experimenting alongside pupils who also have varied experiences and expectations of it.

2.4 – Intra-personal and inter-personal processes

This section discusses the process of internalisation to externalisation – the ‘corporeal expression’ as phrased by Franks, influenced by Judith Butler (Franks 1997) – where drama can be conceptualised as a process of constructing imaginary worlds, closely associated with the basic learning process of internalisation (Henry 2000). Vygotsky recognised that the aesthetic response as processes that are “both intra-personal (within an individual) and inter-personal (between individuals) (Connery 2010:19).

This discussion highlights the blurred boundaries between free play and more formal structures. It also reveals the historical development of drama-as-toolkit from its roots in theatre rehearsal rooms and the common sign system used to explore and represent emotion and character relations. I return to the closely-related ideas of Vygotsky and to Konstantin Stanislavski, the Russian theatre practitioner who was working in Moscow in the same decade in order to address some of the problems inherent in the expression of ideas in the dramatic form. This is a particular concern of Research Question 3, which seeks to investigate tensions in deploying the constellation of communicative tools and interpreting ideas and events to develop understandings.

2.4.1 Imagination and physical action

Sinclair et al (2009) propose that a key part of this debate is what constitutes adult ‘art’ and child ‘play’. Sinclair notes that the open-ended, informal ‘what if?’ of child’s play can be a number of degrees away from the other end of a continuum concerning the rule-based, formal ‘as if’ of the

adult expressive art (Sinclair et al 2009:7). However, considering that teachers will have goals associated with the study of the curriculum subject, the pupils' goals may be more aligned with the aesthetic, such as the operating of tension and of social roles they are interested in (O'Toole 1992). The challenge of how to frame such playful, artistic exploration so that it can structure – but not overly formalise or inhibit – a creative learning experience is central to my research into the use of drama strategies in 'non-drama classrooms'.

Corbeil (1999) rejects the notion of making a sharp distinction between adult and children's play or even claiming play is only something which children do. Following the line of Vygotsky's perspective that draws attention to the increasing detachment of thought as a child matures and develops, engaging with the imagination might be viewed as shifting to a more purposeful activity. The adult's willingness to "expend time and energy" depends on their being able to "see the possibilities provided by the experience" (Corbeil 1999:177).

Dramatic form might be perceived as formalising the less structured behaviour associated with 'make believe'. However, Henry (2000) points out that "dramatic and socio-dramatic play provide ways for children to construct their knowledge differently than do games that involve fixed rules, competition and achievement" (2000:49). By this she does not necessarily mean that drama does not involve boundaries and some sense of challenge to successfully portray narrative and emotion. More that thinking in role generates "knowledge by acquaintance" (2000:50), learning how to be through the interrelating of thought and feeling.

The actor's work, in my analysis, is to create personal and imaginary worlds, which serve as media for learning. Creating personal worlds is a learning process that moves in a direction opposite to many kinds of learning, in that it begins with an idea, an analytic or abstract form of knowledge, and shapes it into contextualised knowledge...Feelings and imagination inform the personal world which one creates as a metaphor for reality. (Henry 2000:53-54)

Jackson (2007) reminds us that drama-as-toolkit does not simply involve the individual appropriating the tool of empathetic thought but that dramatic form can act as a frame. He describes aesthetic as more transformative and cites Geertz in that the “ability to respond intelligently to [artworks] is no less a cultural artefact than the objects and devices concocted to ‘affect’ it” (Geertz 1997:118). In describing a performance event that had had a powerful effect, Jackson acknowledges that he had been caused to see something in a new light, not just that components of theatre had been ‘artistically’ put together in a school hall or that he had been educated with new information transmitted.

These points go some way to addressing the question of the function of drama-as-pedagogical-toolkit: what is the participant achieving through action? The relevance to the case studies will be exploring in what ways teachers and pupils relate the demands of the drama tasks to their curriculum studies and to how the classroom relationships are formed and ‘played out.’ Included in this, and linked to Boal’s Forum Theatre, is the question, What kind of dialogic practice is encouraged? In ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’, Boal states:

The Theatre of the Oppressed is theatre in this most archaic application of the word. In this usage, all human beings are Actors (they act!) and Spectators (they observe!). They are Spect-Actors.... Everything that actors do, we do throughout our lives, always and everywhere. Actors talk, move, dress to suit the setting, express ideas, reveal passions - just as we do in our everyday lives. The only difference is that actors are conscious that they are using the language of theatre, and are thus better able to turn it to their advantage, whereas the woman and man in the street do not know that they are speaking theatre. (Boal 1992:xxx)

He draws attention to the way that communicative tools are used by humans in their interaction but that when a performance space is created, with a watching audience, the actions take on a particular force in that they perhaps have been even more purposefully selected.

What is of interest in this study is the potential shift in the way pupils relate to the meaning making and the understandings that are developed over the course of the lessons.

2.4.2 Thought, feeling, emotion and action in drama and learning

As clarification, here I expand on the terms ‘thought’ or ‘thinking’, ‘feeling’ (as noun and verb) and ‘emotion’. I distinguish ‘thought’ as concerning the images and connections in the brain that exist to help a human make sense of the world around them. ‘Feeling’ refers to physical sensations as a reaction to either internal or external triggers and the resulting state is an emotion. The body ‘feels’ tense, rigid, shivery; the human is experiencing the ‘emotion’ fear. One may have interpreted something externally, a dangerous-looking person for example, to trigger this, but the trigger may also be internal, for example, an imagined scenario. ‘Thought’, ‘feeling’ and ‘emotion’ can be further distinguished thus:

- Thought as visual images (real/recalled or newly created)
- Thought as attitude (to people, issues, situations)
- Thought as objective (desire, intention)
- Feeling as subconscious reaction (to internal trigger)
- Feeling as conscious physical action (controlled trigger)
- Emotion as a state (combining trigger and reaction phases)
- Emotion as a remembered experience (combining scenario and resulting state)

In the field of drama, ‘thought’ is sometimes described in terms of an objective – a goal – and what the character wishes to achieve, which motivates their actions. The fictional character ceases to be abstract and becomes “immediate and physical” (Neelands 1997:31), not only in their bodily presence but in conveying a physical state of happiness, torment or other emotion because of an understanding of the circumstances the character is in. There is, therefore a meta-awareness of thought and its relationship to action. ‘Thought’ will also encompass a conscious awareness of a character’s perceived relationship with another character. The actor’s own thoughts take into account both these thinking states of the character they are portraying in order to select the most logical vocal and physical expression at any given time:

The language we each use expresses our needs and intent in the drama but it also symbolises our position in the social structure and hierarchies of the drama. If my role is that of a lawyer, I choose my world to communicate information but I also choose them to show that I am a lawyer – I will talk like a lawyer. (Neelands 1997:30)

Approaches to drama-as-toolkit for exploring human behaviour can trace its roots to the naturalistic drama in Western Theatre. The significant shift at the end of the nineteenth century was to “return to the analysis of character...ordinary people in their natural setting, and...examine the physical and social influences that made them what they were” (Styan 1981, 2002:9). Made popular by the work of Russian practitioner Stanislavski, though not exclusive to his pursuit for onstage ‘truth’, is a rehearsal process that explores characters and meanings through practical tasks. The conventions of drama – of role, space and time – are used to discover different perspectives on characters and situations (Neelands 1997) rather than discussing ideas abstractly.

As problematised by Vygotsky (1932), the portrayal of a character is dependent on the socio-historical experience of the actor. In order to ‘act’ convincingly, an actor may recall, internally, past emotional states – the situation, the internal thought and the external feeling - that are similar to those of the character in order to attempt to simulate a similar state when performing and move closer to what might be a spontaneous reaction. There is an acceptance here that the actor is not fully subconsciously reacting and believing in that scenario but that they have the ability to skilfully manipulate their actions. Nevertheless, as Neelands (1997) points out, in a spontaneous improvisation, the participants are equally unaware of what might be said or done next, contributing to real experiences of tension or surprise.

Stanislavski’s work is closely linked to, and incorporated into, the writings of Vygotsky (1999). Both men were concerned with the person or characters’ social context, and with the justification of action based on a logical sequence of human behaviour; the connection between the inner emotional and external physical state. Whilst Stanislavski was concerned with the individual within their social world as presented to a theatrical audience, Vygotsky also concerned himself with the

human born of, but also acting upon, the world (Vygotsky 1978). Both acknowledged the power of emotion to motivate a being into action and Vygotsky even cites Stanislavski's notes on expressing motivating thoughts in his work *Thought and Language* (Vygotsky 1986).

In order to identify the unit of analysis, Vygotsky used the term *edinitiy* – directly translated as 'units' (Valsiner 2009) and perhaps better related to his scientific, experimental endeavours. Previous translations of Stanislavski from his Russian notes into English prose, most notably by Hapgood (Benedetti 1990), have used the word 'unit' and at first seem like a decent link between the two. Stanislavski in fact used the word *kusok* - bit (as in of meat) – to describe a section of the text or an event of varying size that could be more thoroughly analysed, making the actor's work easier (Benedetti 2008). Another concept lost in translation was 'objective', sounding in English as if it might be somehow related to 'object' as in mediated activity, and frequently coupled with 'unit' to signify what an actor believed the character was motivated by at that point. The word used in Russian was *zadacha* - meaning task or problem – and which, rather than being some fixed entity like an objective, was framed as a question, to be fulfilled by *diestvie* (action):

Tasks are the lights which...stop you losing your way...These are the basic stages in a role which guide the actor during the performance. (Stanislavski 2008, 143)

Even by moving on to a new 'bit', the 'task' might not disappear in the next scene but may be consumed into a new one. The crucial element in the process of experiencing a role was the setting of a problem, which give life to both actor and character. This use of the word 'task' also resonates with the distinction I make regarding lesson 'tasks' as working towards specific learning goals.

Stanislavski believed the actor should gradually release hints at the internal workings of the character, the subtext, thereby developing the audience's understanding and adding to the dramatic tension. Making the process of human behaviour transparent yet subtle is the key to onstage 'truth' (Stanislavski 2008). For Stanislavski, the subtext (*podtext*) was the images and words relating to the character's experiences, held in the mind of the actor in a constant stream throughout the

performance. Whereas previous work had focused on physical action stirring feelings and experiences, now “inner mental images are a decoy for feelings and experiences in words and speech” (Stanislavski 2008, 411). Just like Bakhtin and Vygotsky’s concepts of dialogue as social transactions, he was concerned with actors having conversations as they would do in life, requiring them to transmit, pause, receive; the pause indicates the other person – the ‘object’ – needs to have time to decode the subtext or mental images that are being portrayed (Stanislavski 2008:407).

There should be no soulless, emotionless words in the theatre. Neither should there be unthinking, actionless words. Words must excite all manner of feelings, wants, thoughts, intentions, creative ideas, aural and visual images, and other sensory experiences in the actors and their partners and, through them, the audience. (Stanislavski 2008:402)

Vygotsky believed that “the living phrase, spoken by the living person, always has its subtext; there is always a thought hidden behind it” (1987:281) but he also acknowledged the nature of interpretation, open to actors, that multiple subtextual phrases could be ascribed to the same line with very different meanings.

How does this figure in discussions on the appropriation of drama as pedagogical toolkit, as well as researching such lesson tasks? For Vygotsky, external language is part of the process of an individual’s understanding, highlighting the importance of communicative tools in developing understandings and new perspectives. However, according to Vygotsky, the act of artistic creation cannot be taught (Oreck and Nicoll 2010) and so the pupil must gradually acquire a way of communicating ideas and approach the task by directly acting upon the object of enquiry. This focuses attention – and the research questions - on the teacher’s structuring of tasks and the teacher-pupil relationship in the classroom context. These aspects are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF LITERATURE - PART TWO

'CULTURAL HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CLASSROOM TEACHING AND LEARNING'

3.1 Introduction

Having discussed the development of drama in secondary classrooms, it is possible to chart the increasing concern in the late 20th century of interaction in the classroom and the capacity for children to learn with and from each other socially, rather than individually. Such a perspective is concerned with the way classroom practices and hierarchies are developed over time, and shifts in the understandings of how drama can relate to classroom learning.

Cole and Engeström (1997) root cultural historical theory in particular Soviet psychology of the 1920s and 1930s and the work of early 20th century Russian social scientists has greatly influenced contemporary thought on human interaction (Daniels et al 2007). Its premise is that the historical development of human beings is governed by separate laws to biological evolution. Due to the ability to deal indirectly with earlier generations through language, time becomes an important factor in considering the development of cultural practices:

Important is the assumption that other human beings, both those present to the sense and those of prior generations, play a crucial role in the formation of human cognitive capacities... Another important feature...is that when activities become institutionalised, they are rather robust and enduring. Once they gain the status of cultural practices, they often have radically longer half-lives than an individual goal-directed action. (Cole & Engeström 1997:6-8)

This chapter discusses jointly constructed understandings and teacher-pupil relationships, focusing the study on the interactive rather than individual experiences of the participants. Given the

interactive nature of the drama tasks undertaken in the case study classrooms, this is an important consideration in the broader context of the teaching and learning under investigation. I begin by discussing Vygotsky's work and include the theoretical perspectives of two educational researchers who have been influenced by Vygotsky's work: Mercer (Mercer 2000, 1995, Edwards, D. & Mercer 1987) and Daniels (2001, 1994, Daniels et al 2009). I also draw on the work of others such as Barnes (1975, 1971, Barnes & Todd 1995) to expand on key elements of classroom interaction such as teacher-pupil talk. Lastly, I introduce the main theoretical framework, Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), as a heuristic for understanding classroom activity.

3.2 Vygotsky and learning

As discussed in the previous chapter, Vygotsky's work had a significant impact on educational thought (Britton 1987, Daniels 2001). It also contributed to broader ideas on social interaction and networks through the later work of Cole (1996) and Engeström (1987, 1999). I view Vygotsky's work as an ongoing practical investigation into the motivation and interpretation of human behaviour. His favouring of semiotics, Wertsch and Tulviste (1992) believe, was probably influenced by Saussure at this time and he included art, diagrams and maps in his consideration of socio-cultural psychological tools. To me, this reveals a continuing reflection on the visual as influential in human activity. His interest in theatre also prompted a consideration of the work of the actor and the relationship between their goals and the communicative tools that mediate action with the audience.

The aim of this section is to build on issues raised in the previous chapter and focus on Vygotsky's perspectives on scaffolded learning and a child's developing ability to abstract from experience. I pay particular attention to: the social-psychological relationship, mediating and communicative tools, and the Zone of Proximal Development.

3.2.1 *The social-psychological relationship*

Minick (2005) identifies the first phase of Vygotsky's thinking as focusing on the 'instrumental act': a "unit of activity mediated by signs that are used as tools...to control behaviour" (Minick 2005:33). In external speech, thoughts manifest themselves in words, in external signs that are then internalised by both the subject and by others. One is aware of the social implication of the signs that one creates:

I am aware of myself only to the extent that I am another for myself, i.e. only to the extent that I can perceive anew my own responses as new stimuli.
(Vygotsky 1979:30)

Vygotsky acknowledged that one mind cannot directly communicate with another, it must go another way. Thoughts are connected to word meanings in inner speech but it is not like external speech (Vygotsky 1987). Vygotsky argued that:

Higher mental functioning appears first on the 'intermental' and then on the 'intramental' plane. When encountering a new cultural tool, this means that the first stages of acquaintance typically involve social interaction and negotiation between experts and novices or among novices. It is precisely by means of participating in this social interaction that interpretations are first proposed and worked out and, therefore, become available to be taken over by individuals. (Wertsch 2007:187)

Daniels (2001) cites Matusov's distinction between 'internalisation' and 'participation'. To him, 'internalisation' is the individual interacting with the social as a separate being. 'Participation' refers to the individual as part of cultural activity, from which the individual's responsibility, membership and/or (social) practice is transformed. This has significance in the exploration of drama in the classroom as it questions the positioning of the pupil in relation to the lesson task as both part of their individual development, and the way the pupils learn together. Drama tasks rarely require participants to operate in isolation and in the lesson, drama tasks are not fully isolated from the usual way of behaving/interacting in the classroom. Wertsch seems to suggest that participation precedes internalisation; however, the lesson tasks may not be structured with this in mind.

Säljö (2007) emphasises the wider context by perceiving human action as embedded in “enduring institutional practices in which cultural modes of thinking and acting are continuously produced and reproduced over time” (2007:11). For example, what a pupil understands a teacher requires of him will be influenced by the pupil’s previous experience of the behaviour of teachers and the culturally-accepted notion of what school is for. Regardless of the multitude of related responses he might give, the pupil then acts according to this practice, which he then reinforces by doing so. Pedagogical practice, as Daniels puts it, is “a fundamental social context through which cultural reproduction-production takes place” (2001:6), and one which encompasses the teacher and classroom (the context), and perspectives on / values of learning (the content). However, as Säljö notes, learning is not simply about “giving back” but is now a more creative activity where previous experiences influence subsequent action (2007:14).

Vygotsky focuses on the social and cultural elements of the learning process, which is a useful perspective when exploring group work in the classroom (Smagorinsky & Fly 1993). To Vygotsky, ‘mediated action’ involving cultural tools is a core facet of human behaviour and his followers have adopted it as the basic unit of analysis (Cole & Engeström 2007). A creative event is one where an existing action pattern is transformed in a new context (Moran & John-Steiner 2002). However, there will inevitably be differences from previous instances of that action because of the uniqueness of each person’s experience. Vygotsky states:

To study something historically means to study it in the process of change...To encompass in research the process of a given thing's development in all its phases and changes - from birth to death - means to discover its nature, its essence, for it is only in movement that a body shows what it is. (Vygotsky 1978:64-65).

The relevance of Vygotsky’s work to this research is that attention is drawn to the action within the classroom context and to the wider cultural and historical sphere surrounding each classroom. The understanding that teachers may incorporate specific practices for particular goals also necessitates

an enquiry into the tools that make up these practices. These tools, along with the subjects that appropriate them, develop over time.

3.2.2 Mediating tools

Vygotsky (1997) associated human consciousness with the use of psychological tools, which included sign and language systems. Rather than act upon the world directly, human contact with the social and physical environment is mediated by signs (Wertsch 2007). Using a knotted handkerchief as an example, Vygotsky (1997) describes the association between two points, A (for example the person trying to remember) and B (the thing that needs to be remembered) as being mediated via X: A-X, X-B (X being the handkerchief, the psychological tool).

This basic triangle, derived from Russian cultural-historical psychologists, is diagrammatically represented by Cole (1996:119):

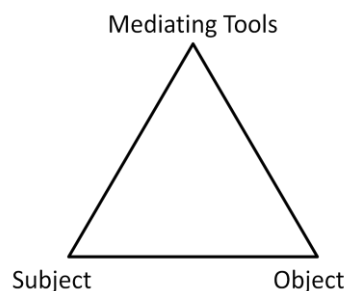


Figure 1- mediated action as conceptualised by Cole (1996)

Cole visually represents a basic action whereby the human subject is working on the object, the product to be produced or problem to be solved. This goal-oriented action is being mediated by the tools the subject deploys and adapts for own use, those tools having been culturally formed over time.

For Vygotsky, psychological tools differ from technical tools in that the psychological operates between the human and external object, whereas the technical directly acts or brings about changes in the external object (Vygotsky 1997). Vygotsky defined psychological tools as more than language and included counting systems, maps, diagrams and works of art. These tools are necessary in mastering mental processes. Grossman et al (1999) describe pedagogical tools as “classroom practices, strategies, and resources that do not serve as broad conceptions to guide an array of decisions, but instead have more local and immediate utility” (1999:12). Included in this are verbal exercises, textbooks, worksheets, whiteboard diagrams and so on.

Cole (1996) argues for the concept of ‘artefact’ that takes into account the ability for humans as well as material objects to mediate activity. It also takes into account that artefacts are not exclusive to individuals but “require communication, attribution of meaning, mediation between self and other” and that they exist in relation to others (Glăveanu 2010:6). I continue to use ‘tool’ in this research to mean both human and inanimate, but mostly referring to the communicative tools discussed in this chapter. Wartofsky (1979) identifies three levels of tools – primary, when tools have a direct function of making; secondary, which are the modes of actions (for example traditions and beliefs); and tertiary, which are imagined worlds and in which category works of art fall.

The tools themselves determine the operation of the person or persons involved and the signs alter the flow and structure of the action. This has relevance to the research in the conceptualising of drama as incorporating communicative tools, leading to a specific research question to examine this.

3.2.3 Communicative tools

Tuan (1990) notes how in everyday existence, we do not pay much conscious attention to the rhythms and patterns of bodies in space, whereas this awareness is heightened in ritual and theatre. Counsell and Wolf (2001) stress that “meaning does not exist in the material world, it is a human

product...of *culture*, and the interpretation...requires a reader who is culturally competent” (2001:177). They continue that the community of individuals doing the interpreting have “an unspoken agreement” (2001:177), which I term a ‘commonality of sign system’ that the body as a medium of expression depends upon.

In *English in Urban Classrooms* (2005) Kress et al problematise incorporating data in education research that is as disparate as wall-displays, furniture layouts, pupil gestures and teacher talk. They adopt a semiotic approach in which the components are a *sign* of the teacher or pupil’s sense of English. To Kress et al (2005), multimodality “is based on the assumption that meaning is made through the many means (...called modes) that a culture has shaped for that purpose” (2005:21), concurring with Counsell and Wolf (2001) above. Their way of looking at classrooms is categorised similarly to Pavis (1996):

- The layout of the classroom
- Movement of the teacher
- Visual display
- Gaze, gesture and embodiment (posture)
- Voice quality

They stress that “the meaning of any event or of any structure does not lie in the meaning of one sign, but has to be seen in the complex meanings of a set of signs all read together” (2005:35).

Just as pupils may explicitly communicate their understanding to a teacher, the teacher may also be seeking other signs of internal processes, including empathy, that are more subtly shown externally. This is, of course, a common problem for the researcher. Although referring exclusively to theatre performances, Pavis (1996) indirectly refers to this problem that is potentially raised in the classroom. Whilst pupils are required to work in-role and draw on their own real experiences, their presentation is often also required to be as if real. Therefore the inner workings of the character are

also, as in real life, hidden to others and must be carefully decoded by the audience (the other pupils and teacher).

In theater, actors' emotions do not need to be real or live; they must above all be visible, legible, and in compliance with the conventions relating to the representations of feelings... Not only do actors lend their body, appearance, voice and emotions, they also pass themselves off – at least as naturalistic acts are concerned – as actual people, identical with those we mix with everyday: people with whom we can identify, since they create in us impressions of a similarity with what we know of our own character, our own experiences of the world, of emotions, and of moral and philosophical values. (Pavis 1996:56-58)

A part of these 'everyday acts' is that often more than one communicative tool will be appropriated at any given moment. In order to interpret the action – both for audience and researcher – , it is useful to identify a framework that distinguishes between communicative tools, even though, as Kress et al (1995) point out, they should be read together.

In *Analyzing Performance* (1996), Pavis discusses a wide range of elements of performance in great detail, deconstructing physical action and discussing the meaning a spectator may derive. Figure 4, below, is derived from the discussion of these elements. In order to work towards a schedule for classroom observation in this field, I have grouped into the areas of Proxemic, Practical, Visual, Aural, Oral, and Textual. The descriptions I have intentionally simplified in order to make parallels with the action in classroom settings.

I make particular use of these descriptions in order to focus observations of action. This is discussed in the Methodology in more detail concerning the observation of lessons (4.2.8 *Observing and recording in the classroom*) and analysis of data (4.3.3 *Fine-grain and cross-code analysis*). They are crucial in identifying the communicative tools that participants appropriate as part of drama tasks and, in more general interaction. The range of tools indicates what might be considered apart from oral communication, this range also being utilised by Kress et al (2005) amongst others.

Proxemic	Space	<i>Objective/External:</i> the physical building, performance space and any demarcation between performers and audience <i>Gestural:</i> the relative positioning of performers; the cultural coding of spatial relations between individuals (Pavis 1996:153)
Practical	Objects	Anything that can be manipulated by the actor; for example paper, wood, fabric, plastic ('prop' to Pavis negatively implies a secondary nature of a tool). The object exists along a spectrum between full materiality in natural form, object shown and named, and spirituality (e.g. imagined or memorized).
Physical	Movement	The actor moving across the space at a particular pace, in relation to gestures and verbal utterances
	Gesture	Body movement and facial expression which, in performance, are mimetic in relation to real (everyday) human behaviour
Visual	Paintings, pictures, projections, mental images	In a theatre setting these might be used as the background set. They tend to be more fixed and not interacted with like practical objects. Such surroundings may also be created figuratively in the minds of the actors and audience.
Aural	Music	Created by instrument, voice, other means and which adds to mood
Oral	Vocal expression	Pace, pitch, tone, diction, emphasis as a 'sign' of character attributes
	Speech patterns	Dialogue, monologue
Textual	Printed (worded) material	Here I refer to words projected onto a screen or distributed on paper.

Figure 4 – Elements of performance, derived from Pavis (1996)

3.2.4 Potential tensions in the use of a complex sign system

Given the complexity of signs in classroom activity, there are potential tensions that may arise between drama-as-toolkit and the goal of the activity. These relate to the concepts of representation, spontaneous action, and audience function.

Whilst physical, bodily activity is a part of many drama tasks (Donelan 2002), it is debatable how far precisely following the directions or actions of another has the potential to work in the affective domain, and then how far this contributes to cognitive understanding (Boddington 1980). Whilst pupils might copy a teacher's gestures, and in doing so construct a muscle-memory experience, I propose it is not the same as a mime or still image that is constructed by the actor from their own imagination or is created with the awareness of a spectator's interpretative gaze, although they may be aware of demonstrating accuracy. Nevertheless, copied actions may be an important part in the process of helping pupils "to develop an understanding of cultural symbolism" (Baldwin 2004:142), and of ritual, which may be a crucial part to their developing understanding and future drama tasks.

Students are taught to use their bodies as centres of perspective, in sight, reflection, motivation and agency. Students, therefore are taught to both listen to, and be "in" their bodies, in order for them to express and be able to go "out" of them (Wright & Rasmussen 2001:227)

This debate is expanded when considering the difference between scripted, prepared action, and spontaneous, of-the-moment action. It draws our attention to the difference between a narrative unfolding and one where the players are aware of the capabilities of their own character and can act upon it – not as themselves, but as a fantastical extension of themselves.

The degree to which a role play appears to be merely a narrative unfolding may depend to an extent on the teacher's presentation of material and structuring of the task. The teacher may feel compelled to rigidly structure the work because of sensitivity to pupils' social risk in negotiating the complexity of drama. Mercer and Littleton (2007) suggest that in collaboration, the social risk of verbalising one's understanding before it is fully developed is shared and therefore diminished. On the other hand one wonders if the risk is heightened because of the social nature of the process. As an example, Crowder (1996) identifies such 'interwoven gesture-talk' as being potentially significant in helping pupils to shape subsequent language and that pupils using in-the-moment non-verbal gestures (as distinct from more prepared describing) do so in the same intimate space around them,

rather than proclaiming to an audience. Whilst the spontaneity of the improvisation can help initiate tension or surprise in the fictional context that is also present in the real, drama tasks do not always require the quick flowing of ideas (Baldwin 2004). However the teacher's scaffolding of the process may play an important role in modelling and supporting the pupil's appropriation of their communicative toolkit. The concept of teacher facilitating and modelling is discussed in the next chapter under a broader heading of interaction in the classroom.

O'Toole (1992) cites Rosen and Vygotsky in acknowledging that dramatic behaviour "proclaims its fictionality" (1992:98) in that imitation of the real becomes representative in a fictional context because of an acknowledgement of the aesthetic form. This raises the problem for the pupil of their joint role as actor and audience. For the teacher, it adds the responsibility of making clear what is expected of each, developing the pupil's objectivity and meta-awareness of the communicative toolkit as part of the drama task.

As with Boal's concept of 'spect-actor' (1992), in computerised role-play games (RPGs), "players are spectators from the outset: the players observe themselves as their characters and are aware that they are able to affect the game world and change it" (Choy 2004:57). Jackson (2007) recognises that:

It is now commonplace in discussions of the semiotics of the theatre to stress the interrelationship, indeed the interdependence, of the actor and the audience, the stage and the auditorium. To investigate how signs are generated in the theatre means inevitable some consideration of the reception of those signs by the spectator. After all, 'significance' has no existence on its own: it must be interpreted as such by the percipient. (Jackson 2007:13)

Choy (2004) stresses the power of what he terms the theatrical frame to firstly distinguish the onstage drama from the reality elsewhere, the maintaining of this known as the suspension of disbelief. The performance seems real enough and yet is not so real enough that the conventions of

not interrupting, not intervening, not distracting, not speaking (although laughter and applause are allowed) are upheld.

Whilst these concepts can be and are discussed at length in the literature, my purpose is to focus on classroom interaction. The next chapter discusses socio-cultural perspectives of learning, in particular the concepts of shared knowledge and jointly constructed understandings, and how these relate to pedagogical approach that includes the appropriation of drama-as-toolkit.

3.2.4 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and 'scaffolding'

Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky 1978) has been discussed in great detail in educational literature and is possibly the best known of his concepts in the West (Del Rio & Alvarez 2007). For him, learning that was directed to the level at which an individual was already at did not suggest development could easily occur. His proposal was to spark an internal developmental process by working at a level beyond full competency and interacting with peers. The internalisation of these processes would then aid the pupil's development (Vygotsky 1978). Mercer (1994) simplifies this into two key features: i) learning with assistance is commonplace, and ii) "the limits of a person's learning or problem-solving ability can be expanded by providing the right kind of cognitive support (1994:102).

Having observed teachers introducing new terminology and techniques to pupils in science lessons, Wertsch (2007) describes acts of 'ventriloquation' where pupils say and do things with only partial understanding. Rather than being a disappointing imitation of the teacher, he sees this as a positive experience for pupils whereby they are using tools at a low level but gradually increasing their expertise by interacting with more experienced teachers:

For a Vygotsky-Shpet approach to learning and instruction, the goal is to encourage students to master the use of cultural tools. Becoming more expert means being socialised into an existing social order, characterised by an existing set of cultural tools, and expertise is reflected in the ability to use these tools flexibly and fluently. Given that the goal is to socialise students to use socioculturally provided and sanctioned semiotic means, the issue is how to engage them in a way that will lead to increasing levels of expertise, and this is where material sign vehicles as entry-level mechanisms come into play. Thanks to these, it is possible to create initial levels of intersubjectivity where interlocutors have much different levels of understanding of what the task is and how to leverage that to higher levels of intersubjectivity and expertise.

(Wertsch 2007:190)

The notion of expert is relevant to my research questions concerning both the communicative tools and the roles (in terms of hierarchy and division of labour) taken up by teacher and pupils in drama tasks, given that the teachers are not specialist drama educators, nor are the pupils necessarily practised in classroom drama in these curriculum lessons.

Mercer (1994) derives the notion of 'scaffolding' from Bruner's concept of the parent reducing the child's freedom in a task in order to allow it to focus on the skill to be acquired. However, 'scaffolding' does not refer to generic assistance from a teacher but that which will eventually increase the ability of the learner that they will eventually be able to complete the task alone (Maybin, Mercer & Stierer 1992). For the purposes of this research, it is important to distinguish between types of 'help' afforded by a teacher and consider whether the teacher's own positioning within the task is reflecting that teacher's desire to allow the pupils to operate more independently. Secondly, it makes "a direct conceptual link between two very different aspects of teacher's involvement with pupils' learning... - the pursuit of curriculum-related goals for learning and the use of specific discourse strategies when intervening in children's learning" (Mercer 1994:101; my emphasis). Here 'scaffolding' in the context of this research relates not only to what the teacher wants to achieve through the appropriation of drama as a learning tool but also to the appropriation itself – the way the tool is adapted, incorporated and deployed.

Mercer problematises ZPD in two ways: firstly, he sees it as being oriented towards the individual pupil; secondly, he views it as a static version of classroom learning and interaction. He poses an alternative of an *Intermental Development Zone* in which the teacher and pupils operate within a shared communicative space (Mercer & Littleton 2007:19). Smagorinsky (1995) adds another dimension by reminding us that individuals are capable of developing in several different ways at once and in overlapping social networks. He also prefers Wertsch's perspective of a social context involving cultural tools which have no value in themselves but take on uses as the participants find need for them. The social nature of creativity is also important to Vygotsky, as Daniels et al (2007) point out in their study which concurs that "the goal of promoting creativity in schools will not be achieved if the construct of creativity remains that of an individualistic capability" (Daniels et al 2007:140). These perspectives acknowledge the potential complexity of classroom relations to which interactive drama work is introduced.

Mercer (1996) identifies an association between talking, thinking, relationships and cultural understandings, which are further discussed in the next section (3.3):

First...particular ways of talking permit certain social modes of thinking. Second, particular social modes of thinking are developed in particular kinds of collaborative relationships. And third, collaborative relationships are shaped by participants' culturally-based definitions of the situation. (Mercer 1996:369)

Rogoff (1991) also provides useful definitions of communal activity that can guide an exploration of drama tasks in classrooms:

1. The metaphor of *apprenticeship* provides a model in the plane of community activity, involving active individuals participating with others in culturally organized activity that has as part of its purpose the development of mature participation in the activity by the less experienced people.

This suggests a teacher's skill or that of a few pupils modelling in-role work for the purpose of 'getting better' at drama.

2. The concept of *guided participation* refers to the processes and systems of involvement between people as they communicate and coordinate efforts while participating in culturally valued activity.

This is more related to the way pupils may share ideas and previous experiences in order to help their group fulfil a task.

3. The concept of *participatory appropriation* refers to how individuals change through their involvement in one or another activity, in the process becoming prepared for subsequent involvement in related activities.

This suggests the teacher and pupils may develop an understanding of drama as a pedagogical toolkit – both its function and form – with a view to deploying it again and more successfully in future curriculum work.

3.3 Teacher-pupil and peer relationships

Although Vygosty's work is central to my research lens, here I draw on the work of others to expand on the complex relationships that occur between humans in classrooms.

3.3.1 Ways of talking and social thinking

In *From Communication to Curriculum (1976)*, Barnes advocates approaches that encourage exploratory talk, compared to transmission from teacher to pupil, or the teacher requiring neatly

phrased responses from the pupil. 'Exploratory talk' he describes as a 'groping towards meaning' and he argues that:

It is very important whenever we want the learner to take an active part in learning, and to bring what he learns into interaction with that view of the world on which his actions are based. That is, such exploratory talk is one by means by which the assimilation and accommodation of new knowledge to the old is carried out. (Barnes 1976:28)

He does not specifically advocate group work but calls for a consideration in all tasks of the vital function of thinking aloud in which the learner becomes more responsible for forming and evaluating hypotheses. Talk is often perceived as having a lower educational value than writing (Alexander 2004), whereas in writing, pupils are likely to be representing their thoughts for a singular, private audience or judge – the teacher (Rosen 1973, Barnes 1976, Solomon & Black 2008) – and one who is already more informed. The role of the audience is important in motivating pupils to modify their articulation and understanding of concepts according to the other pupils (Solomon & Black 2008).

As discussed in Chapter 2, the introduction of the UK National Curriculum included Speaking and Listening as specific target skills for development, followed by the National Oracy Project and the National Literacy Strategy. However, such policy measures did not necessarily initiate practical change. The prevalence of teacher-dominated Initiation-Response-Feedback patterns found by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) are corroborated by more recent studies (Burns & Myhill 2004). This interchange describes the common practice of the teacher asking a question, the pupils being invited to respond – often to give the implied correct answer – and the teacher feeding back whether the response was correct, incorrect, and other extra information deemed necessary to the pupil's understanding. In their research, Burns & Myhill (2004) find that despite a particular desire for 'interactive' approaches, the teachers still dominate talk and pupils participate only on request, if

at all. To them, the teachers' emphasis on the transmission of content "reflects the concern with content and the awareness of the need to meet objectives" (Burns & Myhill 2004:47).

Palincsar (1998) highlights research of the late 20th century that suggested direct instruction by a teacher is insufficient in going beyond imparting factual content in order to develop transferable cognitive skills of reasoning and problem-solving. Researchers claim that reasoning and evaluating – the type of talk found in collaborative tasks – falls within the interpretative genre that is associated with more significant learning gains (Palincsar 1998). Mere articulation in itself is also believed to lead to deeper processing, however, at that stage more experimental designs had not been able to conclude that this articulation necessarily has to occur when pupils operate in pairs. The research claims that conceptual advances are made by the process of verbally elaborating on one's own ideas but that there needs to be sufficient verbal interaction for this to occur. Wertsch considers that:

The standard situation in many instructional settings involves students saying and doing things that they only partially understand...Not only may it be possible, but it may be *desirable*...because such a possibility means they can enter into a basic form of intersubjectivity with more experienced teachers and experts and thereby leverage their way up through increasing levels of expertise.

(Wertsch 2007:188)

In the UK, Burns and Myhill note Haworth's (2001) view that "the teacher is being represented as the 'controller of the spoken word,' whilst 'the learners remain in the shadows'" (Burns & Myhill 2004:35). This prompts their research into classroom teacher-pupil interaction. They find that despite teachers acknowledging a need for interactive whole class teaching, the resulting pattern of question and answer or statement and response does not achieve adequate scaffolding or flexible discourse (Burns & Myhill 2004). They call for an exploration of various forms of talk that liberate pupils to express and develop their own views.

Mercer groups the verbal interchanges that occur during co-operative tasks into three categories:

Cumulative – speakers build on each other’s contributions, adding information

Disputational – speakers voice their disagreements, sharing conflicting points of view, but decisions are individual

Exploratory – differing opinions are negotiated and evaluated, leading to a joint resolution

(Summarised from Mercer and Littleton 2007:51).

He stresses that these are not distinct but can be taken as indicators of how people think together. His intervention research (Mercer 2008) also supports the belief that teachers can model effective forms of talk as a cultural and psychological tool between learners, which aids their development.

In a study of classroom discourse in Los Angeles schools, Gutierrez, Rymes and Larson also found that often the teacher’s attempt to retain power was evident in their language that stifled the potential for pupil interaction and critical discussion (Gutierrez et al 1995). While the teacher claims to be discussing a shared view of the world, it is actually one that is quite specific to his own cultural perspectives and the classroom activity only serves to reaffirm the belief that the students do not possess a fraction of what is his own authorial knowledge. In identifying a ‘third space’ where “cross-cultural communication is possible” (Gutierrez et al 1995:465), according to Gutierrez, a lack of interactional experience may cut such participation short and “both teacher and students retreat from this uncomfortable territory, seeking refuge in their more comfortable, predictable scripts” (Gutierrez et al 1995:466).

Cornelius & Herrenkohl discuss the concept of ‘ownership of ideas’ regarding the power relationship between an individual, a concept and his peers in terms of perceptions of who owns certain aspects of knowledge. They state “if a student sees the teacher as the owner of a concept, for example, the teacher may also be perceived as more powerful to the student” (2004:470). They also highlight that certain modes of communicating, in ‘persuasive discourse’, “can in themselves affect the relationships of power among people” (2004:471). In their study of Science and History classrooms they found shifts in power relations facilitated a more meaningful engagement with the concepts,

however further questions were raised about the complexity of the classroom relationships, particularly regarding motivation, and how these shifts might transfer to whole class or small group work.

3.3.2 Collaborative relationships

Followers of Piaget have considered 'socio-cognitive conflict' – how the understanding of one point of view may shift after encountering the different view of another (Mercer 1996). However, as Mercer also notes, little early research focuses on the talk in conflict, often because the focus was on the individual pupil in the classroom rather than jointly constructed knowledge. In sharp relief is research, increasing from the 1980s onwards, that specifically focuses on the relationship between teacher and pupil, and between pupils.

Bruner's concept of scaffolding (Wood et al 1976) prompted an examination of the frameworks used by adults to develop the child's capacity to successfully complete tasks. However this is different to pupil-pupil collaborative relationships where the teacher is not present for much of the task. Classroom interaction can relate to both teacher-pupil interaction and pupil-pupil (peer) interaction. Both could be perceived as collaborative and research in this area has included peer (paired or small group) interaction (Barnes & Todd 1977, Mercer 1995) as well as teacher-pupil talk being considered in the pursuit of co-constructed knowledge (Gutierrez et al 1995, Burns & Myhill 2004, Smith & Higgins 2006).

Soller et al (1996) believe that pupils who benefit from collaborative learning are those who encourage rationalising decisions in themselves and others. Baker-Sennett et al (1992) studied the sociocultural processes of creative planning and conclude that children need to manage both the social relations and the cognitive problems in their planning. In order to advance the process, the individual must be flexible to adapt to the ideas of others and find a suitable coherent role in the

problem-solving (Baker-Sennet et al 1992) This broadens the scope of my investigation to encompass both cognitive and social aspects of classroom activity.

Sawyer describes the interaction of pupils in cooperative group tasks in educational settings as a 'collaborative emergence' (2004a), meaning that firstly there is no single determinant and secondly, that ensuing action and eventual outcome is unpredictable. In such circumstances, one might question how a fruitful discussion under the time restrictions of classroom lessons result from multiple perspectives and voices. How can learning goals be assured to be reached, and pupils adequately assessed, under such conditions? It is precisely this unpredictability that Sawyer (2004b) highlights as positive. Conflict is perceived as useful to developing conceptual understandings as a result of having to elaborate on one's own ideas in the face of contradictory opinion. Barnes (1976) also warns of the difficulty in having to 'arrive without travelling', meaning that there are various stages of comprehension that need to be gradually passed through.

Pupils bring their own understanding to the classroom space, hence the learning process not just being a case of filling vessels (Barnes 1976:24). This also widens the cultural sphere to include pupil experiences of the wider school context and the world outside of the institution. Mercer and Littleton (2007) describe cultural human activity as relating to the goals of the community and the activity to pursue them. They define 'learning' as the process whereby ways of being able to make sense of the world are developed. This distinguishes cultural understandings evolved through collaborative relationships from the concept of being 'taught' or 'told about' the world. It suggests that learning involves reflexivity (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith 2004), whereby pupils reconcile the curriculum content with their own private experiences and views of the world.

From a socio-cultural perspective, conceptualising thinking and learning as being shaped by collaborative relationships is highly relevant to this research. The implication is that useful learning encounters can be examined by the quality of interaction and dialogue (Mercer & Littleton 2007). For this study, it raises the possibility that a meaningful deployment of drama as a pedagogical tool

can be understood by examining social interaction and communication rather than the individual's experience in-role. Mercer (1996) finds that "a sociocultural perspective on classroom education...highlights the need for a rationale...[that] learners themselves need access to that rationale; and it has to be a rationale that they find convincing" (1996:374). His concern is that simply facilitating pupil talk will not ensure quality talk and directs researchers' attentions to the ways in which pupils negotiate the learning goal and classroom rules for interaction.

3.3.3 Democratic pedagogies

O'Toole states that "the degree of commitment, and what exactly might be meant by the 'qualitative component', is a frequent cause of friction and distress in drama in education...between the authority source and participants – the teacher and students" (O'Toole 1992:188).

How 'regulated' human spontaneous social behaviour is provides a core question for an inquirer. The aim of this section is to discuss perspectives on the teacher's authoritative position in scaffolding the learning process, particularly where, as in drama, the outcome in part also depends on the investment of the other participants, in other words, the pupils. It discusses the possibilities for different degrees of teacher control and pupil input. The relevance to research in drama as a pedagogical toolkit is to understand how these positions can be conceptualised in different ways in order to understand classroom activity when roles shift. It leads to a key research question regarding the division of roles and responsibilities of the classroom, and the social and institutional rules that are culturally constructed and renewed through lesson tasks.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in 1970, Friere describes the concept of a 'banking' system of education whereby "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Friere 1996:53). Those unknowledgeable persons then become distanced and passive. He desires a more 'authentic

thinking' where subjects communicate in mutual trust and their thinking is more meaningful when generated by action upon the world.

Freire operates on one basic assumption: that man's ontological vocation (as he calls it) is to be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in doing so moves toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer like individually and collectively. This *world* to which he relates is not a static and closed order, a *given* reality which man must accept and to which he must adjust; rather it is a problem to be worked on and solved. It is the material used by man to create history, a task which he performs as he overcomes that which is dehumanizing at any particular time and place and dares to create the qualitatively new.

(Shaul, in Friere 1996:14)

Freire believes human action is initiated by an understanding of the other, the "not I" (1996:35) and a *reflection* on one's perception of reality as being vital in the impetus to recreate it. On the other hand, when one believes one is not good enough or capable enough, often through being told this by others, one distrusts one's own view of the world and one's own capacity to understand through one's own experiences. Dialogue is crucial in naming the world and forming new ideas (as well as material objects), however, Freire stresses, it must be done together, rather than by a few on behalf of many. The teacher and pupils should reflect together.

Harwood discusses the teacher's role in democratic pedagogies when they are leading discussion. To him 'democracy' is "a way of life in which matters of policy are resolved by discussion" (Peters 1978:468, cited in Harwood 2001:295). He is critical of the 'transmissive' model where teacher dictates and imparts views and information and believes the 'transactional' model, where alternatives are discussed and evaluated by both teacher and pupil, should be more closely followed as "there is evidence that teacher neutrality can have beneficial effects on the amount and nature of pupils' participation" (Harwood 2001:293), therefore having a positive impact on their ability to transfer knowledge, understanding and skills to other situations.

Harwood conceptualises a spectrum with the degree of experience in the lesson task on the 'x' axis, fully mediated at one end and reality-based at the other. The degree of teacher-centred or student-

centred decision making is on the 'y' axis. The mid-points are shared decision-making and simulated experience. At the intersection of little experience and teacher-centred decision-making is what he sees as a weakly democratic pedagogy. At the intersection of reality-based experience and student-centred decision-making is a strongly democratic pedagogy. A Frierean perspective might perceive drama tasks as ideally lying between moderate and strongly democratic. Other possibilities may be offered by drama conventions, which draw on a reality-based understanding fostered by the pupils' own experiences and beliefs, and are simulated as the pupils more often take on the role and perspective of 'another' to consider scenarios. In terms of teacher control, it would then be placed firmly within the mid-range of the democratic continuum because such activities, although subjective and spontaneous, are bound by certain rules of behaviour and execution. This is not to say that this is the way it is to be found in all classrooms and is merely a hypothetical perspective. The actual diverse nature of drama tasks is the very focus of the research.

In moving towards shared decision-making, the teacher may change roles from 'instructor' to 'facilitator' (Harwood 2001) or, similarly, as 'communicative participant' (Jones & Mercer 2002). Distinctly different qualities required: whereas an instructor required clarity of explanation, a facilitator needs more skilful use of questioning. When pupils do not possess the skills to advance the discussion and their own learning, the approach may be modelled by a more skilled expert (Wertsch 2007, Mercer 1994, Rogoff 1991). Unfortunately, with so many competing demands on teachers and the need to be in control of the classroom activities, teachers cannot afford to 'risk' unpredictability (Edwards & Furlong 1978) and so therefore resort to 'coping strateg[ies]', similar to Gutierrez's findings (Gutierrez et al 1995).

There are additional concerns that the neutrality of the teacher might weaken the learner's ability to critically evaluate by opening discussion up too far although Friere (1996) believes that the benefit is that the teacher and pupils uncover together the same reality, oppression and liberation. Despite this, Harwood (2001) argues, Weiler (1995) calls for recognition of subjective differences between

people of the same gender, race and class in terms of situation, history and experience. She adds that teachers and pupils have different interests and different power, which makes it difficult to negotiate genuine meanings together, thereby having a potentially negative impact on the ability to achieve an active/democratic approach. Freire describes a 'fear of freedom' as being a potential barrier, including the autonomy and responsibility that would be required to replace it. This raises questions as to the potential for pupils to self-regulate their own action and the peer social rules of the community that may come into play.

3.3.4 The pleasure of identity and change

Rogoff (1995) believes:

With guided participation as the interpersonal process through which people are involved in sociocultural activity, participatory appropriation is the personal process by which, through engagement in an activity, individuals change and handle a later situation in ways prepared by their own participation in the previous situation. This is a process of becoming, rather than acquisition"

(Rogoff 1995:142)

In the context of classroom relationships, which this research is exploring, this may also relate in a further two ways to i) a teacher's effort to develop pupils as social beings, or ii) a pupils' shifting relationship with their own peers, with whom they share their learning experiences.

What is common across the decades of literature that investigates classroom drama is the element of 'fun' or 'enjoyment', and 'motivation', the drama tasks being part of a desire to engage pupils in learning (Simpson 2007, Stern 1980, Courtney 1968). In other words some nature of the task – be it interacting with peers, relaxing of teacher sanctions, not reading or writing, enacting imagined scenarios, or physically moving around the space and expressing oneself through body language – is perceived to be a source of particular pleasure and is therefore granted some elevated status in the spectrum of lesson tasks.

Relevant to a discussion of pleasure and subverted activity is Bakhtin's (1984) concept of carnival. The key idea is that everyone participates rather than it being a spectacle for the benefit of others and, whereas official feasts reinforced the established authority and value systems, the carnival was a temporary liberation from this. Key features of the festive carnival include: *crowning and decrowning* – a ritual involving the carnival king to symbolised the end of the old order and the birth of a new authority; *games and comic parody* – these freed the players from the regulations of normal life; *free and familiar contact* – transgressing normal social hierarchical boundaries; *mixed language* – of the marketplace and of other styles, mixing informal with official. Carnival “does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators” (Bakhtin 1984:7). In terms of researching classroom activity, one might consider any change in teacher authority, the degree of freedom of spatial movement and physical interaction, and the use of language. It may be that by its unusual, novelty state, such affordances become more attractive. Particular pleasure may be experienced in shifting rules and relationships but only because of being different to the norm.

Gee (2005) states it is “often issues of participation, membership and boundaries that are problematic in the first place” (2005:215) and gives the example of two different pupils in a science class, one ‘engaged’ with the content of the lesson, the other just along for the pass mark. Both may ‘enjoy’ the lesson but the motivations are different. Whether a drama task can embrace both attitudes or whether the tension between pupil desires is heightened is worth exploring to see if new approaches can be retained. One might argue that classroom contexts, with pupils’ exposure to personal risk of social embarrassment and a sense of ‘not being good enough’, may encourage a feeling of marginality that may lead to non-participation and a lack of shared identity (Wenger 1998). This shared identity may be crucial to pupil success (Boaler and Greeno 2000).

Given the potential of drama to encourage new perspectives, the added value for the teacher in motivating the students is worth exploring alongside the pupils’ own understanding of the value of

drama tasks. This provides a rationale for examining the way tools are appropriated and are closely linked to responsibilities and perceptions of knowledge and learning.

3.4 Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

Nissen (Langemeyer and Nissen 2011) identifies three important historical dimensions in Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT): firstly, an “all-encompassing history” in which aspects of behaviour such as learning and play have been developed throughout the existence of humanity; secondly, the “cultural history” of an issue, such as forms of learning following particular education reforms; thirdly, the “specific histories” of live communities, which form the approach to data (Langemeyer and Nissen 2011:21). Cultural historical theory places emphasis on mediation and tools, and in CHAT, the emphasis moves “from the individual to collective subjects” (Ellis et al 2010:3).

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) can be important in highlighting the relevance of social context and relations in the classroom but it also emphasises the importance of field experiences in research (Grossman et al 1999). Tulviste (1991) notes that some studies have used activity-related research (in the Cole tradition) to investigate the role of context, such as how ways of thinking are used in different situations. However, they do not investigate the origin or development of these ways. He believes research should not limit itself to accepting the existence of practices but ask “why, when, and how these ways of thinking have come into being, and then changed and interacted over time” (Tulviste 1991:75).

This section discusses the concept of participant action being integral to the changing culture of the classroom and how CHAT is useful in understanding activity that involves complex relations in tool-mediated action. Both my research questions and analysis have been influenced by CHAT “which addresses human activities as they relate to artefacts, shared practices and institutions, thus it goes

beyond individual knowledge and decision making to take a developmental view of minds in context” (Meyers 2007:para.11).

Roth (2007) sees Activity Theory as incorporating what he sees as crucial elements of emotion, motivation and identity. For him emotion is communicated across individuals and can become a collective state. Increased motivation can be a result of a desire for a higher emotional state or can be decreased when there is a gap between individual and collective interests (Roth 2007). Differences of goal and motivation are potential tension points in the classroom where pupils are being pressed towards specific learning outcomes and so are useful considerations.

I take the line of Cole’s development of the Russian psychologists (Vygotsky, Leont’ev, Luria) towards Engeström’s research methodology, developed at the Centre for Developmental Work Research in Helsinki, Finland (Engeström 1987, 1999). Now a much more international community of thought (Kuuti 1996), it is particularly relevant to the study of collaborative activity in this research as learning is not seen in isolation according to the individual, but the person is “located in time and space and influenced by the surrounding actors, resources and behavioural constraints” (Meyers 2007:para.11).

3.4.1 An overview of CHAT and the Activity Theory model

Engeström describes expansive learning as referring to “processes in which an activity system...resolves its pressing internal contradictions by constructing and implementing a qualitatively new way of functioning for itself” (Engeström 2007:23). The *transformative* aspect of expansive learning is the most obvious or visible in that it refers to newly-created tools and concepts. The object is also transformed. The *horizontal* aspect concerns dialogic negotiations and crossing boundaries of social space.

Figure 2 shows Engeström’s model that demonstrates how the relationship between subject and their goal is affected by mediating tools, the rules of the culture, the community and their roles (or ‘division of labour’). Two other factors crucial to understanding the ‘system’ as a whole are i) the historical factors that still have a bearing on the operation and ii) the tensions or contradictions that exist within the system, which would hinder progression to the desired outcome. Although other models have been proposed (Bedny 2003, Wilson 2006) that adapt Engeström’s model to varying degrees, this research continues to use the given model, as it appears here, in order to explore the way it can be applied to learning in classroom contexts.

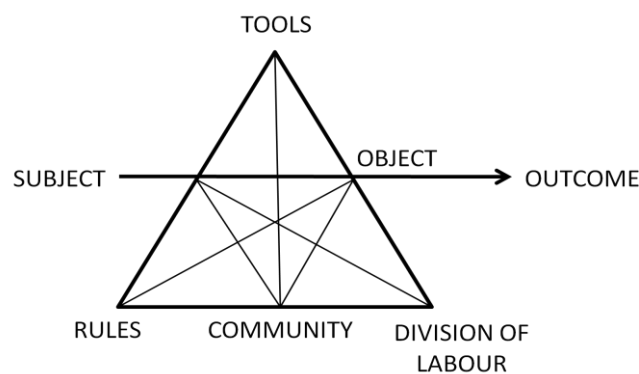


Figure 2 – Activity Theory model (Engeström 1987, 1999)

The upper subject-tools-object triangular relationship is recognisable from Cole’s diagrammatic representation of Vygotsky’s notion of tool-mediated action. Leont’ev places motives in the objects of activity (rather than the subjects) and the objects are themselves “restless and unstable” and something that is “anticipated” (Engeström 2008:88), hence the motivation to direct the activity.

This is expanded to consider the concept of shared activity as distinct from that of the individual. As Engeström (1999) points out in an example, the subject refers to the group of scholars he is working with, and the community is the associated academics worldwide who share the same perspectives. Hence ‘community’ is added on another plane, referring to the people with whom the subject is linked and who may share the same object. To this plane is also added the ‘rules’ that govern the behavioural norms of the community, and the ‘division of labour’ which are the roles that the joint

subjects have. However, Roth (2010) stresses the danger of viewing such a model as a representation of a fixed activity, rather than the dynamic relations it has the potential to highlight.

The application of CHAT specifically to the analysis phase of the research process is discussed in the last section of Methodological Process in the next chapter (4.3). Here I expand on these elements to give a brief outline of their meaning and function in understanding activity systems.

3.4.2 Subject and goal-oriented action

It is useful to conceptualise classroom activity as a dynamic system whereby the teacher is the subject with defined aims for the learning practices and eventual learning outcomes, and the pupils as members of the community, operating within a structure of rules and roles that are evolving over time. It is the relations and tensions between these elements that is the focus of my inquiry, taking into account the cultural context and its capacity for change.

Drama-as-toolkit might be described as creating a fictional context enabling participants to explore social situations from the perspective of someone other than themselves. One might carefully structure the real and/or imagined physical space and sequence of events in order to encourage a personal investment by the participant to imagine the perspective of their character, influenced by past experiences and other knowledge of the context.

Engeström's work is primarily based in the workplace and often where, in laboratory fashion, the model is discussed with the participants to prompt change. However, Grossman et al (1999) believe that "Activity Theory is useful for understanding the process of learning to teach, particularly in illuminating how teacher choose conceptual and pedagogical tools to inform and conduct their teaching. This framework directs our attention to the predominant value systems and social practices that characterize the settings in which learning to teach occurs" (Grossman et al 1999:4). The central role of the teacher in directing the tasks of successive lessons, as required by the

schemes of work (also teacher-led), and the concern of the research to identify teacher goals, places the teacher as the primary subject. However, both in terms of capturing the essence of the classroom activity, and in maintaining a balanced focus in the research, it is important to consider pupil goals. Hence I explore a way to represent both.

The concept of a collective subject considers how pupils work together in problem-solving situations. In order to consider how teacher and pupils, potentially operating in distinct systems, might operate across these boundaries or in different ways on the same task, the systems can be represented as part-overlapping in the way teacher and pupils may work on the same objects, as in Figure 3. Engeström (2008) distinguishes that the work activity of school teachers may be called *teaching* whereas the activity of school students might be more suitable termed *school going* (2008:89). Where the outcome might be the same, the rules, division of labour and object may be different. In this case two systems would seem to be in operation in the classroom – one of the teacher and one of the pupils – and I construct similar models to reflect the interpretation of the classroom activity in the case studies.

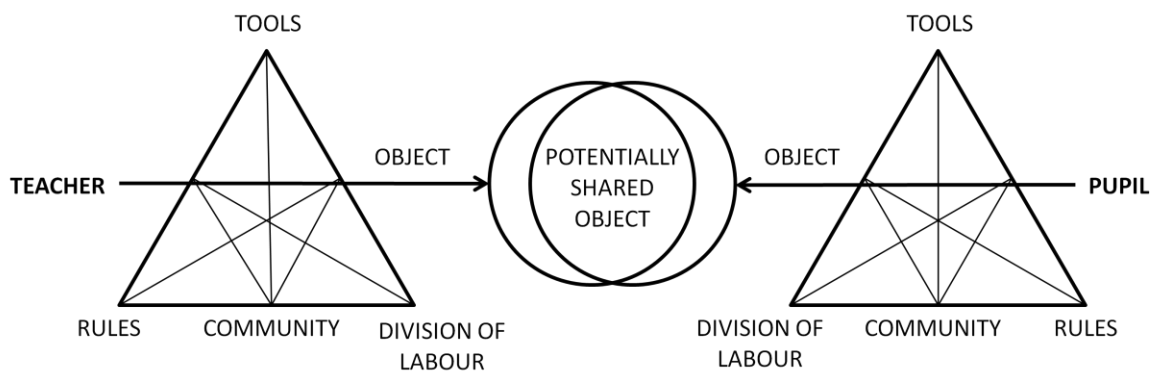


Figure 3 - Two interacting activity systems as minimal model for the third generation of Activity Theory (Engeström 2001:136)

3.4.3 Tools and Appropriation

As discussed earlier, the manner in which participants appropriate communicative tools as part of sense-making is an important part of the process in working towards a shared goal. These communicative tools I have defined as: proxemic, practical, physical, visual, aural, oral and textual and form part of the drama-as-toolkit:

The tools of a skilled carpenter may fill multiple boxes. They offer the practitioner multiple alternative access points to a task. Thinking is performed with the tools. Thus, the tools open a window into the mentality of the trade.

(Engeström, 2007:33)

For Engeström (2007) this perspective represents an important shift from understanding action to be mediated by singular tools to a more complex co-configuration. By exploring existing practices concerning this toolkit and within tasks where participants create for and operate in a fictional role, more can be understood about the relative transformative power of the toolkit in working on the objects towards supposed common goals.

Appropriation “refers to the process through which a person adopts the conceptual and pedagogical tools available for use in particular social environments...and through this process internalizes ways of thinking endemic to specific cultural practices” (Grossman et al 1999:13). This is relevant to this study because it examines not only the way teachers deploy drama strategies and do so by getting the pupils to also become active in this, but it questions the way drama-as-toolkit is perceived and what bearing it has on the developing understanding within the curriculum subject.

Grossman et al (1999) identify five degrees of appropriation when considering the professional development of teachers:

- i. *Lack of appropriation* – The concept may be too difficult to comprehend or too alien to previous experience
- ii. *Appropriating a label* – A superficial level where the tool is known by name but not by features
- iii. *Appropriating surface features* – Some features are known but not fully understood. This may be particularly relevant where teachers are using a departmental scheme of work or have experienced some lesson task on a short course but do not fully comprehend what pupil might gain from it
- iv. *Appropriating conceptual underpinnings* – The theoretical basis is understood, which prompts the use of the tool but not necessarily the label or the practical application.
- v. *Achieving mastery* – Likely to take longer but the eventual ability to deploy the tool effectively and with developed conceptual understandings

Also of continued importance is the social environment in which these processes occur. I do not intend to assign a number value to the degree of appropriation of drama-as-toolkit. However, this list is a useful description of a spectrum of appropriation for my exploration of different case studies, and of the differing appropriation between teacher and pupils.

If, through this process, learners are able to reconstruct the knowledge they are internalising in order to reach new levels of understanding, then it would seem that transmission-orientated instruction has less potential than drama-as-tool to facilitate it. The tension seems to lie in how far the pupils are given the freedom of appropriation, particularly if they lack experience and understanding of the tool itself, leading to only a superficial level of appropriation and potentially a limited positive learning experience. Within the case studies, there is some evidence that where teachers assume sole control of the task or where pupils are given a very wide brief with little structure, therefore the actual appropriation of the tool and the value of sense making seem limited.

As part of sense-making, how does the classroom setting afford the negotiation of conflicts and multiple perspectives, of multiple goals within the single task?

The degree to which participants have free choice of action is dependent on the appropriation of drama-as-toolkit. For example, the task may be structured by a pre-determined script from the teacher, or the pupils may decide to create such a structure for themselves, thereby pre-determining their own action early in the interpretative process. Do the learning outcomes facilitate the taking of risks to explore scenarios imaginatively before the knowing of facts or scripting of dialogue?

3.4.4 Community

Csikszentmihalyi states that “the field of art, like any other field, is made up of a network of interlocking roles” (1988:330). Even though the wider community might not be present, for example other members of staff are rarely in the teacher’s lesson, they may be influential in the subject’s action:

In an activity the individual is not isolated but is part of a community, and the activity will be affected by the individuals’ participation within this community. Additionally, the subject’s relationship to the community is mediated by rules and the community’s full collection of tools. (Bellamy 1996:125)

Once again, it is important to stress that the community are the wider relations the subject has with others outside of the immediate context. For teachers in classrooms it may be other members of staff, other academics working in the field of their subject or education. For pupils it may be their peers in other classes, their siblings or other members of their family, for example. Other acquaintances outside of the classroom may also be influential in the way that they interact within it.

3.4.5 Rules

'Rules' in the Activity Theory model refer to the explicit and implicit regulations, norms and conventions that constrain actions and interactions within the activity system (University of Helsinki Centre for Activity Theory 2010). Social and classroom rules govern the physical classroom space and other spaces, and the norms of behaviour that are required of those spaces. In teaching and learning these are of vital importance in creating regulating boundaries and establishing patterns of communication. There may be a difference, however, in the understanding of the same tools and associated action across different classrooms (Fuller & Clarke 1994); essentially every classroom is unique.

In differentiating between types of rules, I use 'classroom' when referring to rules that the teacher, and school institution, has established to govern the behaviour and interaction of pupils in the course of lesson tasks and the school day. I use 'social' when referring to more informal interaction between pupils which is not governed by the teacher. The boundary between these two types is blurred and may be even more so in pupil-led group tasks, which is of interest in this study.

3.4.6 Division of Labour

Division of Labour "refers to the explicit and implicit organization of a community as related to the transformation process of the object into the outcome" (Kuutti 1995:25). This reiterates the motivation inherent in the assigning of roles as well as the dynamic, ever-changing nature of the activity and its participants. Saljo (2007) is interested in how it is possible to "transform learning practices and the division of labour between people and tools" (2007:14). For him, by examining the object of enquiry and the unit of analysis, one attempts to locate the 'knowing' which is between people and tools (rather than in human thought processes), even if the subject has not acquired full mastery of the tool.

3.5 Towards a conceptual framework

Cultural Historical Activity Theory explores activity systems by examining the relationship between subject, tool and object, combined with the rules and responsibilities of a community. The tensions between these points, and the recognition of desired outcomes, bring the investigator to a closer understanding of how the system functions. Theoretical perspectives drawn from analysing performance events help acknowledge the range of communicative tools that can be appropriated in joint action, and the particular relationship and mutual understanding held between actor and audience.

Appropriation of drama as a pedagogical toolkit is not the interpretation of content, in other words not the kind of close analysis of play texts associated with English lessons, but refers to the process of structuring the mode of interaction and communication in order that participant may be able to operate 'in-role' whilst objectively operating as audience to reflect and give feedback as required to move the process along according to the demands of the task. In order to further the learning process, a second degree of objectivity is required to make connections between the in-role task and the curriculum topic in question as part of achieving a deeper understanding. Thus the responsibility for appropriation – the division of labour - can be seen to lie with both the teacher and the pupil, as well as the appropriation being of a dual nature – as actor and audience.

This conceptual framework directly informs the research questions and the research methodology, discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS

4.1 Focus of the study

My previous research (Grainger Clemson 2007) explored occasions where teachers, including drama teachers, bring their pupils to a theatre to engage in an educational workshop led by a theatre practitioner. This new research investigates not where practitioners are invited into the school environment but where the teachers are operating as chief instigator and in the classroom (as opposed to studio) space where their own style of teaching is the norm. The participating teachers are those who are not employed as full-time 'drama-as-a-discrete-subject' teachers but as teachers of the curriculum subjects of History, Geography and Religious Studies. Without formal training in drama or in drama in education, they are doing so with differing levels of expertise and confidence (O'Neill and Lambert 1990). In these lessons, the participating teachers relate, the use of drama strategies is sometimes encouraged, sometimes tried, sometimes used again, but only as part of a range of approaches over the course of an academic year and a pupil's progression through Key Stage 3 and beyond. Also included in the participating subjects are the pupils of the classroom – the 'classroom' conceptualised holistically as a learning community and the context for events.

This is not an intervention study but one exploring particular existing teaching and learning practices. It explores the ever-changing and evolving nature of the interactions in the classroom as the pupils construct new meanings according to the demands of the tasks. I ask 'how does the appropriation of drama-as-toolkit figure in these interactions and understandings?' in a way that appreciates the teacher's developed learning strategies are embedded in the cultural historical practices of the classroom. In exploring the action of both teacher and pupils, attention is paid not

simply to the interaction between independent minds but enquires how rules and relationships are negotiated given the prevailing culture of the classroom.

4.2 Research Questions

4.2.1 Main research question and terminology

How is drama appropriated as a pedagogical toolkit in secondary classrooms?

This question focuses the research on six concepts or concerns:

1. 'drama' – the way it is conceptualised by teachers and pupils and applied outside of traditional theatre contexts
2. 'pedagogy' – the ideas and practice of teaching and learning, as developed over time by individual teachers operating within unique institutions
3. 'tool' – in its most general form a tool can be described as something used to accomplish a task or solve a problem; here, 'toolkit' refers to the notion that a subject's goal-oriented action is mediated by tools and that drama tasks involve a number of them; this multiple use of tools is also the case in learning processes
4. 'secondary' – in the UK, typically from the ages of 11 or 12 years and following a curriculum of statutory subjects, with options increasing at age 14 and schooling remaining compulsory until age 16.
5. 'classroom' – that both the physical space and the community created by shared experienced within it has a bearing on the relational activity of the participants
6. 'appropriation' - the way a tool is adapted for a particular learning goal

The sixth concept – appropriation – ties together the preceding five. The teacher’s established pedagogical practice may be influential in structuring a drama task in a certain way, and vice versa. The perceived value to the learning process by both drama-as-toolkit and acquiring an understanding of curriculum content may define what needs to be understood by the pupils before the task can commence, and what is then perceived as a successful reaching of goals. The level or manner of appropriation may depend upon the person’s prior experience, or familiarity, with the toolkit and their skill-level.

The wider cultural understanding of the toolkit – how drama has been and is perceived in the world ‘outside’ - is introduced into the local culture of the classroom both by the teacher’s direct insertion into their practice but also via the pupils’ own understanding and previous experiences. Subsequently the pupils may appropriate the tool in different ways whilst the task is underway, according to how closely they follow the teacher’s structuring of the task. For example, across the case studies, the drama tasks are heavily structured by the teacher and when the pupils are given more control of the action, the pupils may be observed to impose their own structures. Exploring the appropriation is useful in understanding the cultural values and experiences brought into the classroom.

Activity System	- the classroom, its people and their goal-oriented action; the ‘case’ in the specific time frame I was present
Context	- the wider school institution in its setting in the local community and the wider cultural-historical experiences of the participants
Lesson	– the timetabled period when the teacher and pupils were present; a series of tasks planned and implemented by the teacher
Event	– shorter periods within the lesson, bounded by a task, an interaction between people or an extended period of individual action

Task	– series of actions with a specific goal as defined by the teacher, relating to the plan for that lesson
Action	– a combination or series of utterances or gestures that are goal-oriented

Figure 1 – terminology used when referring to case studies

4.2.2 Subsidiary research questions

RQ1 – What are teacher’s rationales for incorporating drama tasks in secondary curriculum lessons?

This question explores the developing pedagogical practice of teachers and how drama-as-toolkit features as part of that developing pedagogy and builds on the literature that considers the historical development of drama tasks. As the learning process is guided by the teacher and they are the ones to select the types of task used in given lesson, their values ascribed to the toolkit are an important consideration in understanding their subsequent design and implementation of lesson tasks. A teacher’s practice is also understood to have developed over a number of years as a pedagogical approach embedded within the teacher’s understanding of the institution and educational practice in an even wider social sense.

RQ2 - How is dramatic form appropriated in drama tasks when working towards learning goals?

This question builds on the literature concerning drama in the curriculum. It explores how drama is structured and conceptualised as a process on order to work towards these goals. The term ‘dramatic form’ is used here to refer more specifically to the medium of expression: whether a task is based on scripted text, mime, improvisation, tableau, and so on. Pupils often come to curriculum

lessons with some previous experience of drama or performance, meaning that its introduction into the classroom practice already comes with a grasp of conventions, such as ‘audience’ or ‘character’. Form also refers to the teacher’s structuring of the task according to the teacher’s aims – who does what and when - which then sets boundaries. The degree to which the aims are explicit may also determine how the participants decide to interact, particularly regarding dramatic conventions or the utilising of subject knowledge. When working ‘in-role’ a participant may be conscious of both the constraints and requirements of the wider task – of drama-as-toolkit – and the constraints of the fictional scenario, together with the desires of the character being portrayed alongside other participants.

RQ3 - How do teachers and pupils appropriate communicative tools in drama tasks?

This question builds on discussions on the creative process and communicative toolkit deployed by humans in social interaction. As discussed in the Review of Literature, communication in drama tasks can be perceived as an elaborate sign system and the manner in which participants appropriate signs as part of sense-making is an important part of the process in working towards a shared goal. Based on the analytical framework discussed in the literature chapters and here in the methodology, I define the communicative tools as:

- Proxemic – layout of classroom; spatial arrangement of participants
- Practical – material items used in tasks
- Physical – gestures and movement
- Visual – fixed or used by teacher; mental images
- Aural – music, vocal expression
- Oral – lecturing; asking and responding; discussing
- Textual – reading, writing

The externalising of role through physical and vocal expression might influence the experience in the drama of other participants, thereby becoming part of the tool as interactive process. The question prompts a focus not only on the verbal exchanges but also the space and gestures used to communicate meaning during in-role activities and what interpretation may be made by and about the participants in relation to their goal-oriented action.

RQ4 - How do teachers and pupils negotiate rules and responsibilities in drama tasks?

This question builds on literature regarding teacher control and collaborative action; collaborative not just in terms of group physical action but joint sense making. The historically developed cultural rules and hierarchies governing the learning context are perceived to be important components in a CHAT-based analysis of the classroom as activity system. A focus on these components can reveal potential tensions within the system. This question proposes an investigation into shifting social and cultural rules that govern teacher and pupil interaction and the type of work undertaken by these subjects. In other words it explores their decision-making processes and freedom of choice.

4.3 Research design

4.3.1 An overview of the process

This research comprises four case study classes spread across four secondary schools in the south of England: one in History (Year 7), one in Geography (Year 7) one in Religious Studies (Year 10) and a Creative Curriculum (multi-subject) class (Year 7). As the sole researcher, I spent an average of two weeks observing each lesson within a series that covered a single unit of work (one topic within the curriculum for that year group). The unit of work to be observed was suggested by the participating teacher, and discussed in pre- fieldwork interviews, as being an example of the way they typically

incorporate drama tasks into lessons. In addition, I undertook two further case studies, including the full series of observations and interviews: one with the History teacher and his Year 9 class, and another with the Head of Department to the Geography teacher and his Year 9 class. I decided not to formally report on these case studies in this thesis, in order to provide more scope for description and discussion in the other four. Nevertheless, I did undertake some analysis in the two cases, which broadened my perspective of the Year 7 cases by giving me an opportunity to explore other examples of approaches within a similar context.

My previous research study (Grainger Clemson 2007) operated as a pilot study of suitable methodology, as well as the content making a provisional enquiry into drama and learning at secondary level. Data for the research was generated from the observation of these lessons together with further interviews with the teachers and separate focus group interviews with pupils. The events, recorded in written notes, as well as audio and video recordings, were then transcribed and analysed over several months. This section (4.3) covers the early stages of finding and recruiting participants (4.3.2-6); ethical considerations (4.3.6) and the observation and interview process, in particular the positioning of the researcher (4.3.7-9). The next section (4.4) addresses the analysis of data, specifically: the transcription of recorded material and field notes (4.4.1); thematic coding of data (4.4.2); the fine-grain and cross-code analysis (4.4.3); and the reporting of findings (4.4.4).

4.3.2 Multiple case study

I opted for a multiple case study approach in order to allow for enough immersion into each classroom culture and yet to gain as much insight as possible into the different approaches by teachers in different types of schools. Herriott and Firestone (1983) find that multiple cases can increase the robustness - and thereby the usefulness in generating greater understanding - of research through heterogeneity of cases (Schofield 2002, Yin 2003). In my study, I take each

classroom as a unit of analysis, where comparisons may be made across case units. This is having followed roughly the same schedule with each; however each case remains an independent site of inquiry, given their diverse contexts.

Yin (2003) recognises the criticism that case study approach has been subjected to but maintains that it is relevant when “a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control” (2003:9). He adds that the case is identified within its real-life context. This is because that context is highly relevant as the boundaries between it and the phenomenon being studied are not always clear. According to Stake (2000), the boundaries of a ‘case’ can lie around a single individual or peculiarity. My cases are bounded by the teacher’s pedagogical approach but also spatially and temporally by the classroom: containing teacher and specified group of pupils (from a wider year group) for their lessons together, yet taking into account the historical experiences of said participants and the wider context of the school.

Schofield (2002), on the increase of generalizability, gives three distinct purposes to what a researcher is looking for: what *is* – typical cases-; what *may be* – activity that is fairly common but at the leading edge of its kind -; and what *could be* – examining exceptional cases. She notes that cases relating to the former should be selected because of their best fit not convenience; the other two pose difficulties of changing institutions and the life cycle of the phenomenon. In my research I am exploring what may be: my assumption is that the majority of teachers of subjects other than drama do not incorporate drama tasks for a significant period of their teaching time, and so I am researching less common activity. It might, however, be perceived as ‘typical’ to that teacher and perhaps also to the pupils if they were accustomed to that teacher’s approach. I would not go so far as to describe it as exceptional in the 21st Century, although such an approach might be exceptional in a particular school. In summary, I have selected my cases on the basis that they are incorporating the less common drama tasks, as well as the more typical lesson tasks for those subjects, and on the basis that one or more of them may be reflective of other classrooms at present or in the future.

4.3.3 Preliminary Enquiries

To get a better sense of what was happening in schools whilst developing my research design I set up preliminary visits to four schools. This was through the Head of Drama in each case as I believed that they might know how drama tasks were being incorporated elsewhere by other members of staff. Unfortunately, this in itself was a difficult task, not only making initial contact but also in trying to use the contacts to source others and I became concerned that my potential participants were too masked from view to identify. The drama teachers themselves also confessed to not knowing precisely which other members of staff used which activities in their lessons.

The visits I made were to Heads of Drama who were particularly interested in my research topic and were concerned about the wider development of drama within their institution. If these were to become the schools containing my case studies it was useful in getting a sense of the overall ethos, the teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions and the kind of drama tasks they were already exposed to. The interviews gave me a deeper insight into the same lines of enquiry but I became increasingly aware that I was building images of these sites from a drama-subject-specialist perspective – highlighting my own assumption that this would be the proper source and therefore starting point. Their descriptions were interesting - although not of lessons but ‘off-timetable days’ - and (promoted to me as) positive accounts of cross-curricular projects and whole school initiatives that were challenging teachers and pupils perceptions of learning. However, I still lacked the perspective of teachers for whom these tasks were not everyday practice.

I exploited a few opportune moments in the staff rooms with Humanities teachers to ask them about their classroom aims and practices, however none of whom felt able to commit to a research project, or perhaps, as Yin (2003) would have it, have me “intruding into” their world (2003:72). In one instance I was sitting in a staff room during a lunch time talking to members of staff who began the sharing of their own work with “I don’t know whether you’d call it drama but...” suggesting that even the teachers themselves are not aware of how to label their techniques and therefore even

less likely to come forward. I created a simple A4 poster and then a leaflet to distribute to schools and at a conference to provide examples for teachers who may not immediately think the research topic is appropriate to them. On a final two-day visit to another school I was able to interview and observe a Religious Studies PGCE student in their first attempt at using drama (as part of a Unit of Work on the Parables). Having discussed this with teacher-educators I had decided not to recruit PGCE students to the study as it was highlighted that they were still very much coming to terms with their own classroom management systems and formulating their own style. Nevertheless, this was still an interesting pilot exercise to re-familiarise myself with classroom activities and the type of interactions I might expect in my main research.

4.3.4 Recruitment of teachers

Foster (1996) notes that “gatekeepers are often concerned to protect their own interests.” It was often the case in the months of recruitment that contacts (in schools, country drama services and Local Education Authorities) had apologised and cited OFSTED inspection or a particularly ‘busy period’ as the reason for not replying or not encouraging me to contact other staff. I was also more reluctant to contact head teachers as the initial contact as I had taken this approach with one who immediately refused on behalf of all other members of staff, suggesting that they felt the research would be disruptive. It seemed increasingly important to find ‘kindred spirits’, sympathetic to the research, and closer to ground level in order to be more persuasive at management level.

As a more direct route I made a more purposive sampling of key informants in order to find information-rich cases that were highly relevant to the research (Patton 1990), in other words I sought to find the teachers directly. I considered attending curriculum subject conferences (at great time and financial cost) and searched the Internet (including the site ‘Rate My Teacher’) for publicised anecdotes. Ultimately, I had a spell of encounters where contact details were passed on

to me and I was able to visit and interview four of the teachers concerned. This opportunistic approach, whilst seemingly unstructured, does not pose a problem in the research as I still achieve a range of schools and teachers with different previous teaching experience. It was important not to merely settle for the first contacts and so I was prepared to extend my recruitment phase if necessary, even after the first phase of field work.

My initial description of the research to teachers was ambiguous and more broadly reaching, preferring to describe it as “an open exploration of the use of drama in classrooms”. This is due to the research evolving over time, but also in part by a desire to leave my interpretation open in order to capture the unique approach of the teacher. I wanted to avoid skewing the case study to fit the research, or giving too concrete an impression of expected tasks to the teachers lest they might alter their own practice or reporting of views to try and fit my research. In order to maintain access to the teacher’s personal reflections, any particular focus of the research was underplayed to promote the classroom activity as driving the process. This also served a dual purpose in maintaining my own objectivity and make allowance for emerging ideas.

As for the teacher-researcher relationship, all but one of the participating teachers are heads of department, accustomed to making curriculum policies and to hosting trainee teachers. They therefore possibly have a stronger sense of pedagogy and how they might phrase it for a third party. As an ex-Head of Department myself, I openly empathised with the teachers when they were discussing issues – not in any false manner but in a way that might reassure them that I was approaching the research with a certain degree of familiarity and that they could trust me in this respect. It was only during one case study that there was a sense of a different relationship. The teacher in part portrayed their pedagogy as a product to be disseminated, having already been so through workshops for local teachers. I even attended one of these workshops, which helped deepen my understanding of the teacher’s pedagogy but also highlighted the potential for this teacher to perceive the research as a vehicle for promotion of her distinct teaching and learning

strategies. Making adjustments for the benefit of my visit to show particular aspects of her practice may add to the unnaturalness of the research environment but also highlights how participation in research may motivate teachers to experiment with approaches, as described by another participating teacher.

4.3.5 Compiling the Cases

By emailing a questionnaire to each prospective teacher before the start of the new academic year I was confident that I had potentially achieved enough variation in school, teacher, subject and the drama tasks as described to me. Although I had hoped for an even greater range – for example a Maths or Science classroom – I planned for a full two terms of fieldwork with time to source more should it be necessary. Again I was at the mercy of the teachers and they all decided that the Autumn term was the only suitable time for my visits. My pre-planned schedule - of singular case studies followed by adequate time for reflection and review - was compromised in this respect. Without securing a Year 8 class to research, I was also unable to achieve a full range of year groups, to allow for any evidence that age might have a bearing on the appropriation of drama-as-toolkit. This was particularly frustrating because, as one teacher commented, Year 8 pupils are possibly more ‘suitable’ for the type of approach I was exploring because they are no longer new (to the school or each other) but do not necessarily have the social awkwardness of older pupils.

CASE	SCHOOL	TEACHER	SUBJECT	PUPILS Total (Interview)	TOPIC OF LESSONS	Total visits (Date)
A	Community College	1. Female HoD	Religious Studies	Y10 – 25 (4)	Judaism	5 days - July, Sep, Oct, Dec
B*	Comprehensive	2. Male HoD	History	Y9 – 27 (5)	WWI Trenches	5 days Oct
C				Y7 – 29 (5)	Thomas Becket	4 Days Dec
D	Boys’ Day Independent	3. Female NQT (2 nd yr)	Geography	Y7 – 23 (4)	Nauru’s Exploitation	6 Days Nov
E*		4. Male HoD		Y9 – 20 (4)	Japanese Whaling	4 Days Nov
F	Comprehensive	5. Female HoD	Creative Curriculum	Y7 – 29 (3)	Learning styles & communication	7 Days Nov – Dec

Figure 2 - The case study schedule. *Cases B & E are not reported on in the findings chapters

In order to plan effectively, the access process had to begin months ahead of the commencement of the case study visits. However, it was common for the content of the Scheme of Work to be unknown for most of that period. I was able to know the number of lessons and rough topic area and in which lessons the drama tasks were to be used in order to make sure that I allowed enough time to observe the preparatory work for the strategies (if any) and then other types of activity in between or following such tasks. Yet again I was at the mercy of the teacher as I had no choice in the lessons that were selected for me to observe – I could only potentially reject ones that seemed unsuitable in that they would not provide much more evidence about the classroom weighed up against the rest of the data and the effort of visiting the class, recording and transcribing. Figure 3 simplifies the inclusion of tasks:

Subject	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6
Religious Studies	Drama + discussion	Q&A + Drama	Q&A; writing	-	-	-
History	Drama + discussion	Writing; discussion	Discussion; preparation	Drama	-	-
Geography	Discussion; read & write	Drama + discussion	Comprehension	Discussion	Drama	-
Creative Curriculum	Discussion	Drama / discussion	Drama	Drama / art	Drama	Drama

Figure 3 – Case Study Lesson Tasks

Ideally, the content of the lessons would have been known further in advance to make certain that the tasks were relevant to the study. The lack of information about the actual nature of the drama tasks is revealing of the relationship between the non-specialist teacher and the medium – where there was a discrepancy between a teacher’s description and the actual task, this contributed to an impression of the teacher’s understanding of drama processes.

What do these compromises mean for the quality of research and validity of knowledge claims? It is clear that future similar studies could allow for the possibility of undertaking a further fieldwork

phase, once the teacher's distinct approach has been established and other opportunities identified. Ultimately this research is not as broad in its study of a range of drama tasks but it is an inevitable result of limited time and practical constraints, and of its status as doctoral research. However, valid knowledge claims come from the thorough investigation of each case to provide a snapshot of teaching and learning experiences. Again, these are not more generally applicable to all schools but can inform a discussion on broader issues.

4.3.6 Ethical procedures

Although many ethical decisions have to be based on the judgement of the individual researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995), it depended very much on the class teacher to make a judgement as to whether their pupils would withstand the long-term presence of a visitor/researcher without detrimental effects on classroom working atmosphere and pupil learning. The class as a whole was not being required to make a significant extra commitment in terms of class time for the research. The exception was the signing of participation forms and then the voluntary completion of questionnaires or participating in interview, which the teacher needed to agree to in terms of allowing lesson or other time.

The ethics procedures for working with children under 16 years of age meant particular care was taken to explain the research to the pupils in person and in simple terms in order to gain informed consent. Very few pupils opted out of being videoed, but I took their consent seriously and made sure that the camera did not capture them. The pupils were given a descriptive parent leaflet and consent form to take home and return for their next lesson. The parent form was, according to University Ethics procedures, opt-out for interview and questionnaire and opt-in for video recording. The leaflet, also stating clearly the protection and anonymity of the data, I also sent to the Headteacher in advance of the case study and I used along with a short talk in order to introduce the

pupils to the research. Each Headteacher and participating teacher signed an individualised consent form. Examples of the consent paperwork are presented in APPENDIX A.

More pertinent to this research in terms of moral values were the relationships I established with the participants. I was guided by the BERA guidelines in order to “reach an ethically acceptable position in which [my] actions are considered justifiable and sound” (British Educational Research Association 2004:4), however my positioning in the classroom requires further discussion.

4.3.7 Positioning myself in the classroom

During the lessons, it was not my intention to undertake any role other than observer in the classroom. However, I recognise a varied sense of what I was - researcher, student, teacher, visitor, expert – which might, consciously or otherwise, form part of my constructed relationships with the teacher and the pupils. Each of these perspectives had a bearing on the sense I made from observations and interactions and also on the way, and extent to which, I presented myself to others and so I intend to address my bias and my position in the classroom in this discussion.

Before each case study commenced, I experienced repeated ‘first-night nerves’ spurred by my own desires as a teacher to see a positive use made of drama tasks. There is no doubt that my own perceived standards of what made ‘good’ drama and performance – researcher as ‘expert’ - were partly influential in my reading of this classroom activity, however much I attempted to suppress the critical eye. Early field note comments such as “37min – Main characters just sat behind tables” perhaps revealing in the word “just” my disappointment that physical embodiment of character was not further achieved. Teachers would often ask me or pass comment on how I might differently lead the activity but I would deflect the question, wishing to focus on the approach they had chosen for themselves and somehow avoid engaging in an evaluation of their teaching practice. I avoided

making clear statements on the lesson or offering suggestions about how it might be differently structured – something I only did once and in reference to another class.

Concerning my physical presence in the classroom, I was not a main actor but neither was I a completely passive audience. I wished the lessons to proceed just as they might without my presence in order to observe the natural environment. However I acknowledge that invisibility was impossible, even undesirable, as I had to a) ensure that I was able to accurately (rather than discreetly thereby awkwardly) record my observations and b) negotiate a working relationship with the participants in order to encourage them to share their experiences.

Similarly, Fine (1993) deliberately kept his notebook in view even though he knew it might distract the informants, rather than face the struggle of being “just an observant piece of furniture” (1993:281). I mostly positioned myself on the fringes of the room but, due to restrictions of space, only a metre at most from the nearest pupil. I then moved occasionally to gain a different perspective although this was difficult to achieve in most cases because of the limited space and the disturbance I might cause when the pupils were still at their desks. By being unwilling to cause distractions I had to relinquish opportunities to move from my post to observe more clearly some interactions between teacher and pupils. I was mostly above the level of the pupils as I was usually standing up. This perhaps increased my ‘elevation’ as a visitor but also distanced me – for better or worse - as someone who is not taking part in the classroom activity. In this way I might class myself as ‘observer’ or ‘viewer’, but never passive because of my constant interpretation of events. However because of my obvious presence, the participants’ awareness of me might position me as ‘active audience’ – someone performed to or known to be watching even if the focus is elsewhere – even if I had in no way desired it. One or two addressed me as ‘Miss’, as if I belonged alongside the other adults in this cultural world.

I moved to a more interactive level where I moved about the physical space, into that occupied by the pupils and teacher, and when I engaged them in a dialogue. Where I was looking for a shift in

the teacher-pupil relationship and proactivity, here I was doing the same: seeing and yet influencing the action in order to further my own knowledge and understanding over time. In two case studies I had the opportunity, following permission from the teacher, to 'float' around groups and gauge their progression and interaction. For the most part I allowed this to happen without intervention, however in two instances I asked the pupils about what they were doing. This seemed the only real opportunity to do so because if I had waited until after the lesson or until the scheduled interview at the end of the Unit of Work, their reflection might be impeded a) by the ability to recall so far back and b) reflections on the effect of the final 'product' or 'performance'. It was a decision I wrestled with. In asking questions I had, myself, perhaps applied a thought process or structure of 'rehearsal' to the pupils' work, such as asking what gestures or expression they might employ to convey certain aspects to the audience. Such compromises in my intended role as researcher were faced on many an occasion, however, I believe that they were important in my ability to connect with the personal experiences of the pupils.

The teacher-researcher relationship typifies the issues surrounding my positioning in the classroom and, for much of the research process, they were relationships I was continually re-negotiating. Motivated by this concern, I played up my teacher status and visitor status, contained in neutral my researcher and drama expert status, and played down my student status. This I believe I did in my general behaviour and in references I made during conversations, which lead me to the following reflections. In my conversations with the participating teachers I made a conscious effort to highlight my teaching experience (Drama and English) over that of my current student status – more a 'fellow practitioner engaging in a discussion regarding a topic of mutual interest' – in order to gain and sustain access to the teacher's stories and reflections of their teaching practice. Whereas other researchers might struggle with site-specific knowledge, I was still able to let the free-flowing terminology of 'attainment levels', 'options' and 'assessments' form a natural part of my understanding of the words I was hearing as I knew to a certain extent what they were referring to and what bearing they have on a teacher's work/planning and a pupil's perception of their progress.

I felt partly sympathetic to the teachers and I felt that by allying myself with the teacher to some extent I might offer them some support in their venture. Maintaining reciprocal support for my efforts was also desirable. In hindsight I perhaps attempted to approach the research as a collaborative exercise with the teacher, or at least give them the impression of such, in order to equal the power relationship, although one might say purely for my own gain. My relative 'expertise' – potentially 'studying down' (Harding 1987) - was referred to directly and indirectly by some teachers in interview, playing down their own efforts as 'novice' or 'experimental'. This put me in the awkward position of having to maintain a positive yet neutral manner in that I did not wish the teacher to feel under pressure that I was judging their capabilities. In these instances I would play up the exploratory and open nature of the research, again emphasising my gratitude at being a witness. Following from this, I would also be careful to maintain my 'visitor' status. Even after one or two visits, when I had my bearings, was recognised by the reception staff and knew how to get to the classroom, I would still wait to be invited in and asked permission to set up equipment or move around.

Moje (2000) describes a research situation where the freedom of the researcher to enter and leave the site (purely because of their temporary and non-employed status) led to envy on behalf of the teacher-participant that they could 'escape'. I did not get a sense of such an issue in my relationships with the case study teachers, yet I maintained a studious air in order to reassure the participant-teachers that this was a worthwhile and serious piece of research. In the same report, Moje (2000) describes a comment by the teacher about not having as much time as the researcher to engage with pupil activity, as they are busy policing the room. This struck a chord with me as one teacher made a similar reference, jokingly describing how I seemed to know the pupils' names much better than they did. I felt as if I had somehow threatened their personal relationship with the pupils, which I then accidentally seemed to do again in interview when asking about particular lesson events that the teacher could not recall or say they had noticed. I felt guilty at my insensitivity and was more cautious from then on.

4.3.8 Observing and recording in the classroom

I observed whole lessons, each one in a series over a period of two weeks. All four schools were on a fortnightly timetable and so the time of day and days themselves varied across the two-week period. The exception is Case A where I was only able to visit once near the start of term, once a fortnight later and then not until a fortnight before the end of term. Lessons were 40 minutes in duration for cases D & E (the boys' independent school) and an average of an hour for the others. I therefore observed between 2 hours 40 minutes and 4 hours per case, plus 6 hours for Case F, not including interview time. Having had previous experience as both teacher and researcher observing lessons and workshops, I was content with the length of time available with each case – which was bound by the duration of the curriculum topic rather than any other restriction. I was more concerned the content of the drama tasks would be of insufficient length, complexity or contrasting to other lesson tasks to generate data required to address the research questions.

Even though early in my fieldwork I still had not fully developed my theoretical perspective, from the beginning I conceptualised the classroom as a complete and integrated system of many diverse elements. I was conscious not to rush to draw conclusions that did not accurately reflect the original events. As Jackson (1990) says, "Looking for encourages us to look past things rather than at them. Looking for constricts awareness; looking at expands it." (Jackson 1990:163) I made a concerted effort to be patient, maintain a wide perspective and a critical – but not narrow – focus.

To generate data that would allow me to explore the subsidiary research questions, I set myself an open observation schedule, not least because I would not know that exact format of the lesson tasks until they occurred. Nevertheless, I anticipated paying particular attention to a list of key elements (Figure 4) to ensure that my observation was still sufficiently focused to my line of enquiry:

RQ1 – teacher value	▪ Nature of non-drama tasks
+	▪ Setting up of drama task – instructions, props, space
RQ2 – dramatic form	▪ Format of drama task – identifying the phases of creating, reworking, presenting, reflecting
+	▪ Use of drama/theatre terminology / reference to form
RQ3 – communicative toolkit	▪ Extent of in-role characterisation – both teacher and pupils
+	▪ Teacher talk – manner and direction of lecturing
	▪ Noticeable patterns or distinguishing features of teacher-pupil verbal exchanges
	▪ Use of non-verbal communication – gesture, facial expression
RQ4 – rules/responsibilities	▪ Rules governing communication (e.g. hands up) and other classroom management systems
	▪ Provision for individual / group / whole class creative decision making
	▪ Any other act or event seen as ‘significant’ to be recorded

*Figure 4 – elements for observation focus.
NB each element is not exclusive to one research question*

The spatial boundaries for observation were set as the space used for the lesson. For the most part this meant within the physical walls of the classroom but in some instances included the corridor and an outdoor area outside of the classroom building itself. The wider context of the schools - having had opportunities to visit receptions, playgrounds and hall/cafeterias - have informed my overall impression of the institutions, although these were peripheral concerns. My attention was more focused when entering the classroom space myself, then increasingly during the entrances and exits of pupils and being at my most formally observant during the lessons themselves, as indicated by the teacher’s signal and/or the school bell.

As I was seeking to explore the interactions of all participants, my observations took into account the actions of the whole class. I could have selected a much smaller number of pupils to focus closely on but I did not want my experience or notes to be restricted so narrowly. With no previous experience

of the class, I was liable to mistakenly select pupils who were all of the same and potentially low level of interaction with the teacher, lesson content and peers. As the class were either addressed as a whole by the teacher or sometimes divided into working in smaller groups, I had ample opportunity to observe the full number of pupils, occasionally focussing in on one or two and then dividing my attention across the groups when necessary. I preferred a more informal approach that would allow me greater flexibility and an opportunity to capture the complexity (Robson 2002) of the classroom.

What does this data purport to represent? It is building an understanding of the verbal, physical and spatial interactions between teacher and pupils that is revealing of their motivations and relationships with each other and the learning. It is not just 'what happened', but 'how and why'. The implication of researching in the way chosen and described here is that it is action unfolding but broad with additional events in detail.

Preferring to follow through the lesson in a chronological fashion, my written notes reflect the 'root' observation as only sometimes being a key phrase spoken by a participant and other times a physical gesture or movement with a time reference from the audio recorder which also acted as a stopwatch. I then noted how, for example tone or magnitude, those words or gestures were expressed and any other of-the-moment reflection on the possible meaning (see Figure 5 below) or bearing it had on subsequent action. In previous research (Grainger Clemson 2007) I had tried using, but rejected, an observation schedule in the form of a chart that attempted to subdivide my attention to verbal, non-verbal and spatial interaction. Such a compartmentalised approach seemed at odds with perceptions of communication as an integrated system. Although it subdivided verbal and non-verbal communication for supposed ease of analysis, it was very difficult to fill in at speed and reading back after the event, it was difficult to get a sense of 'what happened, when and how':

38:44	<p>Table A part in-role?</p> <p>Laughing at gun miming.</p> <p>Girl (as Soldier): Shut up, 'Major'</p> <p>Lizzie: Sir, X's cheating, listenin' in!</p>	<p>A game, competition?</p>
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Figure 5 - Example of (typed from written) field notes from Case B

The unpredictability of the lesson format and participant interaction necessitated a flexibility that allowed for appreciation of context as well as intermittent focus on individual utterances and gestures. As soon as possible afterwards I also added to the notes with reflections I might have had, although careful to distinguish between of-the-moment interpretation and post-observation readings.

I used both a video recorder to capture the movement, gestures and expressions of the participants and an audio recording device that was more portable/discrete and would be a back up if the video failed (and vice versa). A review of the audio and video recordings allowed me to supplement my field notes at leisure (Pirie 1996). One might dispute the need for field notes altogether, as they are a burden to keep pace on when so much is happening to see and listen to. I argue that firstly they recollect important moments when I was able to inhabit the participants' space and listen in to a conversation that the other recording devices would not pick up, see a particular facial expression or read what a group had written on their sheet of paper that might reflect their thought processes. They have also been useful in revealing my immediate impressions of a situation; they reflect my queries and thoughts at the time, and in comparison to the video and audio recordings that are continuous, the intermittent hand written notes indicate what I felt important at the time. This is critical when conceptualising my understanding or meaning making as a gradual process rather than an instantaneous or temporally distant event. As Somekh notes, "technology only keeps a partial

record and cannot replace the sensitivity of the researcher's 'self', open to nuances of meaning and interpretation" (Jones & Somekh 2005:140). I was acutely aware of my growing experience of those classrooms and how my perspective was shaped by my own "socio-culturally constructed values" (Jones & Somekh 2005:140):

The positioning of myself temporally - being present at and part of the 'live' event - has a bearing on the meaning made concerning the action and on the value and power of different recording mechanisms. One hour, one day, one month later, my mind has distilled and manipulated the images and although I can draw on them along with other methods of data generation, the memory will not be as rich as that instant moment afterwards, albeit it sharpened with the knowledge that I was not present merely to experience or share in the event but also to purposefully critically reflect on and remember it.

(Personal Research Journal)

Just like the obvious presence of a video camera (however discreetly positioned) the gesture of head up - head down - pen moves across page can change the relationship between researcher and participant. The actor-audience roles are not necessarily reversed but any recognition by the pupil that their own actions are being specifically observed, interpreted and reflected upon, one may argue, brings the researcher and participant into a tacit dialogue.

Mercer recognises that teachers and pupils are "not immune to the presence of the camera" (Mercer 1991:47). However, he also noticed that the impact, as recognised in his own review of research tapes, soon diminished as the participants grew accustomed to the camera's presence. Recognising this to be a potential source of, either discomfort, or a cue for 'performing' to the researcher, in my introductory talk I would explain that I would take notes but merely as an aide memoire, as would the video and audio devices be. The falseness of this statement is clear - the field notes were much more than an extension of internal images but were judgements and

commentaries – and one might argue that I constructed a fraudulent relationship in my position as audience in order to gain what I believed would be a more ‘true’ account of the classroom activity.

The digital audio recording device was small enough to be discreetly placed on my notebook or in my pocket. This was not wholly deceptive as I did explain its use in my introductory talk but in my attempts to reduce any effect on the participants I had to compromise on sound quality. As the video recorder was more than adequate in picking up audio, the audio device became a backup to the video recorder. However something I was unable to record, or even hear first-hand as a present person, were the discussions had in groups as part of class work. In future research I would explore the use of personal microphones to more fully explore the interaction between pupils, particularly as they created and refined performance pieces. Although I was free to move about the classroom, I could not always get close enough to properly hear the exchanges between pupils, unless I invaded their group space – something I did not do. Even hovering nearby might cause the participant of restricting or embellishing what they might normally say and do for the benefit of the researcher, which also might be the case for a microphone pinned to their shirt.

The use of video recording equipment in the classroom meant a more complicated ethics procedure in gaining consent but in retrospect was fully worth the effort. After leaving the site, nothing in my own memory, field notes or audio transcription could provide the detail of gesture and facial expression, without which the words exchanged between participants became seemingly incomplete dialogue. It was soon apparent that in order to produce a detailed description in retrospect, I was relying increasingly on video evidence. I began to rue the occasions I did not video, for example, when I was waiting for parental permission in the first lesson and in the earlier case studies when I was intending to only video short periods. I was also in the dangerous position of not only starting to take less interest in my own field notes after each case visit, but simply writing less. I had to reassess the value of each recording instrument. In retrospect I was almost grateful one day

when the camera battery ran out – my senses immediately sharpened and I renewed my vigour in seeing, writing, reflecting, writing.

The camera's lens is selective – by its very mechanical make up and the direction and amount of zoom I selected myself at the time of recording. With each playback after the original event, I was aware that I was not 'seeing' the original event – being already distanced spatially – but with a new version was constructed in my own mind, just as Denzin (1997) might describe any account post-event. My position as researcher also shifted to voyeur – the on-screen participants no longer aware of my presence and yet I still conceive of them as active 'live' participants. It is possible that the pupils were partially aware of the permanent capture of themselves as their excited groans and giggles might indicate when I played back some of the video in the group interview. Perhaps they realised that their actions were forever fixed in these images and perhaps this made them feel either more powerful in their extension and 'usefulness' beyond the lesson or less powerful in their loss of ability to control the extent to which they would be repeatedly viewed.

If anything, the experience of using and reviewing videotape has reminded me that I as researcher am not now the same person that existed behind (and sometimes in front of) the camera lens in each lesson, nor are the participants the same individuals from one lesson to the next, reconstructed and developed as we are by our social experiences.

(Personal Research Journal)

4.3.9 Interviewing Participants

In each case I interviewed the teacher face to face before the start of the first lesson. I then would hold one or two more informal discussions after the second or third lessons. I then interviewed the teacher again after the final lesson, using some video extracts as prompts for discussion (Video Stimulated Recall has been applied and discussed in education research by many, including Lyle

2003). I invited four or five pupils to take part in a focus group discussion after the final lesson in the series and also used a semi-structured interview schedule together with video extract prompts.

Accessing and sampling of pupils created its own challenges. I had considered that I might focus my observation in part on four pupils in each case class (two male, two female in mixed schools), in order to more purposefully track the experiences of pupils in more depth. When it became apparent that the format of lessons was less predictable and the overall observation perspective more 'emergent', then the decision was to treat each pupil equally and only focus on pupils who became more prominent on occasion. Where possible, a number of these 'knowledgeable informants' (Rapley 2004) were invited to interview, along with not so prominent pupils. This might be seen as rejecting a random sampling method to strive for some measure of general impression of the class. This I would dispute, as pupil opinions can be equally individualistic and yet mutually reflective in the social situation of the group interview and there is no certainty of such a broad reflection of experiences without interviewing each pupil individually. I attempted to capture the perspective of other pupils through questionnaires; however, this particular 'sweep' method became quickly apparent as impractical and unpopular, reducing its value and positioning amongst the research data. I was keen not to miss the opportunity to discuss key moments from the lessons with those pupils involved. In order that pupils might not feel selected for any particular positive or negative reason, the decision was taken to ask for volunteers, which narrowed down the pupils available and gave the impression of choice to the pupils, and from there to specify four or five for group interview.

It was important to establish a rapport (Rapley 2004). The pupils were 'invited' to take part and thanked profusely, supposedly placing myself at their mercy. This overt gratitude I showed was wholly real and yet, with each word of thanks and empathetic nod of the head and shocked expression at their anecdotes, my own 'performance' continued in the quest for 'interesting' data. What reasons might they have for performing too? Perhaps like their teacher they were eager for

their voice to be heard. Perhaps simply by joining the inner sanctum of the group interview they would feel elevated to a senior status in the eyes of their peers and their teacher. I did not feel any reason to severely doubt their responses as anything but their own opinion, particularly as I had spent up to 6 hours observing their behaviour in the classroom. I even felt privileged myself when supposedly restricted information was shared: comments about another teacher or an episode in another lesson coupled with shocked looks from the other pupils as if to say, “You can’t tell them that!” And yet again, the power in a performative act continued – showing boldness in describing classroom activity from behind closed doors may reveal the pupil levels in their ‘informant’ role.

I perceive the ‘interview event’ as a dialogue between participant and researcher, supplementing field notes with spoken words that might reveal more about the opinions and experiences of participants. As I interviewed pupils in groups of four or five, it was another occasion for observing the interaction between participants – an ‘event’. As Macnaghten and Myers (2004) point out:

A group can provide prompts to talk, correcting or responding to others, and a plausible audience for that talk that is not just the researcher. So focus groups work best for topics people could talk about to each other in their everyday lives – but don’t. (Macnaghten and Myers 2004:65)

The interview schedule for each case is listed in Appendix B. As a dialogue it was partially scripted, according to my pre-prepared questions or focal topics at the very least, however, there was still occasion for improvisation in the participant responses and in my own subsequent engagement in discussion.

The extent of the spontaneity is questionable. As Rapley points out, “Interviewing is never just ‘a conversation’, it may be conversational, but you as the interviewer do have some level of control” (Rapley 2004:26). There would have been at least some awareness of my scripted questions by the interviewees and both pupil and teacher may have had some sense trying to give the ‘right’ answer to come across as a ‘good’ teacher or pupil and a ‘useful’ participant in the research. There were measures I could take to try and prevent or counteract this. Although I often took fully worded

questions into an interview as support material, I rarely conformed to the precise ordering, preferring to try and follow the natural flow of the discussion. I also attempted a conversational approach to prevent the event feeling overly formal, however, this by its very description of an 'approach' – a 'tactic' – highlights that I might too be performing in the situation, even though the words 'cool' and 'cos' are present in my own everyday vocabulary:

Researcher: OK, cool ...I'm going to show you a bit of the lesson in a minute, cos I've got it on video...

(Year 9 History Pupil Interview [05:05])

With both teachers and pupils I showed them short video clips of their lessons, which provided a tangible springboard for discussion about key events. I was pleased to encourage a dialogue between the group interviewees, where they overlapped speech and finished or repeated each others' phrases, as I felt that this took emphasis away from the singularity of an interviewer question – interviewee response structure, coupled with my overt enthusiasm for their information to further encourage them and potentially achieve a more truthful account. Nevertheless, responding to more than one pupil at a time, like a teacher's challenge, was difficult:

Researcher: How long ago...was that last year or...?

Pupil 1: Cos when it's -

Pupil 2: - the year before.

Researcher: - The year before?! Two years?! -

Pupil 1: - Cos when it's fun -

Researcher: - You remember stuff from Year 7? -

Pupil 1: - Yeah when it's fun -

Pupil 3: - Interesting -

(Year 9 History Pupil Interview [06:50])

At the point of both making field notes and analysing the data, I was additionally enquiring in my own mind what approach the teachers did not take, in order to further consider that which they did.

I question if I as researcher have that dialogue with myself, why it is not a dialogue to be had with a participant? I believe the answer to be in the perceived subtext of the questions themselves. Whereas one might wish to ask questions in order to find out 'why' a decision was made, then the participant in their own mind will immediately question 'why' such a question was asked – in other words, the teacher would already be aligning their idea of what I might be probing for with their answer. Given that the purpose and content of the research is overt in the context of the teacher-researcher relationship, the very relationship itself may be altered with each dialogue engaged in. Although these are broad and recurrent methodological questions, I feel that they are intrinsically linked to the content of the research which considers at its heart the nature of interaction and joint sense-making.

It is worth making a brief comment on the use of printed questionnaires as, although they were eventually a very minor part of the fieldwork, they did make some contribution to analyses of the cases. In general, the use of the printed work and an individual written task seemed at odds with the research focus, given that I was exploring learning processes focused primarily on verbal and physical communication. I had to remember that the responses were also to the participant's own interpretation of a fixed text (see APPENDIX B). The dialogue, however much I played with expression in the sentences, did not have the same qualities as a live discussion in terms of eliciting information, with no ability to rephrase questions or ask clarifiers off the cuff. I had used the same format in previous research (Grainger Clemson 2007) with some success in capturing a broader picture of a wider range of participants, however I do not believe, with such a small number, that it could ever be termed a 'survey'. I did make alterations each time I administered it and had to tailor some questions to the case class, but in fact I felt that it would be more appropriate to take each completed questionnaire as an individual set of remarks. The difficulty here returns to the question of 'scripted' responses: if the remarks were individual then they were highly structured by the format of the questions and answer methods.

The returns were low. In order not to take up lesson time, the only opportunity was to encourage volunteers to remain in at their precious break time. The inability to generate any statistical data beyond '6 out of 10' was not wholly unexpected and not problematic as the questionnaire data became more useful in the early analysis phase simply to frame or add a little weight to a remark or response as seen in an interview or a lesson activity. I also had to consider that the questionnaire may be considered in some very small part an intervention as it was encouraging pupils to reflect on their work, their interaction with others and the process and interpretive nature of drama. This reflection is a core part of the drama process (Kempe and Ashwell 2000) but as it was less explicit in the observed lessons, the questionnaires were potentially adding a component that would not have been otherwise.

Until I was able to spend more time working with the lesson observation data the interviews were the primary source of information that reflected the participants' experiences. To have direct responses to questions certainly connected more clearly with their opinions than my distanced interpretation of action unfolding in front of me. I was, however, cautious of making such assumptions and viewed the field notes, recordings and emerging transcriptions of equal value in terms of reflecting the participants and their relationships with each other and within the contexts, as all methods are open to various degrees of interpretation.

4.4 Analysis of data

The next stage was the transformation and analysis of data through the process of transcribing, coding, in-depth analysis and then broader interpretation. I take Wolcott's (1994) concept of such a process to distinguish between specific activities that respond to the questions, What is going on here? How is the system working (or not?) And What is to be made of it all? (Wolcott 1994) Moving through these phases also suited my own journey as a researcher. I first made broad sense of the

classroom activity I had been witness to and part of, then narrowed my focus to specific areas of interest, and then broadened my perspective again. The process also allowed me to benefit from and contribute to my research community, such as presenting preliminary descriptive findings at national and international conferences, and sharing and developing theoretical perspectives with University-based research groups.

4.4.1 Transcribing

In transcribing, my aim was to move from 'recognition', seeing similar patterns in the data, to 're-cognition', whereby following a process of exploration and critical dialogue, new perspectives could be reached. Distanced from the live event, at a desk and using a standard computer word-processing program, I was not merely 'typing up' my field notes. The very act of reading my notes and reformatting, even if copying the words exactly, was an interpretative process. I made additional notes in my journal, posing questions to myself on the understandings I was constructing. The variable detail reminded me of the key moments of interest, in other words, I had physically written more if I judged that moment more relevant to research questions. The variance in legibility added to an impression of where there was more to capture and but also gave some indication of the pace of the action I had witnessed.

Transcribing the interviews verbatim, although lengthy, was a chance to pay more attention to the content of specific points raised but also the tone with which they spoken as an indication of the attitude of the interviewee to that issue. When converting the spoken dialogue to a printed text version I was careful to add the closest adverb or note of expression to record a sense of the way words were spoken. Here further layers of interpretation are added: i) my own re-reading of transcriptions being in some way connected to the original event via my own constructed memory of it, and ii) the reading by others who were not present. It was also important to note gestures and

other features of the physical environment which are components of interaction and which “shape the forms of co-participation he or she requires at different junctures” (Heath 2004:271).

I experimented with transcription styles (see APPENDIX C for short examples) in order to construct a version of the original event that took into account the different interactions between researcher and participant(s) within the research process: i) being an audience at the live lesson event, ii) participating in interview events, and iii) reviewing video and audio recordings as the same audience although distanced and afforded new insight.

The first style was a play script format, created from field notes supplemented by further viewings of audio and video recordings. This gave me the opportunity to blend the words the ‘characters’ spoke with descriptive ‘stage directions’ written in the present tense in order to build an image in the reader’s mind close to what I had witnessed myself.

The second style I experimented with was a narrative prose that described the action in the past tense, giving a sense of removal from the original event. It incorporated short extracts from one of the participant’s interview contributions in order to add meaning to his actions as described in the main body of the text. This I found was more successful in drawing together the two event types of observation and interview. The juxtaposition was slightly awkward as the interview quotations were out of context. Britzman (2003) discusses this problem of re-telling stories and artificially presenting participants as fixed identities whereas their chronology and constant re-establishing of themselves with conflicting accounts is at odds with our sense of narrative through-line. Whilst a useful exercise, I felt this patchwork style would be problematic when it came to reporting and evidencing my findings.

The third style was based on a film script format, used in order to capture the essence of an analytical audience being placed behind the camera lens, as I was in my review of the recorded lesson observations. This allowed me to highlight those sections transcribed from video and those

from audio (as 'black screen'), as well as clearly indicate what can and cannot be seen or heard – as close a representation as possible of my own experience both at the back of the classroom and in watching the video. Initial interpretation took place at the point of converting the onscreen images and audio into script form by incorporating the spoken words, gestures, movement and some expression into a sense of characters interacting in a given space. This was followed by a second period of interpretation as I read through the script and annotated it as both a representation of a live event I was present at but also being mindful of the interpretation I had made as 'scriptwriter'.

I attempted this initially with the Religious Studies case study (Chapter 5). My hard copy of this film script has another layer of pencil annotation, underlining, circles and arrows detailing another layer of analysis. I went back and reflected on these comments, some of which reveal my awareness of the degree of interpretation I might impose on the text, just as a director or actor might in 'reconstructing' it. For example, a note relating to four lines of the Teacher's monologue reads:

corrects herself (to) sound(s) more in control of her own Scheme of Work



(Personal Research Journal)

Here I have debated the use of 'to', meaning *in order to*, compared to 'and' meaning *and as a result*. Where the former implies a conscious desire of the teacher and the latter is perhaps more coincidental. This is a prime example of remaining aware of the assumptions and connections I was making regarding teacher goals and action.

4.4.2 Coding

The coding phase refers to my thematic interpretation of events. The aim was to identify themes that would frame my thinking, my discussions and point to further reading on such topics. To

maintain the sense of whole and reacquaint myself with each activity, I worked very simply with paper and pen, re-reading each observation and interview transcript and annotating the margins with a summative word or phrase. I also replayed sections of video and audio recordings to remind myself of the tones of voice and gestures that accompanied the classroom talk. As I began to use the same words over again, I could see potential themes emerging from the data. As with my decision not to do so during observation and note-making, I had also rejected fragmenting the action into speech, gesture, and movement for separate consideration as it is fundamental to my understanding of social interaction that such elements are intertwined.

Even though one can attain a broad sense of the classroom relationships and action on the surface, broad themes do not necessarily unpick the complex inner workings of classroom action. When annotating transcriptions I acknowledged my own presence as a participant, if marginal, in the classroom activity and hence referred to myself in the third person. I preferred this as it aided my objectivity but, as noted in my research journal it made me feel too removed from my own live experience. This highlights an essential, if dubious and frightening, part of the research process: that of instinct and gut feeling.

Despite my efforts to further objectivise the post-field work stage, I needed to rely on my familiarity with the data. I had been present throughout and spent a good deal of time at the sites in order to understand their relationships. From the very moment I began each case study, even before the first lesson, I was already posing and responding to questions in my mind, yet maintaining a renewed enquiry from that moment on. I created short vignettes in descriptive prose, which I shared with others to gauge both their impression of the classroom relationships and their comprehension of the events through my own interpreted presentation in word form. This writing, done relatively early in the transformation process, was also useful in organising and developing my own interpretations as I continued to play with the data.

The research is small-scale but still generated around 10 text documents (.doc), 10 digital audio files (.mp3) and around 5 video files (.avi) per case – around 100 in total. I used NVivo8¹ to manage the data and be able to easily organise, sift and manoeuvre it (Crabtree and Miller 1999). I treated each case as a separate entity, which involved creating 4 independent ‘projects’ (case files) within the computer program. This simulated, but made easier, my previous piloted technique of a matrix display where I used simple Microsoft Word table to align similar-themed data relating to different participants in adjoining columns.

During the descriptive phase, the coding – again by theme as I re-read each transcription and highlighted relevant phrases – was a sorting procedure to juxtapose similar data from different sources. This might be a mix of interview comments, movement across a space, pupils’ facial expression or comments overheard during group work. I was endeavouring to maintain a sense of the whole. As themes emerged, I grouped them under headings to create a ‘coding tree’ or hierarchy, which I reviewed as perspectives shifted. In one sense, this does conform to a kind of data management – a purely practical exercise – but because the core of my research deals with interrelationships, the way aspects of data were juxtaposed, became of prime importance to my work.

Figure 6 (below) is an example of an early coding ‘tree’ that reveals a emerging sense of the classroom. These themes were not entirely derivative from the transcript text as I re-encountered it but from my impressions at the time of the live events and from the research questions. Between them these broadly cover the areas of learning objectives (including the value placed on drama-as-tool), the way the activities are structured, the modes of communication between participants and the structural rules governing the space.

¹ QSR International Pty Ltd 2007

Tree Nodes

Name	Sources	References																																							
Goals	6	27																																							
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Figure 6 – Early coding from first case study using NVivo

The coding structure needed revising as much as the interpretation of data it represented. Following this reductive but also expansive, descriptive phase, I moved to exerting a “centripetal force on the transformation of data” (Wolcott 1994:175). In order to enquire How is the system functioning? it was necessary to review my procedures and, therefore, the theoretical model that would serve as a framework. This does not mean that I then abandoned my impressions from the descriptive phase; rather they informed my perspective as I sought to use a framework for closer study of distinct areas.

With a variety of internal and external constraints that can be both positive and negative, each classroom setting is unique in the environment it provides and each participant unique in its personal perspective and relationship to the setting. As discussed in the review of literature, drama as a pedagogical tool potentially adds greater complexity to the classroom context. As drama is inherently social, relying on the interaction of participants, such activity requires an analytical framework that equally concerns itself with the interaction of tools, roles and relationships, structural rules and frameworks and the values and goals of participants that are culturally and historically mediated.

I investigated theoretical and analytical models associated with research mainly within classrooms or connected with teaching and learning, including virtual world or game-related models such as Asgari & Kaufman (2004). I constructed adapted versions to visually represent my concepts of the relationships as I understood them at the time, then, naturally, found the need to adapt them once presented to others and also as my understandings changed with developing work with data. My aim was, therefore, partly immediate in my need to find a framework for analysis but also long-term in my working towards a way of presenting the conceptual understanding of classroom relationships to others not involved in the research.

It is at this stage that I found Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT – as discussed in the Review of Literature, Chapter 2.4) most useful in exploring tool-mediated and object-oriented action. The relation of the teacher and pupils to each other and to their goals, mediated by cultural means, tools and signs is the core concern and the activity system model as proposed by Engeström (1987, 1991) increasingly became an important heuristic in my analysis and interpretation of the case study data.

It is useful to conceptualise classroom activity as a dynamic system whereby the participants operate within a structure of rules and roles that are evolving over time. It is the relations and tensions between these elements that is the focus of my inquiry, taking into account the cultural context and its capacity for change. This model I apply to classroom activity with the understanding that

exploration of relationships (links and tensions) is at its very core but that hierarchies have the essential difference from the original application in encompassing the adult (teacher)-child(pupil) relationship. It is precisely because of the different cultural values associated with this relationship that I felt this existing model had possibilities in giving new perspectives to my research but, crucially, vice versa in my research providing new perspectives on the theoretical model.

For my research, the investigation is concerned with the relationships between teachers and pupils a) and their perceptions of learning, b) and particular learning tools, and c) themselves as adult/expert and pupil child/novice. This focuses the analysis on what the participants say and do, the choices they make and their reactions to each other. The process of analysis according to this conceptual framework followed the broad to narrow focusing of: i) organising data through coding; ii) closer examination of key events at the level of distinct words and gestures used by participants in discourse. iii) considering elements of the system and how they interrelate. The first stage – organisation of data through coding – is discussed in the rest of this section.

In preparing data for closer analysis and according to the CHAT framework, I coded according to the headings put forward by Engeström in his second generation Activity Theory model (1987, 1991): Subject, Tool, Object, Outcome, Rules, Community and Division of Labour. As discussed previously (Chapter 3.4 and this chapter 4.2) these categories form an integral part of my research questions and were more formally utilised at this stage of the analysis. I adjusted the coding framework adopted for the first phases of coding but it was not so far removed from the descriptive coding hierarchy. The purpose of following the categories so strictly was to satisfy the need to keep a broad and renewed perspective of the data, not coding too specifically, whilst keeping the theoretical perspective at the forefront of the analysis.

Figure 7 (below) is an example of a coding ‘tree’ derived from these headings but also using subdivisions to more accurately and efficiently group references. The act of attributing codes was a

matter of 'best fit' as two or more might seem appropriate for any section of data. This highlighted the nature of the integrated system – where elements are so closely related.

Tree Nodes

Name	Sources	References
Community	1	1
Pupil community	8	32
Staff	3	8
Wider education communit	2	3
Division of Labour	8	29
Actor-Audience Relationshi	4	7
Decision making	8	29
Object	8	41
Outcome	3	4
Rules	1	1
Classroom rules	6	22
Drama conventions	8	23
Social rules	5	13
Subject	0	0
Pupil as subject	3	5
Teacher as subject	6	10
Tools	6	24
Aural	4	9
Physical	7	14
Practical	6	14
Proximal	6	23
Textual	4	13
Verbal	6	25
Visual	6	9

Figure 7 – coding from second case study using CHAT-derived headings and subdivisions

The coding was, in this respect, less quantitative: not measuring how much comes under each heading but more concerned with identifying which area of the system it most related to and then considering what relationship or impact it could be seen to have with or on another part of the system. It also highlighted the uniqueness of each moment. For example, where one might be considering the layout of the classroom, it might be considered as a technical Tool (the material components in the task) or part of the Division of Labour (who was placed where in a space

according to their control of the activity). An example would be of the History lesson during the mock Trial where 16 pupils were sat in two rows to the side of the room as a Jury. As part of building belief in the fictional scenario, the furniture (tool) was moved to represent a courtroom and yet also brought the pupils together into a collective mass (division of labour), whilst also potentially marginalising them from the main action in the centre of the room, which might be seen as in conflict with a goal of including all participants in the action.

Merely placing data under headings does not necessarily present the researcher with an interpretation. By labelling data 'Division of Labour' I have not thematically labelled the data but rather I have determined to approach that 'event' (of human behaviour within a context) from a particular perspective of what Division of Labour means within that unique environment, which is ever-changing. This relationship between cultural perspective (system element) and transcribed observed action (data) is also mutual – as I use a lens to analyse data, that interpretation then informs back on the lens itself.

4.4.3 Fine-grain and cross-code analysis

The aim of this phase was to consider the data attributed to different (CHAT) elements of the system of each case study through the re-coding discussed in the previous section (4.2). This was in order to understand how the coded instances interrelate but also to have an opportunity to analyse the particular 'events' in detail. These 'events' I refer to are periods of interaction of up to only a few minutes in length selected by myself to be particularly revealing of specific elements of the classroom culture. So by identifying emerging themes the analysis was driven by the data but by then framing the data as interrelated pre-labelled components, the analysis was also theory-driven.

I attributed the perceptions drawn from the thematic coding elements of the CHAT model in diagrammatic form, enabling me to, literally, draw links and highlight tension points of

counterproductive action relating to the pursuit of identified goals. Next I selected the key events that informed my understanding of what was happening, why and how. I undertook a broad re-reading of these events through the transcription and some original video and audio footage to identify aspects such as turn-taking, grouping of participants and sequence of events. A second stage was a much closer analysis of utterances and single gestures contributing to a deeper understanding and, eventually, a rich description. The sequence was then reversed as I took these new understandings back to the broad level and then on to refining my interpretation of the system and tension points, adjusting and magnifying parts of the CHAT triangle diagrams where necessary.

I was not seeking a solution to any tensions on behalf of the participants, although this in some way figures in my conclusions as a consideration of the overarching question of drama-as-toolkit. However, I was certainly attempting to achieve more than a surface level description of the action and delve into the process of their present actions, as might be seen from their past existence working towards an as yet unknown future. Still, like the initial descriptive phase, the types of sub-questions I asked of the data related to the setting – the physical and metaphorical space around and between participants - , task structure - the format of the activities - and communication – the way participants constructed and interpreted a mutual and dynamic sign system. I am concerned with both finding patterns – where aspects of behaviour are repeated in similar or different contexts – but moreover with finding contradictions.

I determined to identify the desired outcomes initially as they are perceived as being the motivating force behind the action. Working in reverse from the goal, through re-reading the data, I identified the other conceptual areas of the system. This analysis was dynamic, reassessing my interpretation of objects simultaneously as each area was investigated and new evidence altered my perspective. It was also dynamic in that I would simultaneously look broadly then in more detail, then broadly again.

Some studies discussed in the review of literature note the layout of rooms, participants and the visual appearance of both in relation to the 'role' of each individual. Others present extracts of discourse that are analysed both broadly in terms of the gist of a number of 'turns' and focussing more specifically on phrases or full sentences. Some may also reveal a more detailed transcription of the pauses and subtle shift in pitch within a verbal utterance, on a grammatical or semantic level. However, I rejected moving automatically or too swiftly to this kind of analysis. I follow Heath (2004) in that by taking into account both verbal and bodily action, "we can begin to disassemble aspects of the social and interactional organization which feature in the accomplishment of a particular event" (Heath 2004:277). I wanted to achieve a balance between the verbal utterances, physical gesture and use of space in the interaction and decision making of the participants rather than prioritise their speech pattern as a representation of the classroom relationships. Any detailed focus on words would come out of individual moments as necessary.

The notion of Initiation-Response-Feedback sequence is derived from a linguistics focus (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975), however, it does not necessarily require a word-by-word analysis to recognise it. The criticism of such a close analysis as being perhaps too mechanistic or ignoring other factors was considered but IRF as a proven prevalent sequence in classroom discourse is a concept that I was concerned to investigate, hence paying some attention to the types of turns taken. Heath (2004) describes 'turn-taking' as a perspective on discourse, which is different to content analysis and can also highlight or suggest strategies by participants as they negotiate hierarchical relationships in the collaborative directing of classroom action. Across the case studies there are examples of occasions where the sequence of teacher-pupil-teacher-pupil is broken with interjections and questions from pupils and also pupil-pupil interaction which suddenly the teacher interrupts. These events were of particular interest when exploring the shifting relationships between teacher and pupil. They contributed to my understanding as I attempted to reveal certain participants' 'stake' in interaction and interpret their underlying motivation (Potter 1997).

Aspects of Discourse Analysis (Potter 1997, 2004) informed my paying heed to different contexts in which the same phrases might be used. It was apparent from my observations and interviews that teachers used stock phrases both with myself and the pupils and that pupils also appeared to use phrases used formerly by the teacher. This indicated that it would be prudent to pay careful attention to such utterances, particularly those that may provide insight into: the relationships between teachers and pupils and the participants' shared – or teacher –led - value of drama-as-tool in a learning context.

Heritage (2004) highlights that Conversation Analysis can also focus on three key features of institutional interaction, namely: i) goal-oriented interaction tied to institutional identities; ii) special constraints; iii) talk associated with institutional frameworks and procedures (Heritage 2004:224-225). Derived from Heritage, I identified four general areas in which to examine data. Firstly I considered turn-taking, noting the predictability of formal speech (for example teacher question-and-answer) and the unpredictability of conversations, particularly to examine scripted and spontaneous role-play. Secondly I considered the pauses, intonation and other features of expression to reveal participants possible motivations and how they initiate, develop and conclude “joint business” (Heritage 2004:230) both explicitly and more subtly. Thirdly I considered any apparent interactional asymmetries in levels of participation (dominant/recessive), and levels of knowledge or ‘knowhow’, which can imply/impart authority.

The extract below is from a Year 7 History lesson and is an example of an event that features some of the focal points listed above. The pupils are enacting a trial in a courtroom. Elliot is the prosecutor and Fred has been called forward, by another pupil playing the Judge, to stand and answer questions:

As Elliot begins to speak, Fred sits down on the chair

ELLIOT

Does King Henry shout a lot...?

TEACHER

(Immediately interrupting him from his reclining seated position in the corner and raising his arm, pointing at Fred) Eh!

Fred quickly looks left to the Teacher and stands up rapidly

[Year 7 History: Lesson 4 [13min50sec]]

In studies of theatre performance, there have been attempts to codify the visual and aural into some kind of definitive matrix, such as Aston and Savona (Fortier 2002), but there has also been a similar rejection to such reduction in linguistics in favour of more localised interpretation in each new context. Theatre semiologist Patrice Pavis, as discussed in the previous chapter, describes a systematic approach to analysing performance as problematic (Pavis 1996) and requiring appreciation of the specific context (Fortier 2002) whilst Brecht was concerned with signs being social – gesture and costume are not the ‘real’ person but their assumed role, especially regarding social hierarchies. Fortier makes the link between the ‘social sign’, what Brecht calls ‘gestus’ (Willett 1964) and which Barthes defines as “the external material expression of the social conflicts to which it bears witness” (Barthes 1972:41; Fortier 2002: 29).

This analysis of performance acts – assuming social communication as a performance - to me further highlights words and gestures as operating with motivation to be read and reacted to by an audience. Another example from the same lesson task is below. Interpretations are discussed in the case study chapter itself (Chapter 6), however the point here is that gestures by pupils can express an understanding of their own positioning in the classroom as well as their fictional character’s positioning within a scenario.

Here Fred appears to make light of the discrepancy between teacher and pupil control as well as affect a brave, laissez-faire attitude for his character:

BARNEY (JUDGE)

OK, thank you

Fred turns to walk quickly with small steps to his desk but is stopped by:

TEACHER

Uh, wait!

Fred quickly turns and walks nimbly back to position. Elliot is also stood by his chair.

BARNEY (JUDGE)

(Looking at teacher then forwards and calling out) Sit down.

Elliot sits and Fred turns in the same manner to walk back making show of being like a clockwork toy going round in circles.

[Year 7 History: Lesson 4 [15min:37sec]]

Thereby the researcher's task is similar to the task of both the actor and the audience, as understood by Vygotsky (1999), in sense making from bodily signs. The identification of moment to moment goals, formed part of Vygotsky's understanding of interaction, in particular his relating of everyday behaviour to Russian theatre practitioner, Konstantin Stanislavski's conception of the work of the actor.

To understand another's speech, it is not sufficient to understand his words – we must understand his thought. But even that is not enough – we must also know its motivation. No psychological analysis of an utterance is complete until that plane is reached. (Vygotsky, 1986:252-253)

As discussed in Chapter 2, Vygotsky understood that actors were encouraged by Stanislavski to define what their character wanted to achieve at any given moment in pursuit of a long-term goal.

The crucial aspect of analysis, was, therefore being able to grasp and dissect such a complex web of signs. Although in part informed by *multimodality* as conceptualised by Kress (Kress 2000, Kress et al 2005) amongst others, I am not concerned with focusing on the ‘grammar’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001) of classroom interaction and which media are drawn together in action. Voice, gesture and movement are for me intertwined – within one person and across communicating bodies – hence paying attention to each aspect within any given event. In terms of analysing these composite visual-audio images to examine the arrangement of bodies within the classroom space, and the gestures and speech used and interpreted by participants, I was able to pause video recordings. In presenting this data to others, such as in conference presentations and papers, I could use blurred version of still images but in order to bring the data to life and make the original event clear through the analysis, I had to rely on my newly created textual version that painted a picture in the listener’s/reader’s mind, endeavouring to give my interpretation but allowing them to interpret/re-interpret for themselves.

4.4.4 Reporting

This final stage of the process entailed drawing together my findings and presenting them in coherent prose for another reader. By reflecting on the review of literature and utilising a theoretical framework, the interpretations were made case by case. A further phase of interpretation occurred during the physical writing and continued as I reviewed each chapter (Chapters 5-8). In order to draw together themes and build a broader image of the research data I also looked across the cases to identify patterns or contrasts to develop a conceptual interpretation.

Where possible I present the evidence and discussion chronologically (from lesson one to four, five or six). This is in order to construct a logical argument that reveals my developed understanding over time, as well as reveal the analytical process to the reader. I integrate all components of the action

(such as verbal, spatial) to give a full picture of each event, rather than divide and discuss each communicative tool separately as seen in 'English in Urban Classrooms' (Kress et al 2005). I include transcribed events in the film script style (see APPENDIX C) to give a rich account of the action and I have found that readers find this is a crucial way in to understanding and interpreting the case study for themselves, and contributing to my "impressionist" (Miles and Huberman 1994) personalised accounts.

I include CHAT-derived models in the Findings chapters (Ch.5-8) to represent the interrelatedness of different parts of the classroom system and to give the reader a visual point to refer back to as the discussion develops. It also focuses the reader on selected points of the system. The basic structure recurs throughout the Findings chapters to create a coherent thread of the theoretical framework, crucial when drawing together themes in the concluding discussions (Chapter 9).

Like throwing a stone in a pond, if an interpretation 'works' the ripples reverberate through the rest of the analysis. When interpretations do this, when they illuminate other data beyond their starting point, our faith in their robustness can increase correspondingly.

(Hollway and Jefferson 2000: 60)

Hollway and Jefferson's point is pertinent to this research, within each case study and across them. In my final review of the discussion across all cases (Chapter 9), I take the analysis to a level of abstraction, in order to explore the affordances of drama as pedagogical toolkit in a broader sense and bring the various discussions back to the core research questions. This is not intended to make a deliberate comparison of what were/are unique institutions and classroom cultures, but to place alongside where similarities arise so as to broaden the discussion rather than weaken the evidence of one or suggest it is a picture on a national scale. The act of juxtaposition achieves a fresh perspective of the other and enables each case to be interpreted objectively once more.

I have captured the classroom activity through a thorough process of qualitative methods examining a broad range of interactions. I have chosen to (re)present it to others by layering transcribed

accounts of original events, theoretical diagrams and discussion. Miles and Huberman (1994) call for a blend of both abstract, theoretical reasoning and the more figural narrative that retains some sense of the original event. By doing so in this research, it has enabled me to not only give a full account of the case studies over time but be explicit about the process of the research and ensure that the argument in response to the research questions is both robust and coherent.

CHAPTER 5

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

'The Scripted and The Personal'

5.1 Overview

This chapter explores the case of a Religious Studies classroom in which the teacher has developed her approach over a number of years. It is now also shared outside the classroom space in professional development workshops under the title of 'Theatre of Learning'. The teacher's two main goals of improving exam results and providing opportunities for moral and spiritual development are entwined, and explicitly reinforced throughout, as is her desire to establish her distinctive practice with the pupils and other teachers. Emphasis is placed on creating the appropriate atmospheric context for pupil experiences, particularly via her own physical and vocal expression. She aims to work on the pupils' multisensory and emotive experience, in order to encourage personal investment in the lesson tasks en route to achieving a good degree of recall. This modelled practice is not static or stand-alone, but operates within a learning process designed for pupils to encounter different experiences through different modes of communication and to reflect on those experiences. Making explicit references to her practice seems to be to assure both the pupils and the wider education community of the positive effects of the modelled practice.

Analysis of the observed lessons and interviews reveals tension between the principal aim of engaging pupils on a personal, emotional level and the highly structured, teacher dominated process that is ultimately practised. Work on the pupils' curriculum content knowledge and understanding is done in a predetermined sequence of tasks, calculated and controlled by the teacher, so that she can maximise the potential of the toolkit to create the necessary context and encourage investment. However the teacher's input into the collective action thereby outweighs that of the pupils, potentially reinforcing her role as the singular actor in front of the watching pupil audience. The

personal links made by the pupils are heavily dependent on their individual willingness to invest their own energy and action in the task. Although there may be some external signs of personal reflection, inferences drawn from the data highlight the ongoing challenge for the teacher to both facilitate and monitor the internalising of knowledge and understanding.

5.2 The classroom in context

The school is a mixed comprehensive on the outskirts of a coastal town in the south of the UK. It has approximately 1400 pupils aged 11-18 and has specialist status in sport, the town's new leisure centre being adjacent to the school buildings. In 2008, 30% of students achieved 5 or more GCSE passes at A*- C. This is compared to 40% in other local schools of a similar type and though a previous OFSTED inspection had cited areas for urgent improvement, it also recognised the relatively low ability intake in Year 7. This led the school to develop a Key Stage 3 curriculum to address these shortfalls with particular emphasis on Year 7 and the aim for pupils to have more active involvement in lessons. At the time, the site was also undergoing major construction work, with a number of new buildings that were due to open in 2010.

The classroom is now on the first floor, having relocated at the start of the year. The room before was small, intimate, and able to have the lighting controlled by blackout curtains and a dimmer switch. This new room is larger, with a higher ceiling, made much brighter by the broken (open) curtains and the large skylight above. One of the first concerns expressed by the teacher is her difficulty in creating the necessary atmosphere for each task and for generally focusing the pupils, stating she has had discipline problems for the first time in a while. She has previously adjusted the lighting, dimming it to signal changes in tasks, and so there is already a degree of frustration for the teacher in having to operate without a once familiar tool. Like the music that she plays on the CD player, the lighting was embedded in her established practice rather than being an unusual

occurrence. Pupils are not necessarily meant to be surprised by such actions, rather they become accustomed to them as indicators of a task beginning or moving into a new reflective phase.

The tables are pushed to two sides of the rooms. In other classrooms in the school they might be desks in rows or groups but here are heavily disguised under fabric, decorated boxes, religious artefacts, and a large cardboard and tinfoil 'shrine'. The walls immediately above are covered in key phrases, pictures, and photographs, some relating to world religions, some simply images of humans and landscapes.

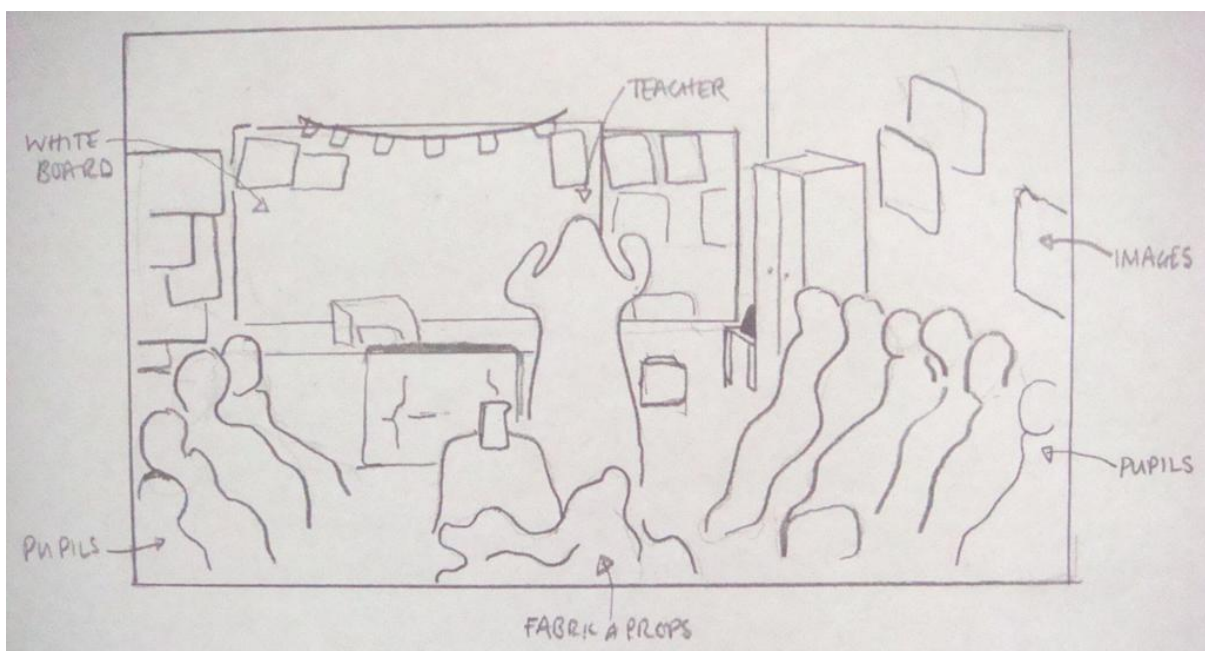


Figure 1 - A line drawing of Lesson 2 showing the layout (traced from a video still to protect identities)

Creating the next 'inner layer' is the horseshoe of plastic chairs for the pupils surrounding an island of material and objects on the floor: boxes, material, sticks, a model boat, a plastic water feature and twinkling fairy lights. The end of the horseshoe is where the white board and CD player are positioned, behind the teacher's chair, which is padded and often draped in material or a large coat. Key to the layout is the direction of the pupils' gaze to the one end of the room, still privileging the teacher's position but also allowing her to move around the whole space. Without desks, the pupils

are potentially stripped of the potential barriers to physical interaction they might experience in other classrooms and this is reinforced by the lack of reading or writing material placed in front of them. The space is arranged to create a communal forum, ripe for interaction and debate.

The pupils were observed not to be restricted to the same chair from one lesson to the next, although many sat in the same area of the room, loosely following their own seating plan. The teacher expresses a desire to create a trusting and engaging environment and the pupils mentioned the circular layout in their interview discussion, referring to everyone “being involved” although they do not articulate this connection explicitly. They were observed to frequently look at each other, exchanging smiles, which traverse the space and are made easy by the layout. In this respect the layout, similar to an effect of theatre-in-the-round, may have contributed to their shared experience. The teacher is conversing with her pupil audience as a connective intermediary role between two perspectives: the followers of world religions that the teacher supposes are so alien to the pupils, and the less knowledgeable or engaged audience.

5.3 Unit of Work - *Judaism*

I made five visits to the school whilst the Year 10 class were studying Judaism, the first module in their GCSE syllabus. The first two were at the end of the previous academic year (Summer Term) to interview the teacher, participate in a teacher workshop (attended by Religious Studies teachers from across the county) and also to observe a lesson, all to familiarise myself with the teacher’s practice before the main research period. In her teacher workshops and pupil lessons she demonstrated typical tasks she has devised such as building a slum shelter out of rubbish and responding to ‘hot seating’ questions “Who are you?” “How do you feel?”, or listening to a story and imagining how one was taking part in the events.

As the school operates on a fortnightly timetable and there were shifts in teacher availability, the first formally observed lesson was near the start of term, the second close to the middle of term and the final visit was two weeks before the end of term. Much of the curriculum content was presented to the pupils through teacher talk – either lecture or storytelling – and I was able to get a sense of what had been covered by the oral recap that formed a part of the subsequent lessons. The key drama tasks took place in the first and second observed lessons in the form of teacher-in-role and mime.

PRE-FIELD WORK (July)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Workshop observation • Teacher Pre-Unit Interview • Pupil Lesson informal observations
LESSON 1 (Sept) (1 hour)	<p><i>Lesson objective: pupils make empathetic association between own emotional response and experiences of others</i></p> <p>Drama Task 1 – ‘Teacher-in-role’: groups of pupils are treated differently and are required to link this experience to their knowledge of the Holocaust.</p>
LESSON 2 (Oct) (double – 2hrs)	<p><i>Lesson objective: pupils know and understand different elements of Jewish Prayer and their purpose.</i></p> <p>Drama Task 2: Mime: teacher demonstrates physical action of Jewish Prayer and pupils copy</p>
LESSON 3 (Dec) (1 hour)	<p><i>Lesson objective: pupils recall information about the Sabbath and a Bible extract; prepare for essay with guidance sheets</i></p> <p>Class discussion: recap of narratives learned through teacher questions and pupil responses</p>
POST-FIELD WORK (Dec)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Interview • Teacher Post-Unit Interview

Figure 2 – School visit schedule and observed lesson content

5.4 A Model Process – teacher and pupil goals

5.4.1 Teacher goals

The teacher has developed her practice over more than 20 years of teaching, including being more recently an Advanced Skills Teacher and Head of Department in a school that was periodically under ‘special measures’¹. Her desire for change was precipitated by an increased awareness of a ‘dull feeling’ in a subject “full of myths and symbols which don’t mean anything to people anymore” (Teacher Pre-Unit Interview 14:11) and a department with low exam entries and poor results. She has not had any formal drama training, nor is she involved with any extra-curricular performing arts in the school. In interview she positions herself less knowledgeable than the researcher about drama theory and practice, although she does use terminology and conceptualises her relationship with the pupils as engaging them as more active than mere spectators: “So it’s build...we were beginning to talk, last night, weren’t we, about what I’m doing is different in that I’m trying to affect the actor as it were, rather than the audience” (Teacher Pre-Unit Interview 05:07).

The three goals of the teacher are made explicit through the interviews, lesson observation and through printed material previously prepared by the teacher for other educators. These goals are expressed slightly differently across the observation and interview data but can be described generally as bring:

1. To develop the child morally and spiritually
2. To increase academic success (recruitment to, and results at, GCSE level)
3. To pass on this practice to other teachers

Raising achievement in terms of exam results is perhaps more pertinent in this case as it is a Year 10 examination class (the teacher also leads non-examined Key Stage 4 PSHE classes), with ‘the exam’

¹ Special measures is when a school is deemed by OFSTED to fall under acceptable levels of educational provision

and 'examiner' explicitly referred to in each observed lesson. However, the end goals are not the only concerns. Other elements such as increased motivation and improved behaviour are perceived as part of the process, rather than end products. The teacher presents these goals herself, portraying herself as very sure as to the aims of her practice. This is a typical statement from our conversations:

26:15 It is difficult for me to say this. This is my pedagogy, so obviously I'm very wedded to it, but I cannot think of a better way to do it. I think it's about understanding what your real aim will be. If your aim was only to pass GCSE then that's all you will do in the classroom and the children will find it tedious but if your aim is to get your children to care and empathise...you can't get that aim without teaching them what they need to know for the exam. But what you do is fill what they need to know for the exam with meaning and relevance. And so the whole thing comes together. And you have this brilliant academic outcome but it's holistic: the whole teacher teaching the whole child.

[Teacher Pre-Unit Interview]

The required knowledge and understanding for examination is believed to be hollow facts that need 'filling' (26:45). The teacher believes the pupils see the curriculum content as irrelevant. This is something she has heard from the pupils in the past and has had a profound effect on her practice and her desire to disseminate her practice in the education community. The duty is believed to rest on the teacher, to "transform[s] the classroom experience for both pupils and their teachers, making the whole enterprise more satisfying for them both" (quoted from the teacher's printed material distributed in her workshop). Her stock phrase "whole teacher teaching the whole child" (26:55) is also repeated in her printed material and refers to both the cognitive and affective domains of learning. She appreciates the reciprocal relationship between the acquisition of factual knowledge and the development of values within these domains.

The teacher states in her interview, "And for me, because it's about 'values education', it's about social and emotional literacy, what I'm trying to do, all the time, is to create empathy" (Teacher Pre-

Unit Interview, 07:20). The word 'values' can be understood to have two meanings: firstly, the moral and spiritual education of the child and secondly, the value of the curriculum subject as holding particular importance in the pupil's overall valuing of their education experiences. Both of these depend on a personal investment in, and connection with, the subject matter, the meaningfulness needing to be personal to maximise motivation (Malone 1980, Asgari and Kaufman 2004) and, subsequently, the learning. As the teacher states:

But what it does is enable them to reflect back on what they're supposed to be learning about, and that's why I call it 'Making RE Make Sense' because now it does. It becomes rich with meaning.

(Teacher Pre-Unit Interview, 13:55)

The teacher's own practice has been repeated and adjusted over time into a defined process. Even the notion of 'process' can have two distinct meanings here: i) the process by which the teacher intends the pupils to interact with the content of the unit of work and ii) the process by which her practice has been developed over a number of years ("experimentation" by her own admission). Her practice is renewed by the act of teaching in the present and is formed for the future by marketing it as a 'Learning Model' which entails seeing, doing, imagining, talking, writing.

As evident in the lesson observations and participant interviews, the teacher works on three objects in order to reach the desired outcomes. These are the pupils':

1. Multisensory and emotive experience
2. Curriculum content knowledge and understanding
3. Meta-awareness of pedagogical practice

5.4.2 Pupil goals

The subjects of an activity system as conceptualised by CHAT theorists, are those working towards the same outcomes, creating a collective subject. In this case it is supposed that most, if not all, of

the pupils choosing the exam-option subject wish to attain some standard of certification. Asked in interview about choosing Religious Studies, one pupil confessed he had to take this subject as he had 'dropped-out' of another core subject even though he said he was glad he had chosen it in retrospect. This is an example of the operation of the wider institution, and a reminder of the awareness the pupils have of being bound by the rules of the school and wider, national requirements. Another pupil claims previous experience as being a factor in studying the subject:

I chose it cos like in Year 9 I really liked it and found it quite easy and then like Miss Jacobs said I should do it cos I was just like well I thought it was quite easy.
(Pupil Group Interview, 01:40)

The motivation here seems to be in part based on continuing the enjoyment but moreover a route of less effort than might be encountered in other subjects, regardless of interest. None of the interviewed pupils cited their moral and spiritual development or a commitment to extending the practice to a wider education community; however one might consider the pupil's own concern for their personal gratification from a classroom experience related to the teacher's concern for increased motivation. As Gee (2003) points out, "When motivation dies, learning dies and playing stops" (2003:3), hence it being an important consideration in reaching learning outcomes. Whilst it might be claimed that the teacher and each pupil cannot in this case be considered part of the same single activity system, this would probably be the same for most classrooms where the desired outcomes are diverse. There is evidence of at least some shared goals where pupils refer to the need to recall content, stating that by this practice, learning is "easier" – better than reading - and it "sticks more". This is represented by Figure 3 (below).

Their goal-sharing suggests that the pupils are inextricably bound to the system by the teacher's power to dictate the goals. Even if the pupils do not already fully understand so themselves, during the lessons - often during introductions to tasks - the teacher repeatedly tells the pupils that this is a 'good' way to learn and that it will 'help' them en route to the exam. Even after being informed of

their own aims, if they do not share these goals they are still objects to be worked upon, and even if resisting this, they are at least members of the same social classroom space and are obliged to take part until the bell rings and they leave.

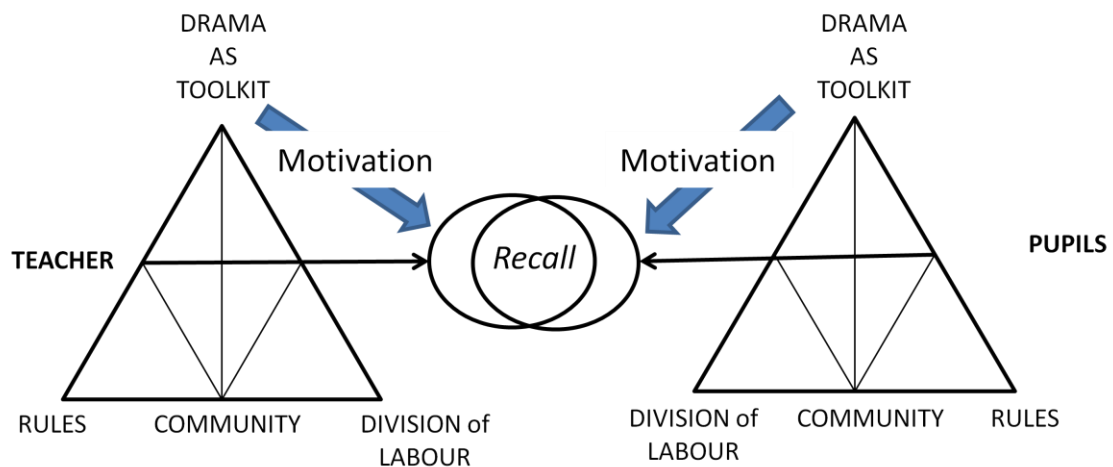


Figure 3 – a model of the classroom activity system that represents teacher and pupil working on motivation in order to improve recall.

5.4.3 Reaffirming good practice

Drama Task 1 – a teacher-in-role task - takes place in the first observed lesson. After a brief introduction to explain that she is about to go into role, the teacher takes on the fictional role of a scientist who is doing research on how different pupils learn. She affects a German accent, puts on glasses and carries a stick as part of her transformation along with her sharp, pointed gestures. The pupils are sent to line up in the corridor and then as they enter they are re-seated into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ sides of the horseshoes. During a simple note-taking exercise, half of the class are treated positively whereas the others are chastised for being inadequate. This is also popularly known as ‘Blue Eyes Brown Eyes’ through the work of US lecturer and trainer Jane Elliott (Elliott 2010).

This scenario plays deliberately on the idea of an unquestioned authority of a teacher who imparts seemingly ‘true’ facts in a harsh and uneven manner, implicitly passing negative comment on undemocratic teaching. In this “unpleasant” (as the teacher describes it to the pupils beforehand) in-

role event, the division of the class is presented as negative, thereby reaffirming the equality of what they would normally be doing: sitting where they pleased, and being equally supported in the learning process. The implied meaning here is those who socially and physically segregate actually treat people unjustly and can cause frustration and anger. Telling pupils where to sit is only done by the vicious social experiment character that the teacher embodies in-role.

The pupils are not required to construct a new fictional role for themselves. They are transported to a new relationship with the teacher's fictional character and are compliant in a collective role-play. The pupils are told that the experience/task is set up for the benefit of their learning and their personal reactions are key to subsequent discussion about societal injustice and historical events. Although they are not taking on a wholly separate fictional role, they are as much part of the performance by bearing witness and reacting as 'themselves', aiding the creation of the dramatic event that is then reflected upon. Subsequent discussion relates the pupils' experiences to their knowledge of the Holocaust.

Whilst the pupils may make some empathetic links between this short experience and curriculum content, the task itself is brief and the reflective discussion seems to be designed more for teacher to single pupil communication and primarily to test recall. Even though the task is presented as part of their work in Judaism it also seems to be an opportunity for the teacher to be more explicit about her own pedagogical practice and values, which are presented as morally good.

The teacher's introduction to the class preceding Drama Task 2 (Mimed Prayer) is revealing of the goal-oriented action constructed by the teacher and projected for the pupils before they begin to fully participate.

TEACHER

Right. Now. I very much hope you are going to enjoy today's lesson. It's going to be...about Jewish Prayer and how Jews pray. But before we get into that...I want to do a little bit of a recap and show you how we got there...
(Lesson 2 - 2min45sec)

The teacher uses the word 'enjoy' to reveal her own desire for a positive response. Even without the statement there would be no evidence of her wishing the pupils disliked the lesson, however it immediately sets an expectation that this experience should be a pleasurable one, in contrast to her introduction of the Treatment task which is 'not pleasant' and perhaps also in contrast to 'other' lessons with approaches used by other teachers. Reviewing the process via a recap seems of dual importance in developing pupil understanding of the content. On the one hand, recall is important for the outcome of knowledge for the exam. The word 'remember' is interchanged with 'learn' throughout the lesson, including part of the mime at which the pupils stand up: "to help you remember". Here it seems that learning is presented as synonymous with recall, forming that connection in the pupils' minds.

On the other hand, to "show [the pupils] how [they] got there" seems equally important for recognising some structure and logic to their learning and sets the context for the experiential task – that links can be made between their own personal response and an understanding of prayer drawn from a range of sources. The teacher attempts to model a personal connection with the lesson content through her own anecdotes. For example, she tries to give a sense of the excitement of the German people with the widespread availability of cars. She recalls a time from her own childhood when her family got a car and incorporates an informal expression of similar syntax to her pupils: "and we were well excited". This awareness and attempt to foster a closer engagement and appears to be part of her intent to get pupils to see the relevance in the subject they are studying. In a previous lesson exploring the idea of invasion, she asks pupils to think of and share ideas of people and possessions they are close to and the fictional narratives or 'visualisations' are based in the local area and the school itself. She continues (my underline to show her vocal emphasis):

TEACHER (cont)

03:50 Let me show you how, in this circuitous work, we got there. Now you, my darlings, have not read anything or written anything all term so far because we've been

04:00 going in this rhythm every time we got somewhere - like I was away on Monday showing all the trainees around so you were watching Oprah Winfrey and then last week we went to do an essay and then I went "OK you don't really understand the Covenant" - ...this won't be a problem because suddenly all of the bits of

04:15 the puzzle will make sense and you'll be able to do it. So don't worry.

In her use of the words 'circuitous' (03:50) and 'puzzle' (04:15) it seems she has sensed a lack of coherence to the sequence of tasks across lessons and a concern on the part of the pupils. It may be more of a personal concern but she decides to openly address the difficult business of teaching and learning in front of both pupils and researcher.

TEACHER (cont)

04:20 But let's see how we got here. Now, we started off...with, uh, the video on The People's Century, which the proper decent copy of which I've ordered

04:30 hasn't arrived yet...so we looked at what happened with the Jews in the thirties leading up to the Holocaust and the camps and I was astonished when I came in, with the notes for you to do your essay,

04:40 and I found to my astonishment you knew it all. Absolutely amazing. You just remembered it brilliantly. I wonder...if you still can...

(Lesson 2)

The teacher's introduction has a number of references to a collective enterprise: "how we got here" (04:20) and almost identical to the opening of the previous extract (03:20). Despite a pseudo-cooperative "let's see" (04:20) this is not necessarily retained in the subsequent discussion tasks where Teacher asks "Do you remember" and requests "tell me". In the Jewish Prayer task, after the teacher has said "I'm going to tell you what they do", the return to the collective "we'll see if you can learn it without doing any reading" may seem a false sense of shared discovery given that she believes in the power of the mime to achieve the goal of imparting factual knowledge. This is repeatedly affirmed to the pupils, culminating in with the ultra-positive statement later on in the

lesson of “This is a fantastic way of actually learning it”, ‘actually’ being an alternative to some supposed partial learning or inferior ‘other’. Her ‘astonishment’ (04:40) seems not only praise to boost the pupils but signal how much they have achieved in the face of adversities in their institutional context: the absence of the teacher due to training others, struggling with an area of the topic, and a poor copy of the video.

Not only is the teacher aware of her performance to the pupils, she is also overtly aware of promoting own pedagogical practice, to other teachers and the researcher. She takes a multi-faceted approach in her public teacher workshops, observed during the previous term. She performs as a teacher to the visiting teachers as if they are pupils, so they can see it modelled). Secondly, she is a fellow practitioner with other teachers, discussing her rationale for lesson tasks. Thirdly, she is an explicitly self-reflective teacher so that teachers can see her thought processes as a teacher developing the technique, for example she restarted a task with “no, I’ll start again with the music on this time...” This wider practice is also shared with the pupils, they themselves becoming on the one hand more integrated into collective action – “people coming to see *us...we’re* going to...” – but also consciously transformed into a performance troupe that enacts this successful learning process as directed by the singular subject, the teacher – “*I’ve...chosen* to teach...getting *them* to write...”.

The following comes from the introduction to Lesson 2:

TEACHER

Now. We’ve had two lessons with dates where I’ve had to teach something specific, or chosen to teach something specific because of people coming to see us... Now I want them to see what we’re doing today because what we’re going to do is we’re going to do experiential and finish up getting them to write and this particular lesson demonstrates the whole of Theatre of Learning learning style...

(Lesson 2, 03:20)

The difference between knowing the mechanisms of prayer and the knowing the underlying beliefs and emotions are hinted at in this Lesson 2 address to the pupils through the words “good” and “some” (60:55). Here the teacher makes a statement that appears to be a general positive

judgement on pupil attainment, but it is closely followed by what is clearly the key issue at hand. Learning for the exam is distinct from their social 'human' (60:15) development. She as a teacher is also part of a different community to the examiners as those others ask questions of "us" (61:10):

TEACHER

60:55 I think you've shown very clearly that you've now got a good knowledge and understanding about how Jews pray and I think you've got some understanding about why but
61:10 there are two issues the examiners ask us about and I'm very concerned to treat you and teach you as human
61:15 beings as well, not just about the exam part, we've got two questions to think about now: How does it affect a believing Jew to pray each day and the second issue which they often put in the exam paper is, Is it silly to dress up for prayer?

[Lesson 2]

The final 'exam' is mentioned regularly throughout all lessons as a distant event to be developed towards and almost as a threat on the horizon, whereas in the present the teacher is offering a more humane form of interaction away from the written tests that they fear or abhor:

02:05 Researcher Um...what makes it fun?

Ed *He is sitting upright and has folded his arms*
The circles

02:10 Phil Yeah or it's you're just the acting

Emma And you don't do much writing

Phil Yeah it's not boring and like..

Emma (quietly - almost out the side of her mouth to Paul) And tests

Researcher What is it about writing that makes things boring?

assumption is that “if the teachers put too much structure into...play...expansive play will not appear” (Brostrom 1999:261). The interview responses suggest the pupils understand and value their heavily structured experiences as more focused towards learning outcomes than the loose structure of their Drama lessons, contributing to their understanding of the usefulness of drama-as-tool and their willingness to comply with the established practices of their classroom.

Despite the teacher’s Question and Answer method of assessment, the pupils do not equate this with a ‘test’. The teacher seemingly attempts to weaken the pressure further by again telling the pupils that they have learned the required information and that recall is not essential at this stage at least:

TEACHER

Now, you have learned...the vocabulary, the artefacts, and what Jews do. We're going on in just a moment to think about how it makes them feel and how it affects them through an experiential exercise. Before we do, let's see what you've learned of the vocabulary. I have deliberately not put any on the board. I want to see how many you can remember and it doesn't matter if you can't.

(Lesson 2, 47min)

Understanding the affective element of prayer – both a requirement for the exam and the teacher’s own separate objective for the pupils’ development - is approached in subsequent class discussion. During the second prayer task, the pupils are required to think about their own hopes and concerns. Afterwards they are required to reflect on their own experience of the second mimed prayer and imagine how another would feel. The teacher anticipates the pupils may be unable to do this successfully because of their lack of investment in the task. Their investment, she implies, is under the pupils’ control as she has apparently never had trouble before and some pupils managed it. She pre-empts a division in the class: that those who did invest would had got ‘more learning’, as revealed in the following extract:

TEACHER

62:00 How did you learn in that little bit we've just done?

BEN

Uh...actively.

TEACHER

62:10 Well, actively so you can remember it but I know that
some of you found it quite hard to enter into the
feelings (*more sternly*) and there was some giggling
and hitting people over the heads with boxes and
generally disturbing the atmosphere which is a bit
unfortunate cos I've not really had that before. ...
62:15 but for those of you who were able to get into it
there's more learning there.

(Lesson 2)

Here the teacher reiterates her belief in the power of visual and gestural communication, as well as the power of operating within the affective domain. Whilst the pupil provides a correct response and the teacher reaffirms the goal of recall, she also implies her ability to judge from visual clues whether or not pupils have emotionally invested – that thought processes are visible - , linking the internal to the external. She believes gesture can indicate the pupils' investment in the action hence reception of signs becoming part of her evaluation of the process, shared with the pupils.

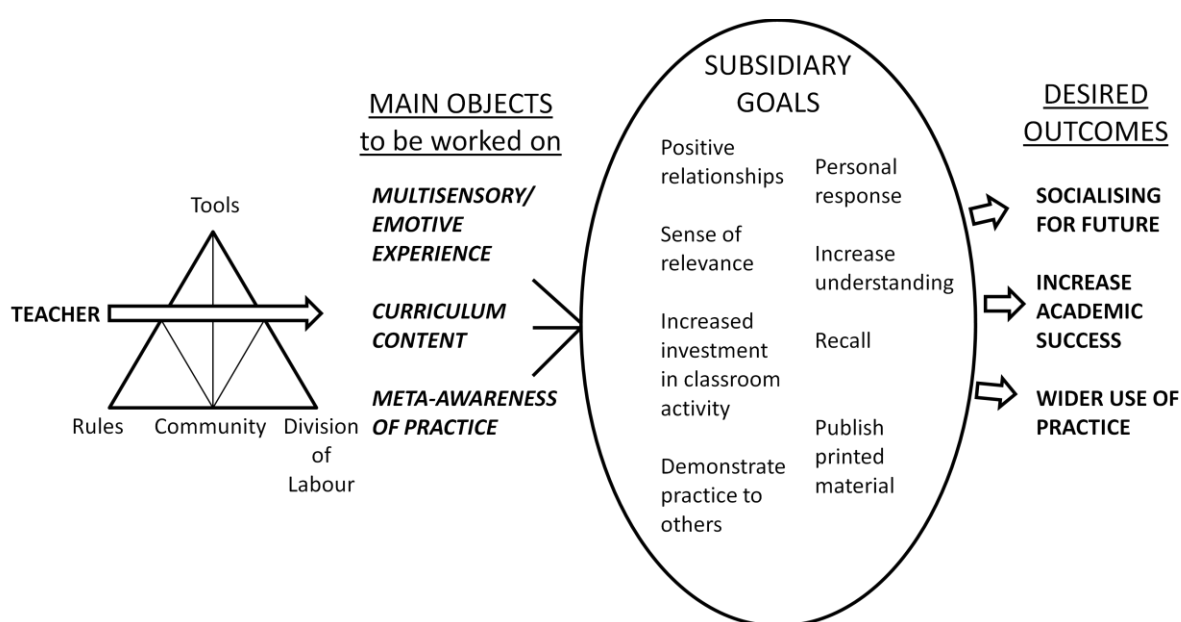


Figure 4 - CHAT-derived conceptual model of teacher goals

Figure 4 (above) is a visual representation of the teacher's objects and desired outcomes, based on the CHAT model. This helps to show the relationship between the goals as part of her 'Theatre of Learning'. The model also provides a visual basis for subsequent consideration of the related appropriation of tools and the division of labour (varying responsibilities) between teacher and pupils.

There are the three objects to be worked on: a multisensory/emotive experience, the pupil's knowledge and understanding of curriculum content, and a meta-awareness of her practice. Subsidiary goals form a route to the desired eventual outcomes. The establishing of positive relationships and making the curriculum content relevant seems to be driven towards an increased investment which then is believed to increase the potential for understanding and recall. These goals are then believed to contribute to increased academic success and the social development of the pupils. A link might also be made between 'increase understanding and 'socialising for future' if curriculum content (knowledge and understanding of world religions) is itself conceptualised as a social tool. The 'increase academic success' is also different for teacher and pupils temporally: where the teacher (also Head of Department) would view this over a number of academic years, for the pupils success is a one-off and individual goal.

5.5 Repetition and investment – teacher and pupil use of communicative tools

In the second observed lesson, after a question and answer discussion to recap previous work, the teacher commences Drama Task 2. This involves two mimed sequences. In the first mime the teacher shows the process of washing hands, putting on the prayer shawl and then attaching the prayer boxes. The teacher then repeats this mime with the pupils simultaneously copying. Finally the pupils repeat the mime alone and in silent unison. The second mime requires pupils to write a short 'prayer' (a hope or wish or thought) on a piece of paper and then hold it momentarily to their heart and head as directed by the teacher. They revise the vocabulary and then discuss why the prayer

might be important to the Jewish faith. After the task, pupils mark sample exam responses from the perspective of a teacher or examiner.

In labelling her approach the 'Theatre of Learning', the teacher proposes that any transformation will not automatically occur unless close attention is paid by the teacher to create the necessary atmosphere, communicative structure, relationships and appropriate sequencing of events. This made my observation of the use of physical space, and on verbal and non-verbal interaction particularly relevant. These elements aim to transport the pupil to new physical and mental spaces to further the work on cognitive and affective processes.

5.5.1 Material objects and use of space

The teacher is aware that an examination question such as "One doesn't need to dress up to pray. Discuss" – the example given to the pupils in Lesson 2 - is going to require a deeper understanding of the full importance of the ritual of prayer and how it relates to one's own personal state. It therefore requires a more personal engagement than simply 'what happens and what each religious artefact is called.' She consciously appropriates material, cultural objects. Her use of props is important for visual interest and practical understanding, as she relates in interview: "When you think that these children are so bored and lessons are so sterile that they're just watching a teacher. That is a novelty, just to come in and see the silver bowl." This jug of water, however, is used in the first demonstration mime but not after that and the prayer shawl, although held up is also not used and neither are the boxes. Some three-dimensional indication of objects can be related to the task but it is the movement itself and the meaning that are the focus, with the material objects diminishing in importance.

The range of communicative tools mediate action in and out of the drama task in a way that reveal the pedagogical values embedded in the practice and tensions that exist within the classroom space.

The transformation of the physical space is perceived by the teacher as a necessary act to focus the pupils and create the necessary state for visualisation, chiefly working in a circle to “foster trust and respect” and working in a multi sensory environment (cited in the teacher’s printed material). Reading and writing is delayed until after role play and/or visualisation experiences and discussion in order to approach more difficult literacy tasks with understanding, confidence and engagement.

Savin-Baden (2008) notes that “*representations of space* are related to the relationships between sites of production and the way in which signs and codes are used within those representations” (2008:10). In one lesson that was not observed but was described by pupils in interview, the room was changed around to reflect the layout of a synagogue. With enthusiasm, the pupils recalled how they were directed to take on various roles, representing the service participants:

Emma: - put all the chairs in like it was an orthodox one and then we swapped it round and read things out like facts about it that they would actually read about people and stuff

(Pupil Group Interview, 03:45)

One striking feature of this was the way that the pupils pointed to areas of the room when recalling the exercise – it is a physical memory but one that the pupils can recall within the now altered space. They understand that they have gained an understanding of the functional relationships within a synagogue and that carries across to their present understanding, even though the space has changed. At the same time their actual physical movement was heavily restricted by the teacher to remain seated unless they were told to move to the lectern to speak. This may be to authentically recreate the ritualistic nature of the service. However the pupils hint at some disappointment that even the central role was not afforded much movement:

Researcher So what did you have to do as the rabbi?

Ed Sit there. (laughs)

They all chuckle a little

Phil Sit there

Ed And then I had to...uh...did I read somethin'?

Phil Yeah, we all did because we had to go there
*Points to the raised platform at the back of the
room.*

(Pupil Group Interview, 04:05)

Even in the transformed fictional space the chairs have retained their function of restraining the pupil, only able to move when they “had to”, and reaffirming their subordinate relationship to teacher-director, who stands, sits and moves at will. Although this was only relayed in retrospect to the researcher, it suggests that the pupils are aware of their subordinate status in the task rather than being allowed freedom to create or extend their participation as their might see fit (such as the important rabbi).

5.5.2 Gestures

Gestures, physically made and visually seen, explicitly communicate curriculum content and co-construct understandings. For example, miming the Jewish Prayer conveys the literal sequence of actions but also the manner in which they are mimed and the way the viewer understands that way of gesturing to have meaning will contribute to the understanding of that Prayer. The first Jewish Prayer task reveals the scripted performative nature of the teacher’s own gestures that suggest a concern to work both on the pupils’ content knowledge and engagement as well as reinforcing the distinctive practice of the teacher in front of the watching pupils and researcher.

As the teacher performs the movements, her poetic repetition of phrases are as ritualistic as the prayer itself, coupled with her soft tones and slow gestures using the water, towel and palms upwards. Even when Alex (pseudonym) interrupts, she maintains the same posture and vocal expression, not breaking the performance, and moving slowly to match the flute music that has been playing on the stereo:

LESSON TWO (41min20sec):

TEACHER

41:20 And they're saying we do it because entering every day is like entering the temple.

A pair of girls, halfway up the horseshoe on the left of Teacher look towards each other. A pair on the right does the same.

So think about what would it be like for us...

She is folding the towel

41:30 If we entered each day...as if it were a temple...

And we went around the school

She places the towel down on the stool

41:40 ...as though it were a temple...

She opens both hands with palms upwards

And we behaved to each other

She gestures outwards, palms upwards and elbows resting on the arms of the chair

...as though it were a temple...

ALEX

Speaks in a low voice during a pause in her speech without a cue. His words are inaudible from the back of the room.

41:50 Teacher looks towards the boy but not moving in any other way, hands in her lap and maintaining her soft voice.

TEACHER

Well just imagine that you were behaving so respectfully to one another

42:00 She looks to pupils on the other side of the room and the building, how calm that would be.

The teacher's frequent use of gesture suggests she is keenly aware of her watching audience, even in one-to-one discussion. Her phrasing of the appeal to a spiritual connection with the Jewish Prayer "What it would be like...as though it were" is identical to the way it was presented – performed – to me, the researcher, in her first interview, three months previously. When she is demonstrating tasks, and even though the mime was relatively long at such a slow pace, there is no sense of being compelled to speed up or short cut – even the imaginary string as she demonstrates the *teffilin* is wound the full and slow seven times. There is no sense of the lesson time running away and a rush to pack more content in.

The teacher and pupil joint performance of the first Prayer mime task – with pupils and teacher acting together – is indicative of the teacher-pupil relationship and the use of gestural communication:

TEACHER
44:25 (Slightly louder) They pick up the second of the tefillin and they place it on the hand that they write with...on the inside so that it will lie against their heart.

44:30 BEN makes a show of not deciding which is his writing hand by looking from one arm to the other and to ALEX next to him.
On his other side a girl decides not to do this part of the mime but sits back and plays with a ring on her finger.

TEACHER
44:35 And they will wrap the strings seven times: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7, and round here in the first letter of the name of God.

44:45 ALEX
What finger is it?

BEN
Oh yeah

TEACHER
44:50 It's these two.
And then they will pick up the tallit. Oo, right, we've missed a bit out. Right, put the tallit down...

45:00 The teacher is smiling and half laughing at her own

error. Some of the girls smile too but carry on the mime. The teacher and the pupils do not break out of the mime but act as if removing the shawl before continuing.

(Lesson 2)

Noticeable in this extract is the response to collective visual enterprise. Ben displays his comment on 'writing hand' (44:30), possibly either to say "I am trying to get it correct" or as a joke, "I don't know which hand". This is both to his neighbour and possibly the teacher as well, given her close proximity (he is sat only a metre away). Meanwhile the girl on the other side of the circle displays her decision to not take part, in terms of her posture, hand movements and eye level (focused back and down). The teacher either does not notice this or if she does, chooses to ignore it and not force the girl to take part. Alex also matches Ben's extra input by verbally asking for clarification (44:45), which the teacher humours. When the teacher makes an error (44:50), it is the collective "we" who have missed a bit out and the girls show they understand they are *sharing* the joke by smiling. It is not clear whether they are laughing with or at the teacher, but the relationship is such that they feel they can smile. Finally, the fact that the mimed shawl is put down, rather than allowed to vanish into thin air, is indicative of the teacher's desire to engage the pupils imaginations in order to create a more realistic re-enactment of the prayer.

5.5.3 Vocal expression

The teacher uses a range of volume, pitch and tone for effect in an attempt to create the necessary atmosphere for the pupils and to signal her expectation for their investment. The sense of ritual and reverence is made explicit in the lesson and 'performed' by the teacher through vocal expression and gesture. She begins this in the introduction: "You just remembered brilliantly. I wonder...if you still can..." On this last sentence her tone is softer and laced with some suspense – some 'wonder' - in a manner as if reading from a children's book. In the subsequent recap, her tone is more straightforward and brisk but still with a good degree of emphasis on words "really" and "well",

giving some sense of excitement. This excitement is unparalleled in volume and emphasis when it comes to correct responses from the pupils: “Right!” “Fantastic!” This tempo she changes overtly to signal the start of the mime task on “Right...Jewish Prayer...Now...” where very obviously ‘her face falls to a more serious expression’ and her storytelling tone is both authoritative and mysterious. She breathes to take the slower, more measured approach to prayer and signal this change to the pupils, along with her stock cue words “Right. Now.” The teacher reveals her pedagogical practice through her performative expression.

5.5.4 Making transformative connections between internal thought and external action

In the teacher’s introduction the intention to personally engage with the content was indicated by the pupils being told to ‘think how they would feel if’. The format of the task is firstly the demonstration of action followed by the pupils’ collective repetition and then the teacher tests the pupils’ recall of action. Here the ‘remembering’ of given basic gestures would seem more of a priority, even if the dual aims are yet again reiterated. There is no explicit guidance for thinking how one feels – one is expected to do it. The problem in terms of learning goals is the internalising of the task by the pupils, both critically and emotionally.

In contrast to a pupil-driven pedagogy, the tasks are directed by the teacher. They are heavily dependent not only on the teacher’s setting up the appropriate atmosphere or context but also the pupils’ willingness to take part, to invest (see figure 5, below). However, the teacher’s dominance is not surprising given that the teacher is also delivering key aspects of curriculum content through the mime, in effect showing them at the same time as telling them.

The pupils do not mime to the same level of precise execution and deep focus as the teacher. This intermediate level of mime could be a distinct stage of ‘ventriloquation’ (Bakhtin 1981, Wertsch 1993) whereby the pupils say or do more than they understand. They have not yet experienced the

collective sensation of mime, nor do they yet have a full grasp of the meaning of the movements – this will potentially come when they add their own personal prayer in the second mime task. In the final performance of this first mime, the pupils are required to perform back to the teacher:

TEACHER
45:50 What I'd like you to do now...I'm going to count you
down three to one, and then I'd like you - in silence
46:00 - to do that mime. This is a fantastic way of
actually learning it. OK. So, what are you going to
start with?

ALEX
Hands

TEACHER
46:10 Right, ok, and then go on after that. OK.
3...2...1...

The pupils begin the turning of the hands. One boy at the back of the class does not move. One of the boys who asked the questions bows his head and puts slightly more energy in than the rest. The girls to the left of the teacher keep their eyes on the teacher.

46:20 There is a pause as the students have forgotten what comes next. The teacher sits still with her hands in her lap. Eventually one boy begins the next action. Everyone joins in putting the box to the forehead.

46:30 The girl nearest the teacher nods to agree that they are on the right track.

TEACHER smiles, nods a few times and then gives the class the thumbs up, emphatically with both hands.

46:40 As they wrap the imaginary strings around their arms, a few girls turn inwards to smile at each other. There is a low murmur and some giggles as the pupils stand up for the final act.

TEACHER
46:50 That is so brilliant.

The pupils sit down again some talking in low voices as they do so.

Right. Well done.

(Lesson 2)

What happens the second time round as the mime is repeated, this time with the pupils joining in, is that the mime is not as detailed as before – by teacher or pupil - and it is hard to suggest absolutely why. Perhaps the ‘performance’ is over now, it has served its purpose, and the pupils just need to go through the motions, but this would be counter to the ‘personal experience’ so desired. Perhaps the less detailed mime comes from the teacher and the pupils copy this version, or vice versa: that the teacher consciously or sub-consciously matches their efforts by taking up the half-hearted attempt by the pupils. Again, surprisingly, the final moment “at one with God” is not held with a pause as before on her own, head bowed and arms crossed reverently, but immediately followed by an instruction for the pupils to sit down.

The mime sequence, although seemingly a non-emotive series of copied gestures, can be seen as a forerunner to the second mime task where the teacher hopes there will be more personal engagement by getting the pupils to write a hope or desire and hold that piece of paper to their head and heart. This can be seen as crossing out of the realms of performance, away from the ‘as if’ world, and into the realms of real feelings and experiences.

56:55

TEACHER

So, very quiet (glancing at boys) being respectful...taking your box, thinking about your special wish, hope or dream, or special person you're thinking about...

She raises her box to her head

57:10

...close your eyes, hold it against your forehead... (pause, synthesised piano music heard)

Pupils smile initially when asked to think and hold box to various parts of body; some quieten, appear to focus

57:25

TEACHER (cont)

...and think about what you'll do....

More music

57:45 And now take your box and hold it against your heart
(some pupils start to talk and share comments that
make each other smile)...fill it with loving feelings
and hopes.

The teacher remains very still with the box under her arm,
despite pupils moving.

58:30

TEACHER

Finally take your special wish and hold it in your
hand, like this. Think about what you can do to make
it come true.

Her tone is rounded and solemn as is her facial
expression. The pupils shift around and look around.

Boys to one side laugh and chat. Boys at the front quietly
joke and chat. A girl at back has head bowed as if she is
taking the exercise seriously.

(Lesson 2)

It is not clear if they are moved to really 'feel'; whether they have the necessary objectivity to make connections between their experience and curriculum content and be critically reflective. This is not to say that the pupils might be (nor is there evidence in the case study lesson to suggest they are) so carried away with emotion that they are unable to be analytical. It is possible that the focus moves from, in this case, Jewish Prayer, to a separate construction of belief and reverence. The teacher is conscious of making exercises 'religion-neutral' (her own terminology devised for her modelled practice) in order to avoid the usual hang-ups of irrelevant religious knowledge. However there may still be tension between this and the curriculum which requires a close study of religion. They put aside religion to engage personally and yet may just as easily decrease their investment because of the religious content. Nevertheless, the pupils in interview agreed that they felt that they were learning because "you get more involved sort of thing and you try more" (Pupil Group Interview, 05:25), hinting at some personal connection linked to effort.

Figure 5, below, shows the respective appropriation of communicative tools by the teacher and pupils. The key part of the system under investigation is along the tool-division of labour plane

(indicated by the bold line). The teacher's input in task design and demonstration of action outweighs that of the pupils, moreover because the pupils may also choose to reduce their input even further. Although the task may be in part completed by repeating the mime, the CHAT model raises the point that tension may be caused between this action and the achieving of further goals of engagement and empathy, because it relies so heavily on the way the pupils are involved in the process, not just their surface-level gestures.

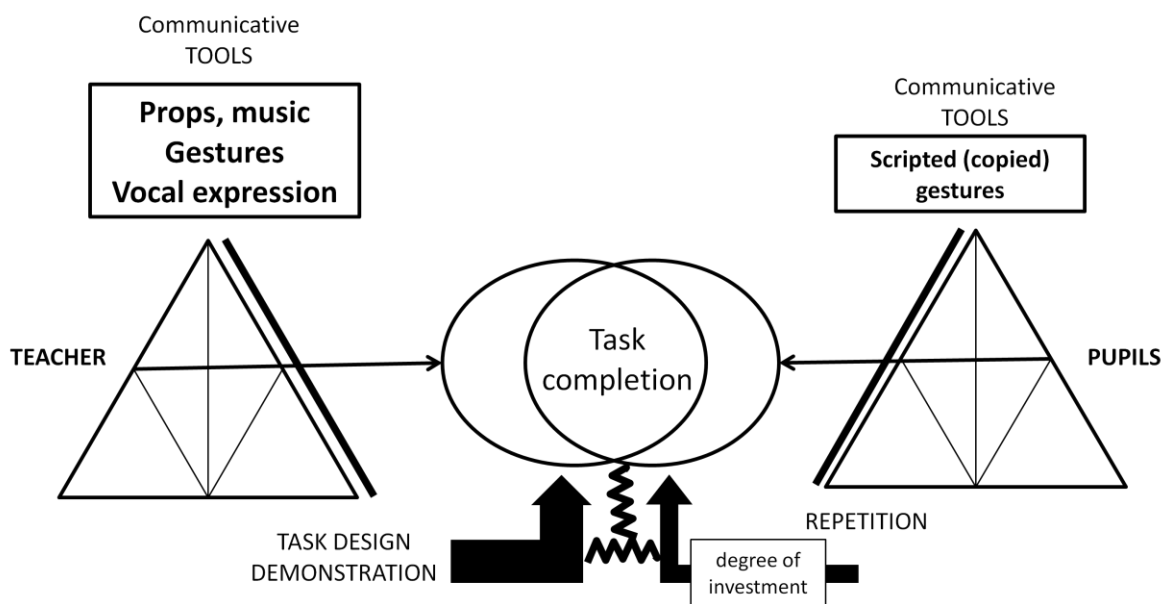


Figure 5 –the respective use of communicative tools by teacher and pupils in drama tasks

The requirement to invest in imagining 'as if' or, a step further, fully engaging one's emotions, potentially runs against a culture of trust and private thought. The pupils are asked to feel and the teacher wishes to see that they have invested and yet that investment is not fully made known or developed in an external dialogue as the pupils are not required to share their own feelings. The teacher allows them to keep these private and throw their pieces of paper away in order to maintain the safe environment of a classroom where personal emotions can be drawn on but are not exposed to others. The questions and responses move another degree away from the subjective to the objective. In asking How might the prayer affect a Jewish person?, the process of engaging personal feelings and making connections is perhaps assumed to be automatic or something that can happen

quickly, even simultaneously. The pupil responses phrased as questions to the teacher hint that they still assume a finite list of 'correct' answers, much like their copied gestures - "They feel part of something?" "They do the right thing?" This follows a Teacher-question, Pupil-response pattern, whilst retaining some sense of 'exploratory talk' (Mercer & Littleton 2007, Barnes 1976) as being a space for continuing to try out new ideas, or "groping towards meaning" (Barnes 1976:28) as independent learners. The teacher and pupils move towards completing each task, however other shared goals are difficult to ascertain, as is the pupils' emotional engagement within and after the Prayer task.

Achieving the necessary balance in drama tasks of division of labour, whilst being sensitive to social issues of trust and emotion, seems to be unresolved in this case.

5.6 Investment and Expertise – the division of labour in the classroom

5.6.1 Signalling for investment

The dominant verbal and physical communication of the teacher (pupils are not required to speak during the main action of the Prayer tasks) directs pupil action and uses vocal expression to attempt to model the necessary reverence and seriousness required. Although the teacher can signal reverence, in the way the task is formatted however she cannot 'show' personal connection and can only tell the pupils to do it. This depends on the pupils' own innate empathetic ability and their individual obedience or desire to invest for success.

The teacher uses her introduction to Drama Task 2 (Mimed Prayer) to reinforce her expectations:

LESSON TWO (25min50sec):

25:50 The boys are still conversing briefly but Teacher puts the shawl down on the box in front of her and continues.

TEACHER

Right... Jewish Prayer...
Her face falls to a more serious expression.
Now...

She takes a deep breath and clasps her hands together

26:00 When Jews pray and if they're males and over the age of thirteen,

SHANE

(calling out but in a quiet voice) Bar Mitzvah

TEACHER

They wear - (points at Shane) bar mitzvah - some equipment.

26:10 She picks up the shawl again.

And what I'm going to teach you, and this is to do a GCSE essay, I'm going to model the techniques, I'm going to tell you what they do...

26:20 With the shawl draped over one arm, she taps the thumb of her right hand with her left index finger

...because the examination will say How did they pray? And I'm going to show you that with artefacts and with experiential.

She emphasises 'artefacts and experiential' by twice pressing out her left hand with fingers splayed. She pauses briefly.

26:30 You're gonna to do a mime, you're going to do a reflective exercise, you're going to listen to some music and we'll see if you can learn it without doing any reading or writing at this stage.

26:35 She bends down and picks up one of the course booklets, prepared and photocopied by herself, from a pile on the floor and holds it aloft momentarily and then gently drops it back onto the pile.

26:40 All the reading and writing you need is in loads of little booklets like that and you can look at it afterwards.

Standing up again.

We're going to see...if you can learn it this way.

The importance of this work in preparation for the GCSE examination is reiterated twice (26:10, 26:20) as well as the teacher's chief role in passing on this knowledge – "I'm going to show you that" (26:20) - by utilising an approach that avoids reading and writing. There seems to be no need to ask them to be attentive when a mention of 'GCSE' reiterates the importance. The gravity of the situation is reinforced by placing the shawl down and picking it up at key moments, her 'serious expression', clasped hands and deep breath (25:50) signalling that previous laughter and interjection should stop. One boy, Shane, interjects but rather than interrupt her flow, she points to acknowledge him.

An interpretation of the division of labour in this classroom is that the teacher will teach, model, and show, and the pupils will do, listen, and learn. This is "with experiential" (26:20). She uses this word as a noun, a tool to be used, emphasised with repeated hand gestures, rather than an adjective that might reveal the type of process to be undertaken and requiring particular emotional reflection. The teacher takes another opportunity to list the main components of the Theatre of Learning approach – a mime (or in other lessons, a narrative) and a reflective exercise. This is a way of attempting to engage the pupils personally and spiritually by appealing to their own life experiences and emotions, accompanied by music. The final visual sign is to reiterate the discarding of reading and writing (26:35) although the gesture supported by reassurance that they can come to that later (26:40). The sense of discovery, challenge and collective journey ("we'll see if", 26:30) is then set to be played out. Her portrayal of her own practice suggests it has a boundary, setting it apart or distinct from other experiences the pupils might have of i) other teachers in their school, ii) teachers in other schools. The researcher is also given an impression of her practice as it has developed over the history of her career – how she now teaches is different.

5.6.2 Teacher's knowledge authority and expertise

The teacher-pupil relationship in negotiating the task described above might be perceived as 'monitor-participant' whereby "the teacher's role is one of setting up the tasks and procedures and making sure that they are carried out; the student's role is to execute the actions and provide information on progress" (Tabak and Baumgartner 2004:404). The way pupils are able to affect their own environment and influence the experience of others is apparent to the teacher. This seems a danger point, as she confided in interview: "I really can't bear group work. I never have because the second I let go of them their own agenda takes over" (Teacher Post-Unit Interview).

The Teacher-question, Pupil-response sequence is a recognisable feature of the way she recaps previous lesson content and where she gauges the pupil's ability to recall topic knowledge, presented as facts:

TEACHER

How did he identify them so he knew who they were? Yes?

BEN

He, uh, put a yellow star on them

TEACHER

Right. He got them all to put a yellow star on.

(Lesson 2, 07:45)

This is also notably followed by a point and smile to the class as if to affirm the pupil's status as a model, then supplying further clarification of the fact verbally and expanding on the response by tapping her chest where the 'yellow star' would go. Another example shows a second initiation when the first is unsuccessful:

TEACHER [1st Initiation]

What did he then do?

PUPILS [1st Response]

PUPILS are silent and do not move

TEACHER [2nd Initiation]

He needed to start to separate them, didn't he? Well, there were a couple of things...that he did actually, yes, sweetie, can you tell me what he did?

ALEX [2nd Response]

He built the ghettos.

TEACHER [Repeated Response Feedback]

(louder) He built the ghettos!

(Lesson 2, 08:15)

The more emphatic feedback is perhaps either a sense of relief that a 'correct' answer has been reached or a way of singling out Alex for particular praise for tackling a more difficult question – in other words, where the desired response was less obvious from the question itself. It may be both.

This carries through to the mime task where interjections are either ignored or dealt with without change of manner so as to integrate or dissolve them into the action, maintaining her control of the sequence of actions and the content of discussion. Pupils are allowed to add to teacher talk often without any reprimand and this is a familiar turn-taking procedure. After the initial request for hands up and the signalling of permission to speak with a look or "Yes", calling out becomes more commonplace in the recap task – eventually all 5 of the boys who spoke do - however, with only 7 pupils making solo verbal utterances in total out of a class of 24, their contributions are part of the minority. The teacher even praises the whole class for their recap, suggesting that their individual verbal responses are less important than the collective ability to listen, watch and physically participate.

Within all of the tasks there is no discussion beforehand of any standards of drama role play in terms of an effective performance that might aid any internal connection with the action or help others (the pupil actors also being audience for each other) to engage and invest. The behaviour of peers seems important to the collective experience:

Phil He is staring at the floor, speaking in a quiet but reflective voice

Depends on your mood really cos if you're in a mood you don't really wanna get up an act...like...like when it's a story everyone's just calm and listenin'

 He shrugs his shoulders

and it's just a totally different atmosphere

Researcher Do you think other people have an effect on the atmosphere of the...

Phil Uh...yeah...

 He nods

Like Will he's all bubbly and just like makes you smile and you've got other people who just sit there -

Emma - Mmm -

Phil - and don't do anything

(Pupil Group Interview 07:55)

The goal in the first mime task seems to be to get the pupils to execute a correct replication of the demonstration. Even in this case, where the pupils' mime is not as exact or reverential as the teacher's, merely recalling the sequence is enough to gain praise. There seems to be an inconsistency between the expectations the teacher has for the pupils' own appropriation of communicative tools and the complex integration of controlled gesture, intonation and high focus she sets as her own standard of performance. It is debatable if this serves as a model approach for pupils to graduate toward or it accentuate the expert-novice divide as well as the distance between teacher as actor and pupils as audience. When questioned in interview, the pupils responded favourably to the teacher's efforts, compared to other lessons:

Phil Looking down at the laptop which is replaying episodes from the lessons. He is leant back in his chair, his legs stretched out in front.

She gets like...like she really tries and gets in role play and stuff. Like not a...like no other teachers do that. Apart from Drama and stuff.

Researcher And what do you think about that? The fact that she gets into role play?

Phil Well, it makes it more fun. It makes you like...And she puts music on and that.

Emma Yeah

Phil It just like livens it up a bit.

(Pupil Group Interview, 12:45)

The pupils also hinted at an initial lack of understanding the purpose of the task, which may have influenced their investment:

Researcher Can you remember what you were thinking while you were doing this?

Emma Yeah - what the hell are we doing this for

Dez You were thinking "What the hell are we doing?"

Emma Yeah

Ed Mmm

Emma And then I realised

(Pupil Group Interview, 09:40)

5.6.3 The limits and possibilities of shared concerns and shared action

If 'experiential', as Kolb et al (2001) might have it, is to incorporate reflection but also analysis and decision-making or problem-solving in order to make meaning from direct experience, then this mimed task would seem to be limited in its experiential potential. The mime does not lend itself to a range of responses – this is a fixed sequence of actions with new information to be stored. One might view the mime as an extended non-verbal example of a Teacher Question – Pupil Response discussion with distinct design of turn-taking (Heritage 2004). The drama task reveals the division of labour to be teacher-dominant, pupil-subordinate. This is shown by the way the teacher initiates by demonstrating and then again with the pupils following. The pupils 'respond' by showing to her the

mime they have committed to memory and the teacher feeds back by smiling, nodding and eventually proclaiming “That is so brilliant.”

Even within the pupils themselves there is non-verbal communication and co-operation: at first two pairs of pupils look at each other seemingly to gauge their own reactions to the teacher’s performance and then, when their own mime goes awry, as one boy remembers, the girl opposite affirms his decision by nodding and smiling. The recall is collaborative and may be important in fostering a sense of shared experience for the pupils, as they report in interview, having a chance for ‘everyone to get involved’. Nevertheless, the pupils have not so much co-created a new experience for themselves, but have endeavoured to copy the teacher’s. This might seem to logically follow into the later written task where they are again told to mimic the teacher (or examiner) by marking sample responses as preparation for producing the required response themselves on paper. On the other hand, by making a broader examination of the lesson tasks as a process, the teacher’s scaffolding frame of copied mime to communal prayer to paired or individual response to exam questions may represent a gradual lessening of her close control of pupil response.

Figure 6 (below) highlights the dominance of the teacher in the classroom activity but also the link between this and the rules for interaction. The pupils for the most part abide by the classroom rules and endeavour to complete the drama tasks, however there is tension between these and their social concerns for security and enjoyment, which impact on their investment. The pupils’ use of communicative tools and empathetic processes seems difficult to assess in terms of achieving goals. For the teacher, she has a duty and desire to engage and inform, maintaining her authoritative position. The tension for the teacher is with what she senses are more dangerous and relaxed rules for group work, hence her structuring of drama tasks remains a tight frame. In standard lesson interaction she can, and does, spend time explicitly stating the rules and rationale for tasks. Within the drama tasks, she attempts to implicitly signal the necessary investment required, but this may not be adequate to effect a change in the pupils.

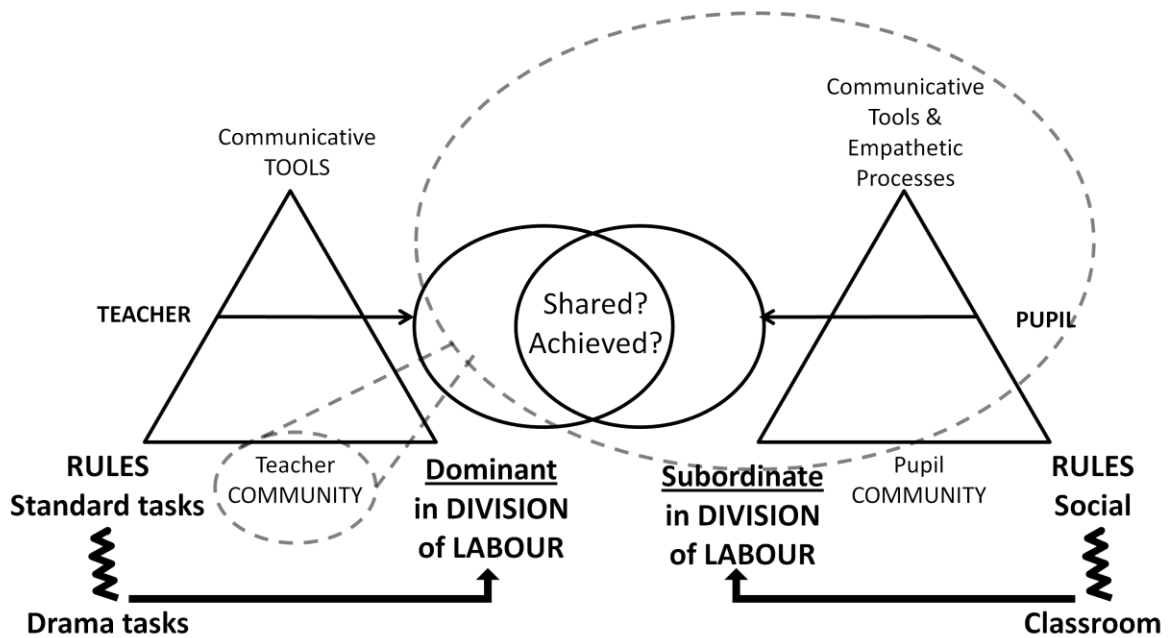


Figure 6 – tension and difference in the rules and division of labour for teacher and pupils

Nevertheless, what the teacher can get the individual pupils do, and show, seems to be her main concern, rather than their social interaction. In Figure 6, the upper part of the pupil-centred system is enclosed in a dashed line to highlight that the pupils themselves form a core part of what the teacher is working on. This is the ongoing development of her practice, which is presented back to the wider teaching community, having been formed and developed within the ever-changing culture of the classroom.

5.7 Conclusion

5.7.1 Conclusions from this case study

When the teacher states that this is a 'good way to learn' it is as if she is attempting to turn her practice into a transferable rule of practice for studying world religions and teaching young people in general – it is also not exclusively about mime but this 'way', is a process – to imagine and engage with personally before reading or writing. Thereby the drama-as-toolkit in this case is made up of a

constellation of tools - multimodal forms of communication - which is embedded in a wider pedagogical practice.

Gesture and vocal expression are an integrated and integral part of the teacher's performance in the Treatment and Prayer mime tasks. Suspense and other shifts in mood are selected and engineered by the teacher rather than co-created and are presented in-role, defining a) the act as separate to other classroom activity and b) defining the teacher as actor and the pupil as audience. The teacher's use of ritualistic scripted (pre-prepared and repeated) gesture is of triple concern to the meaning that is constructed regarding, a) the learning outcome – what is required to be learned by the pupils; b) the learning tool – how the mimed enactment process functions; c) the relationship between teacher and pupils – who is responsible for initiating, demonstrating and responding to action

The task can be seen as potentially working in three different ways for the pupils. Firstly, pupil emotions are engaged but not externally expressed. This achieves the teacher goal for spiritual experience but she is unable to monitor it. Secondly, the pupils make a personal association between their own beliefs and subject matter from spiritual experience during mime and externally expressed by investment in mime and shared verbally in discussion. This is the teacher's ideal goal. Thirdly, the pupil makes a connection between their own cultural values and subject matter in retrospect and externally expressed. The teacher accepts this in Question and Answer response, partly achieving the goal.

Within the Treatment and Prayer tasks, the tools appropriated are speech, physical gestures and the internal feelings and thought processes of the pupils. In other words, the belief is that teachers can engage the pupils' emotions and then direct them to empathetically make links with how they suppose others might feel. This potentially moves pupils towards a more representational form of thought (Bruner 1966). On an enactive level, the pupils are given an opportunity to experience prayer from a personal perspective. On an iconic level, they are then encouraged to talk about the key moments in their own experiences to share with others. The iconic level might also be seen to

be prematurely reached as the enactive experience is already a teacher-constructed one rather than a 'real' experience. Finally, the teacher asks the pupils to make links between their experiences and their knowledge and understanding of the Jewish faith.

The ritualistic 'performer-aware' manner signals the attitude of reverence that is demanded both by the role (Jewish person) and the pupils (attentive students that personally invest in the task). The pupils, however, express themselves only through mime - a physical, second-hand mimicry of teacher who is representing the actions of a Jewish person - and internal thought processes, the latter of these requiring a reliance on the individual pupils' understanding of the way they can be deployed and the pupils' willingness to invest. The crucial connection between personal experience facilitated by the mime and curriculum content for some pupils may not be simultaneous with the mime but react retrospectively to teacher questioning. The teacher states, "what I'm doing is different in that I'm trying to affect the actor as it were, rather than the audience," (Teacher Pre-Unit Interview, 04:50). However, the moment at which the pupil is transformed from audience to actor (both arguably active roles) may be later in the process than anticipated, perhaps not at all. For Boal (Boal & Jackson 1995) interaction is not blurring the boundary between actor and audience, only enhancing it. Where there is spatial division, the spectator is active rather than passive but is not the actor.

8.7.2 Returning to the research questions

Drama tasks are just one of several types of tasks that can be incorporated into a teachers' delivery of curriculum content with a view to improving subject attainment. The increased accountability and demands of the National Curriculum make it unsurprising that the raising of results, whether or not it is an examination year group, is forefront in the teacher's mind. Teachers can sometimes be concerned with a wider purpose of developing pupils morally and spiritually, giving them an opportunity to share and engage with their own experiences of the world. This is not a new

phenomenon (see 2.3.3 *Empathy in the context of drama and learning*, p.20), but it adds to – and potentially confuses – the goal of a task. Where the curriculum also demands empathetic skill, drama is additionally valued as a way of directly engaging with the thought processes of the pupil and for the pupils to engage with the thought process of others. The problem is how to resolve the transmission of factual knowledge to the class as a whole with the individual (and potentially multiple) interpretations of the pupils, afforded by personal engagement with the content. Whereas the drama tasks might seem to directly facilitate a space for “contextualised knowledge” that Henry describes (see 2.4.1 *Imagination and physical action*, p.27), the practicalities of achieving this are problematic.

A pupil’s emotive engagement can be entwined with the teachers’ desire to increase enthusiasm for the topic of study or the subject as a whole. This can be viewed as a goal in its own right or en route to the longer term goal of raising attainment via increased engagement; in other words, fostering the pupil’s desire to take an active part in lessons as a way of increasing their understanding and recall. Teachers may endeavour to engage pupils on a personal level to see the curriculum content as relevant. Because of this, drama may be promoted by teachers to the pupils as a ‘good’ way of learning and an antidote to ‘dull’ lessons. They may also sense that pupils can view drama as lacking in purpose or seriousness and so feel obliged to also quantify the lesson tasks as relevant, where they are perhaps less likely to do so with other types of lesson tasks. Although drama may have historically been seen to engage with the “uniqueness” of pupils, as highlighted by Way in the 1960s, the unfamiliarity or lower status of the toolkit is still a potential barrier to its acceptance within pedagogical practice.

Drama is suggested as a vehicle for increasing pupil choice, the tasks often requiring interaction between pupils away from the gaze and instructions of the teacher. This may achieve what Tabak and Baumgartner call the ‘mentor participant structure’ and the ‘transactional’ model identified by Harwood. Not only are pupils required to choose logical vocal and physical action, they are also required to negotiate with each other. This is reminiscent of Vygotsky, for whom the “the individual

consciousness is determined by the activity of the collective subject” (Davydov & Kerr 1995:15)

However, this seems to be dependent on the teacher’s willingness to release control of pupil action.

The pupils’ willingness to openly invest on a personal and emotional level in a fictional role is counterintuitive in a risky social space, although pupils openly acknowledge the ‘fun’ had. The literature on drama in classrooms is sometimes more focused on its positive attributes and perhaps does not properly consider these social tensions, which continue to be raised in the subsequent case studies.

CHAPTER 6

HISTORY

‘Spontaneity and Scripts on Trial’

6.1 Overview

This case study is of a young male Head of Department and his Year 7 History class at a co-educational comprehensive school in the south of England. It highlights tensions which stem from blurred distinctions between ‘drama’ as a process of enquiry and as a mode of representation. The adult-dominated formality of art, and the assumption of an empirical/rational ‘truth’ in the presented historical facts, potentially inhibits ‘play’ by the students. Taking into account the teacher’s own objectives, specific moments of classroom activity are discussed, alongside a wider consideration of the nature of ‘creativity’ in education.

In this particular case study of a History classroom, the value placed on drama-as-toolkit is rooted in a concern for the engagement of pupils and the consolidation of individual pupils’ learning of factual knowledge. In both drama tasks the students are observed to be reading and operating in-role but without understanding in the moment. Their words are mostly scripted and although repeating them may aid recall for the reader and the listener, they often lack the spontaneity that may encourage themselves and the audience to critically reflect upon their meaning and judgement. The use of the strategies clearly go some way to achieving the teacher’s goals: in some way including all pupils, allowing mixed abilities to engage as they wish, creating lively versions of historical narrative that are memorable and facilitating some experiential basis to written tasks.

6.2 Case classroom in context

The school is a mixed comprehensive, one of three in this town. It has approximately 950 students aged 11-18 and recently achieved specialist status in visual and performing arts and its prospectus cites a commitment to making lessons more interesting through visual media, assisted by ICT. The school's OFSTED inspection, carried out just after the case study visits, graded it as 'satisfactory' and as showing significant improvement. In Summer 2008, 49% of students achieved 5 or more GCSE passes at A*-C, increasing to 62% in 2009. Students come from a predominantly British white community and the inspection report notes that their social and moral development is more advanced than their awareness of their wider multicultural society. The school is also gradually developing its provision for students with low literacy skills and with behavioural and emotional difficulties.

The school site is dominated by the flat-roofed 1960s architecture from its founding year, although a government grant will go towards new development. The main school building fronts onto a busy road, which the History classrooms overlook on the first floor. The case study room itself is flooded with light from the large windows along one side, through which the traffic can also be heard. The tables group the students into fours and sixes with the teacher's desk in one corner. With the pupils seated there is just enough room for a teacher or assistant to move around the space. The large whiteboard is typically busy with writing and diagrams from various lessons and the walls are covered in key historical images and large charts describing the curriculum attainment levels for the subject. The whiteboard also operates as a projection screen for the various images and videos used by the teacher during the lessons. Overhead hang several 'washing lines' of A4 cards, posing key history questions and listing British Monarchs.

Pupils are taught in mixed ability classes, in hour-long periods. In Year 7 they receive 3 hours of History per fortnight, which is reduced to one hour per week in Years 8 and 9. Working to a two-week timetable, the teacher notes that the impact of this limited time is pressure to plan for skills

rather than content knowledge and that each lesson needs to be stand alone (Teacher Pre-Interview).

As Head of the History Department, the teacher is responsible for the development and overall delivery of the Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 curricula. With four other full and part-time members of staff, he also oversees the development of a number of PGCE trainee teachers each year and teaches on the Psychology course. As the department shares a building with English, the opportunity for shared practice tends to be greater than with other departments, although this is generally limited. The teacher described his own experience of professional development courses for History teachers that encouraged him in using in-role tasks. He stressed that they were presented more as 'kinaesthetic' approaches rather than 'drama'-based and that the distinction, for him personally, was blurred.

Earlier in the same term I undertook a first case study with the same teacher and a Year 9 class, including interviewing a group of these pupils (Year 9 Interview). This meant that at the start of the Year 7 visits I was already familiar with the school context and with the practice of this particular teacher. In interviewing the Year 9 pupils I was also able to form a broader impression of the pupils' experiences, particularly as they referred back to their previous lessons that they recalled from Year 7. I interviewed the teacher firstly before the Year 9 Case Study (Teacher Interview A), then again more informally during the observation period (Teacher Interview B) and finally after the fourth lesson (Teacher Interview C). I also interviewed a small group of pupils in the lunch break after the fourth lesson (Year 7 Pupil Interview).

6.3 Unit of Work – 'The Murder of Thomas Becket'

The four-lesson topic 'The Murder of Thomas Becket' exists as part of a term-long study of Medieval England, and a year-long curriculum that chronologically explores from the Romans to the Tudors. The observed lessons took place during the last three weeks of the Autumn Term.

LESSON ONE	<p><i>Lesson objective – to know the key elements of the story; all involved</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A projected image of a medieval painting depicting the murder is revealed, one section at a time. Pupils are asked to guess ‘what is going on’. • Drama Task 1 – Scripted Reconstruction – Pupils enact the events surrounding the murder, using a script that the teacher has written. They are given paper props and are directed to move around the classroom space, mainly using the front area. The task is repeated to allow the other half of the class to participate. • Groups are required to list all the events they can remember. • Individual pupils write 6 main points of the story in their exercise books
LESSON TWO	<p><i>Lesson objective – select evidence to support opinions on who was to blame for the murder</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision writing task followed by Question and Answer • Comic YouTube video song version of the story¹ projected onto the whiteboard. • Revision of Feudal System task with pupils sat in hierarchical fashion as King (on a chair on table), Barons, Knights and Peasants (on the floor). • Teacher narrates events with more detail. • Text book task • Pupils required to move to a corner of the room according to their opinion of who was to blame.
LESSON THREE	<p><i>Lesson objective – to prepare for the Trial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected image of a modern courtroom frames discussion of the various roles and responsibilities • Teacher explains that next lesson the pupils will take part in a trial to decide who is guilty of the murder: King Henry, the Knights, or Becket himself. They will spend the remainder of the lesson and any homework time preparing. • The teacher speaks separately to the 10 pupils taking on the roles of the defendants, the defence lawyers and the prosecution.
LESSON FOUR	<p>Drama Task 2 – The Trial – The tables are moved to a courtroom formation (see below). The pupil Judge is required to call each defendant and prosecutor forward to cross-examine the main characters. The Jury are required to listen and make notes. The Jury then convene and give their opinion and justification for the charges.</p>

¹ Entitled ‘Henry and Becket with puppets’ available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kphg39sleKk>

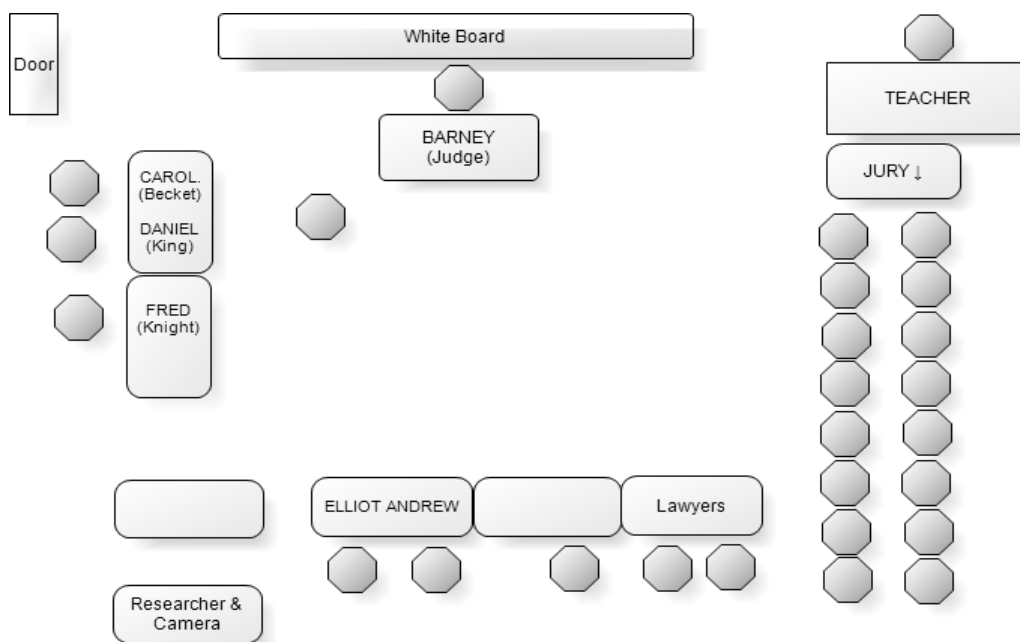


Figure 1 – The lesson content and the classroom layout for Drama Task 2

6.4 The Drama of History – tension between the toolkit and teaching and learning goals

This section discusses the goals of the teacher and his rationale for incorporating drama tasks into his lessons. It finds that his main goals are to enthuse the pupils and to develop their approach in History to one of enquiry. He makes use of vivid imagery and his use of a range of vocal and physical expression is found to have a direct impact on pupils' interpretation, positioning the historical events through frames that are the script and his own presentation. These are then reflected back by the pupils in their subsequent work.

6.4.1 The History 'mindset' and a spirit of enquiry

From the first interview with the class teacher, it is clear that his main goal is to engage and enthuse his pupils in the study of History, particularly with a view to gaining an appreciation of the experiences of the people from each time. The teacher speaks derogatorily of dull periods of history

he is worried will not catch the pupils' enthusiasm and equally of classes who are happy to copy out of a book rather than engage in interactive tasks. He cited his initial experiences of effectively using in-role work with more "rowdy" classes, and this seems to have formed a key part of his rationale.

The teacher also feels that tasks that require pupils to enter into role – to empathise and take the perspective of another – help them enter the kind of historian's "mindset". These kinds of tasks juxtapose a pupil's own experiences with their imagined ones. The teacher is wary, however, of straying too far from the task at hand. In-role work is for acquiring, understanding and recalling historical knowledge, not for "having fun playing at being villagers". He had attended subject-specific Professional Development courses that promoted physical tasks, for example, scrabbling under the desks for paper to empathise with workhouse conditions. However he would not encourage character development much beyond this, accepting that the suspension of disbelief can only go so far for his pupils within his classroom.

Assessment demands are also closely linked and the large 'Curriculum Levels' display board on the classroom wall is a constant reminder. These drama tasks are viewed by him as the key to their improved depth of response and recall in written tasks. As stated by the teacher to the pupils in their first lesson of the topic, the main learning objective was to "know the story", but in terms of their skills in History, they were aiming to go beyond merely "describing History" to a more advanced 'explaining' of it. For the teacher, the importance of role play is to access the appropriate 'mindset' of historical enquiry, making sense of evidence experienced through narrative or some participation in a related scenario, together with rational thinking.

6.4.2 Imagery

The pupils are drawn into the topic, without any introduction, at the start of the first lesson with a 'Catchphrase'-style task. They are required to interpret an image - a painting of the murder - which

was divided into 9 squares and only one revealed at a time. The pupils are asked to guess what they think it is, and respond with “A stained glass window”; “Might be in a church” “A painted picture”. The teacher asks “What’s going on in the picture?” and the pupils respond “Maybe they’re being dubbed a knight”; “Someone being christened maybe”. Here the goal of getting the pupils to wonder as to the story is evident, even though the teacher has to rephrase the question to focus the pupils on the possible *action* rather than the material stuff it is made of.

The teacher then continues to give background information to the topic with a clear use of vivid imagery, caricaturing the monarchy:

TEACHER

When William died, huge fat man he was when he died, he’d eaten so much...became bloated and fat; he was absolutely huge...

(Lesson 1; 07:00)

This highly descriptive style is typical of the teacher, also witnessed by the Year 9 class who were told about mustard gas in the trenches that would “bur-rr-rn into your skin and rot your flesh” (Year 9, Lesson 2, 47min). The pupils’ audible and visible responses to these descriptions are evidence of their impact at the time, supported by their reference in interview to the teacher’s detailed descriptions. Here it seems that the detail is important to the pupils’ building of mental images and personal associations with the historical characters and scenarios under enquiry:

03:01 Mandy - The way he like describes it, it makes you think like when he says “millions of people died” it makes you like think -

Researcher - Oh ok

Heather And tells you how many people it took to operate it and how many men...how heavy it would be...if it actually hit you.

Rory Or how fast or accurate it can go

Mandy Or how big it is like

03:20 Researcher OK, so there's something about -

Heather - And the description of the scene as well

Researcher So there's something about the way he...

Mandy Describes it

Researcher Describes it

Mandy It's like [inaudible]

Researcher Cos do you remember, he got the...did he get the stick from other there?

Heather Yeah

Mandy Yeah

Rory And he said how the bayonet bit...

Gary - What's a bayonet?

Julia It's like a sword at the end -

Rory - It's a sharp -

Gary Oh yeah yeah yeah

03:45 Rory It's what he said...

Gary Uh! (mimed reaction to bayonet stab) Uh - uh!

(Year 9 Pupil Group Interview)

The teacher explicitly states he wants to enthuse the pupils. The pupils repeatedly say they had ‘fun’. They are also observed to laugh at his banter and “oo” and “ah” to his graphic descriptions of blood gushing out onto the cathedral floor, which the teacher explains he uses as a hook to maintain their engagement. There a number of elements that the pupils say that they enjoyed: the opportunity for everyone to take part; getting praise from the teacher; not getting a detention from the teacher; not having to read or write (at least for a while); the narrative the teacher used his storytelling skills to convey; the You Tube video. It is notable that a ‘spirit of enquiry’ – perhaps phrased as “I enjoyed finding things out” - was not mentioned in Pupil Interview, although that is not to say that it was not present. Nevertheless, a willingness to engage with the tasks seems to be promoted by a range of factors, just as much as the powerful imagery contributes to the pupils’ empathy, as stated by Rory in Year 9:

Because [he] would give us like...uh...like uh a description of what it would be like and then we’d have to act it out so you...we feel like we’re more in their shoes.

(Year 9 Pupil Interview, 15:20)

6.4.3 Vocal and physical expression

The teacher’s storytelling skills seem a crucial part of his communication with the pupils. His style allows him to bring the characters within his short lectures to life, meaning that his ‘narrator’ role extends across more than just the original scripted task. He will use vocal expression, gestures, physical movement and mime in order to create these vivid images within the pupils’ minds. His comic informal speech almost serves to humanize the medieval rulers, making them more accessible to the pupils and inferring recognisable moods such as anger, cockiness or interrogation:

TEACHER

And so Thomas Becket goes back to the King and he says,
"Actually...actually, I've changed my mind. Not gonna

get rid of the Church courts - we're gonna keep those - and we're gonna make them better. Not gonna get rid of this, we're gonna keep this, and not gonna get rid of that, that's gonna stay the same, and everything's gonna stay the same. Very sorry your majesty (*leans on corner of desk on one elbow, legs crossed in cocky, casual fashion*), got a new plan. (*stands upright again*) I work for God now" he says "not you anymore. We're done." Now this is the big question. Does Thomas Becket REALLY believe in God (*perching on spare table*) or is he just trying to upset the King? Now that he's Chancellor (*holds jacket lapels, shoulders back and chin up*) AND Archbishop of Canterbury, does he just feel (*circles his arms and reaffirms lapel grab*) "I'm really important, I can do what I like? I'm better than the King..?"

(Lesson 3, 36min)

The power of his delivery is evident in the fact that pupils take direct quotes from the teacher in their own speeches, for example Elliot's use of the teacher's phrase 'smashing Thomas Becket's head with a sword' (see EXTRACT B in Section 6.6) in the Trial task, demonstrating the impact it had had. One might question whether the teacher's approach, although clearly engaging and entertaining, also reinforces his omnipotence and his omniscience. Neither might be a negative thing in the eyes of the pupils. His control is reassuring in terms of their own learning and that of their peers and they seem acutely aware of the careful balance he achieves:

Gareth It's like also when we first went to History he had a really funny laugh because he had like his hammer and his stick that he whacks on the tables and that and then over the course of a couple of lessons after that he grew more serious and then we started like having more History reading projects and essays and then sometimes he can be really funny but when he's serious, you know, he is serious about things in general.

(Year 7 Pupil Interview, 09:30)

6.4.4 Framed investment

A room full of frantically waving hands signalled the pupils' enthusiasm to take part in the acting out of the scripted version of the Thomas Becket image when their curiosity would be satisfied. Roles were assigned and pupils were given paper hats and swords to signify their characters. They were also told to enter from different sides of the classroom, giving a sense of geography to the plot, which takes place across England and France. The teacher also broke out of his 'role' of the narrator to give some direction to the pupils (addressed as their character) to ensure at least some appropriate use of gesture and movement:

TEACHER

Stand up Henry, give us a wave. Stand up! You're the King!
Look tall and proud! There you go. Give us a wave.

(Lesson 1, 12:10)

TEACHER

Thomas Beckett, what do you have to do when speaking to a
king?

The Girl kneels.

The-re

(Lesson 1, 12:50)

TEACHER

Uh! Uh! He's all the way in London, where are you?!

Interrupts Archbishop to get her to cross the room rather
than read from where she is by the window

(Lesson 1, 13:20)

For the teacher, maintaining communal belief in the scenario is secondary to the need to manage behaviour or give advice on the action.

Even if I'm the teacher getting into role for hot seating or something... so interviewing me as Lloyd George... you have to step out a lot because you still have to manage behaviour and then step back in or give them directions. Even if there's not a behaviour problem you need to remind them that they should be writing stuff down, and stuff like that.

(Teacher Interview B, 16min)

The ability to switch in and out of role is similar to his incidental characterisations during his descriptions of events and the teacher does not see the need to overly highlight the switch. For him, a shift in tone or stance can indicate a character or "capture a moment in History" (Teacher Interview C) just as it might in normal conversation. However, as with the direction of movement, the teacher feels the need to emphasise that a similar change in vocal expression is required by the pupils, even though this can be hinted at rather than overtly directed:

TEACHER

(speaking slowly and emphasising) Henry became very angry

PUPIL

(shouting) I should never have given Becket that job! He's no friend of mine!

(Lesson 1, 14min)

Following the first enactment of the script, the pupils listed the events in groups with as much detail as they could remember and then the rest of the class were invited to perform the same script again, following the exact format of the first. Although the teacher had identified the subject skills for development (analysing, debating, arguing), by reinforcing the already set narrative in script with a consolidation exercise, it is possible that the pupils' knowledge and perspective of historical events

were becoming fixed in stone with little room for later reinterpretation. The script (written by the teacher), the roles (assigned by the teacher) and the characterisation (encouraged by the teacher) result in a closely-framed task. The Trial task, explored in the rest of this chapter, is more loosely framed and goes some way to opening up new perspectives, however it also reveals pupils drawing closely on their early impressions of the events and the characters as framed by the teacher in the first lesson.

Figure 2 (below) conceptualises this action along the subject-tool-object planes. It represents the relationship between the teacher’s conveying of historical events and people and the pupils’ forming of interpretation along with their demonstration back to the teacher of their understanding. However, it is important to note that the pupil investment can vary, hence the level of participation and degree of personal interpretation can also vary.

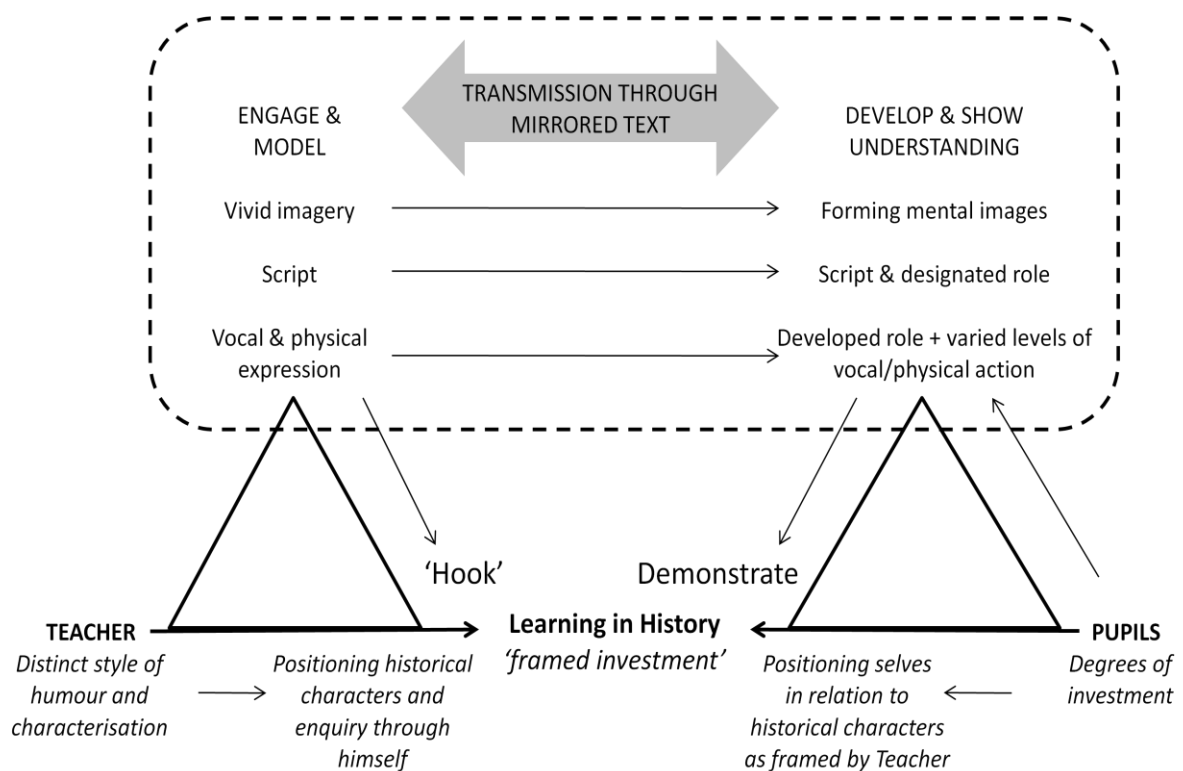


Figure 2 – a model describing the relationship between the tools and the goals

I conceptualise the transmission of curriculum knowledge and understanding as being through mirrored text – it captures the teacher’s original presentation of information and the subsequent reflection back of this by some pupils in their own verbal action later in the unit of work. I conceptualise the goal of learning in history as a ‘framed investment’, referring to the desire for engagement of pupils but with boundaries placed on the task by the teacher. In the scripted task, the teacher controls pupil involvement to a high degree – they are all required to participate and are given verbal and physical direction. This does not necessarily guarantee increased internalisation of the material or empathy with characters. This process of making personal connections is something that individual pupils cite they do themselves, albeit aided by the detailed, expressive descriptions given by the teacher. The teacher’s and pupils’ varying responsibilities, and this relationship to the learning process, are explored further in the next section.

6.5 Maintaining roles and responsibilities

This section discusses the potential for creative in-role work through the freedom of choice and personal assimilation of roles by the pupils. It also explores the potential tension in achieving role development by most or all pupils caused by confidence levels and perceptions of ability.

6.5.1 Freedom of choice in in-role tasks

In this case study, the teacher provides opportunities for pupils to consider the perspective of the people of the medieval period they are learning about. This is through an enactment of events and two simulation tasks: the Feudal System and the Trial. In each of these, roles are assigned and pupil dialogue and physical movement is framed by the teacher’s direction and the demands of the task. Over the course of the tasks, there is an increase in freedom for pupil choice regarding their verbal and physical action, although it is still limited by the rules of the classroom space and the scripted

text they follow. The transformation is concurrent with the gradual shift in the balance between teacher and pupil knowledge and understanding. As the pupils become more knowledgeable they are also afforded more opportunity for individual interpretation and expression.

In interview, I asked the teacher what might have been different if the series of lessons had begun with the Trial. He felt they would not have had sufficient understanding and the learning (of historical facts) might not have been as successful. This risk is understandable, although one might suppose that without the pupils knowing precisely what happened, certain choice elements of the story might be revealed gradually alongside what pupils might have invented within their own imaginations, to sustain their curiosity. This could risk the pupils being confused as to the 'real facts, but perhaps from taking on a character and internalising it on their own terms, instead of needing to remember what the teacher introduced as fact, their interest in the complexities of the story might increase. The fear of being wrong, when there is no definitive right or wrong, might decrease. The suspense of not knowing, if held for a little longer, could be a powerful tool, but it is potentially time-consuming and risky when the key objective is to 'know the story'.

In discussing this with the teacher, he was clear on his opinion on needing a depth of understanding beforehand, not just for understanding but also for engagement:

I think it's about building up a depth of understanding before they do something challenging and the more they are able to understand the more they are able to engage with it and get into that...it's just all different ways of getting them to think...from the perspective of the people who were there. (Teacher Interview B, 25min)

This is not to say that his approach does not attempt to induce a spirit of enquiry elsewhere. In order to advance the narrative right at the beginning of the unit of work, he invites hypotheses from the pupils as part of his description, for example, "which/who do you think...? Hands up if you think....Right he didn't actually..." (Lesson 1, 08:00). His phrasing and the allowing of pupil choice is in

contrast to the more closed questions observed at other stages in the lessons. Here the perspective of a single correct answer is even so strong that pupils often respond with a question, seemingly without confidence in their own knowledge:

TEACHER

What happens next, then, after the prosecution's given a speech? Laura?

LAURA

Are they allowed to ask the defendant questions?

TEACHER

Excellent.

(Lesson 3, 9min)

TEACHER

Where was the evidence that he really did believe in God?

About 10 hands go up

Marie?

MARIE

Is it...he wore the shirt of hair?

TEACHER

Right. When he died and they found him, underneath he had a shirt of painful hair.

(Lesson 2, 36:35)

In the Feudal System task the pupils are sat in a hierarchy with a 'King' on a chair placed on a desk. Below are two 'Barons', sat on the table, and four 'Knights', sat on a row of chairs in front. On the floor are the Peasants. This is shown in Figure 3 below (the image has been distorted to protect the identity of the participants). The purpose of the task is to understand the chain of command and

levels of power the feudal system created. The 'King' is allowed to give any order, such as 'everyone stand up and turn around' or 'everyone pat the head of the person next to you.' This order is repeated by the 'Barons' to the 'Knights' and the 'Knights' to the 'Peasants'.



Figure 3 - Pupils sat in 'Feudal System' pyramid, answering the teacher's questions

The pupils are not required to adjust their vocal or physical expression, nor do they interact with each other within a detailed fictional scenario, in terms of specifying location or time, or a specific 'problem' to be worked through. They are not required to create a background to their character other than accept the hierarchical label. The pupils are not fully themselves but not fully in-role either. They are given the power to act upon each other as the hierarchy suggests. The depth of characterisation and scope for imagined role is limited. But the point is still the same as discussed regarding the Year 9 Trenches work (previous section 6.4) – the connection comes from pupils acknowledging feelings of frustration or fear. They must make the connection between the task and the historical content in order to empathise.

The Year 7 class had played out an extension of this task: a 'Land Game' with slips of paper representing land to be bestowed, taxed or reclaimed requiring more interaction. The Year 9 class also did this when they were studying the same unit. I was not present for this lesson but it was described to me in interview by the Year 9 pupils with great excitement, even though two years had passed since that lesson. The Year 7 pupils also referred to it, without prompting by myself, as an influential task in developing their perspective:

Jane Well I really understood about the Land Game that we played because how the King kept control of the country by using land and that was a good way of learning it because we actually learnt though we'll actually do this stuff because we don't want to get into detention - it's like back then "We don't want to get our heads chopped off" so...

Researcher And who were you? Were you all the same person?

Elliot Yeah well there was one King and just a load of peasants but what happened is the King well we all started off with no land and then the King would give one person quite a large piece of land and then another person a smaller piece of land and then smaller and much smaller and then we had all these small pieces...it worked...

Jane But there was a downside to the game because they chose, the King and that chose to do the work they gave the land to their friends and not to the other people and it's like we all had one piece of land and then all their friends had two or three and we're all thinking...(laughing sigh) they've got a better chance of...

(Year 7 Pupil Interview, 17:45)

Limited lesson time and the business of learning History through a variety of lesson tasks does not seem to allow for full development of scenarios and therefore roles. Nevertheless, the pupils seem

to find some scope for relating to the work on a personal level, particular in their personal experience of allies sharing land amongst themselves.

If the importance in gaining empathetic perspectives is the embodiment (Wright and Rasmussen 2001), it is perhaps the lack of a firm link between the internal role and the embodied role that causes such experiences to be short-lived. The pupils themselves (in the Focus Group Interview) wondered at the lack of a reflective discussion on the Trial activity, such as they had experienced in other lessons to debrief the process. To suppose for a moment, such an occasion might have reinforced the underlying thought processes behind the roles, and given rise to further discussion about the nature of the trial and the power relations of the historical figures involved.

6.5.2 Personal development of role

The teacher is aware that each experience of an in-role task is part of a lengthy progression that may take years to reach fruition. In an interview following the Year 9 Trenches unit, he describes his overall sense of the progression:

My aim with them as we move through the year doing things like this would be that they get better at it, that they learn how to do that, and get better and better at it. So what I'd like by the end of Year 9 when we're doing, we'll do something on the Civil Rights and the end of this year we'll build up towards doing a similar thing with World War Two, we'll do some Civil Defence Planning. World War Two to do with bombs, we'll go into Holocaust, we'll do some propaganda planning and then in the last term we're actually going to do planning a protest and my hope will be that they will have practised doing in-role and group work and all these things so by that time they actually do get quite effectively into role. And you've actually...hopefully what sometimes comes out of that, like last year, is a split between violent and non-violent factions and a real kind of *emotional investment* in it, which goes along. Whereas this time the soldiers weren't massively invested and I had to remind them "are you going to

be happy with that?" but by the end of the year, as you practise it a bit more...It does depend on the class, though. ...It does depend on the class, though. I do have high hopes for this class but there are classes where obviously that never quite happens. But they still get more empathy than I think they have without doing role play.

(Teacher Interview B; 06:45)

The teacher is aware of his tendency to direct the action in drama-based tasks because there is "no time" for the meta-thinking and a pressing need to 'get on with it.' The pupils were not observed to take much initiative in their physical movement, standing still and reading unless they were required to move location. No doubt the presence of a script to follow is restricting in what can be done with the arms and also places pressure on the reading itself, requiring the pages to stay still and close to the eyes, before one discusses how script rather than improvisation sets a fixed agenda. Even the pupil audience did not need to watch the action as they had the text in front of them to follow. Nevertheless, within the first scripted task, the teacher controls from within the scenario, addressing pupils by their character name or referring to areas of the classroom space by the city or country they represent, suggesting maintaining at least some sense of imagined context is important.

Although short-lived, there is evidence that there was some internalisation of role by the pupils in the activities revealed through their observed external expression: the 'knights' smiled smugly at their land gains and two 'lawyers' high-fived when he was found guilty. One pupil even said that he really did "feel" as if he was trying to prosecute in the Trial, and this was at the point when there was the most scope for spontaneous responses born of 'real' motivation - when the scripted speeches ran out and the improvised interrogation (though structured in part by prepared questions) began.

6.5.3 Oracy - ability and confidence

The pupils are aware of the individual investment required to succeed in such tasks:

Elliot Well, there's three groups in there: there's
 people who try hard to do it -
Jane Yeah, other -
Elliot - People who are good at it but try hard,
 people who aren't good at it but try hard at it
 and then people who -
Gareth Can't be bothered
Jane Yeah, can't be bothered -

(Year 7 Pupil Interview, 34.30)

From interviewing both the teacher and pupils and in observing the classroom activities, there is a tension between perceptions of ability and confidence; between what is perceived by both parties as being the required versus the actual levels appropriate to the task. The teacher recognises the usefulness of more open-structured and subjective/experiential strategies with low oracy level pupils or pupils with less compliance to restrained classroom behaviour (in other words, to cite the teacher, the "rowdy" ones). However, the tasks are structured around public address in such a way that the teacher is compelled to ask for volunteers that are 'able': good readers, clear speakers and those who are prepared to write well, therefore it privileges those with certain literacy levels. The volunteers will therefore be those who believe they fit the criteria; if they incorrectly perceive themselves as such, states the teacher, another more minor role has to be found for them.

The pupils are aware of this and speak of their lack of confidence, mainly due to not knowing what the role would entail, again as if they had a pre-existing mould to fill, rather than create their own character. Once they had seen others do it, they then realised they could have had a go:

Gareth I think with these he said who wanted a big part
 but if you knew what parts they were doing and
 maybe there would have been more range of people
 because I expected Thomas Becket to have like a

big part but then someone like King Henry, he didn't do much in the play, just said some things and...

Researcher Does that make a difference to if you want to take part in something, when...?

Elliot You didn't really want to make a fool of yourself

Gareth You don't want to make a mistake

Researcher Is this something you could make a big mistake in?

Elliot You could muddle up your words, you know, but it depends how confident you are so...

(Year 7 Pupil Interview, 05:05)

Nevertheless, they recognise that the situation is more complex amongst their peers and that some might benefit from encouragement whereas others might not have the required skill-level to make a 'good performance':

Elliot I think you really need to have learnt it though. I think it's good that there are some people in the class who are happy to make a good speech but I think there are some people who also want to sit back and maybe it would be good if [Teacher] also said "No, look, you've got a big part, you need to get into role and maybe try a bit harder."

Gareth But then...

Researcher What do you think? Would that go down well? How would it make people feel?

Emma I'm not sure

Gareth I know there would be some people in the class where if they were to do a big speech they would do nothing because they wouldn't know where to start and I think..it's just like if that happened, and there were only four parts and they gave them all to people that didn't do anything...well, didn't concentrate, didn't do the stuff then I think it'd be pretty boring

because then they would just kind of mutter
their words...

(Year 7 Pupil Interview, 22:45)

The teacher is also acutely aware of confidence levels, preferring to give these pupils more time to prepare, or simply structure (script) the task even further. Giving more of the already precious little class time over to preparation not only privileges the more able pupils in moving further on in their role development (potentially lessening the confidence in the 'audience') but also unwittingly encourages them to overly script their own character. As a result, the supposedly live event they lose much of the spontaneity that can potentially help to draw on, and further develop, their understanding according to their own knowledge case and, encourage them to interact and respond to other pupils/characters 'in the moment', rather than enclose themselves in their own individual world. As the teacher's original aims for the whole class of entering the right 'mindset' and encouraging their analytical skills development, the purpose might be to have pupils working at their own level of ability and confidence but this may be to the detriment of their ability to draw on their understanding and defend or compromise their ideas in the face of others, despite the added pressure of engaging (i.e. not being dull or inadequate in front of – see Pupil Interview above) each other.

Figure 4, below, reveals the relationship between the rules of the task, the social rules of the pupil culture and the varying responsibilities (division of labour). Whilst the object to be worked on is the increased engagement with the historical enquiry, the demands of the tools within the task – of reading aloud a script and interpreting it with sufficient vocal and physical expression – causes tension. This tension is between the demands and the desire to invest, to take a full part in the task. The question mark indicates that those pupils who do not take a main role do not necessarily decrease or plateau in their engagement, but it does query their access to the empathetic experiences that those in the main roles cite. Indeed, the risk involved in taking on a more

significant, exposed role may inhibit or distract the pupil from the ultimate goal of increased historical understanding; hence the teacher's close framing of the tasks.

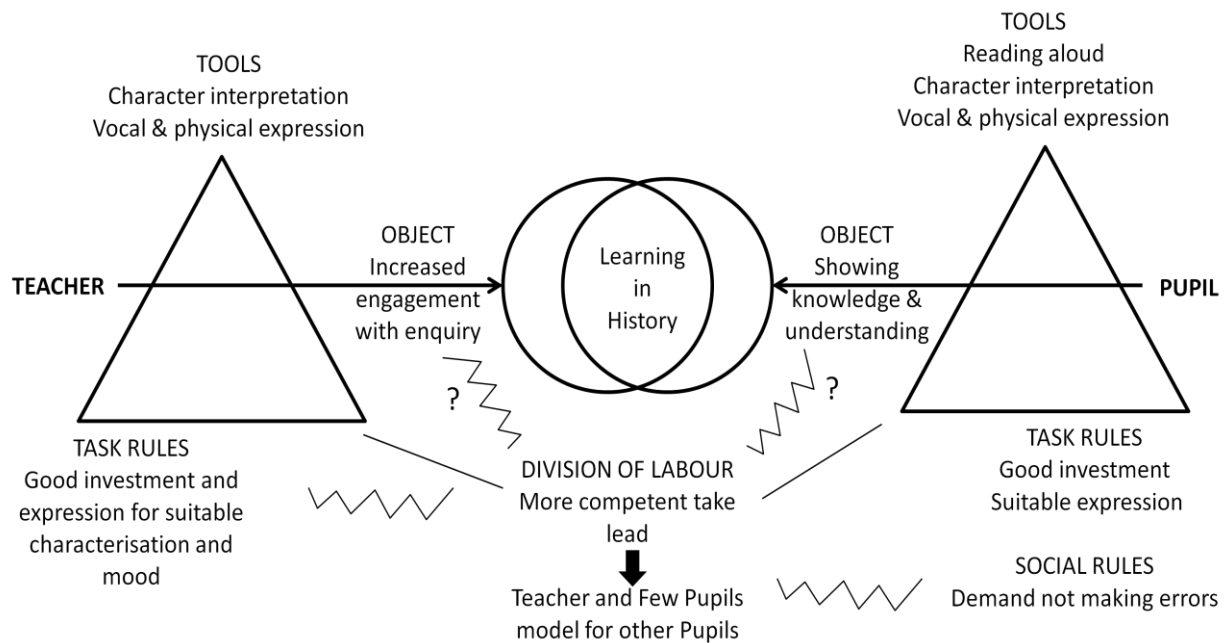


Figure 4 – a model conceptualising the relationship between rules, division of labour and object

6.6 Rules and social relations

This section expands on the discussion of the relationships between teacher and pupils. It focuses on the final Trial task where there is evidence that moments of spontaneity can unlock the potential for dramatic play between pupils. This does more than provide an entertaining experience for the watching Jury. It reveals that pupils can subtly and more overtly deploy communicative tools to respond to each other without script and attempt to manipulate the action and perspective of others. The courtroom setting, with its own rituals, also succumbs to the overriding classroom rules and the complex social culture of the classroom.

6.6.1 Social tactics exposed in the drama task

Despite the teacher's dominant position, a fascinating game occurs when the pupils are engaged in the Trial activity and are having to negotiate each others' standpoints. The laughter, mainly from Caroline and Daniel, plays some part in the undermining or reinforcing of power of individuals. From their first small outburst (see EXTRACT A, below), it is clear that laughter has protruded into the space as Andrew reacts noticeably by looking at them and back, twice:

[EXTRACT A]

The Teacher is reclining back in his chair, having chosen to tuck himself away behind his desk and with the Jury settled to one side, making notes. Andrew is stood behind the prosecution desk. He is reading in a small voice from a sheet of paper - his prepared speech. Everyone else is still. Barney sits in the Judge's seat, facing him, leaning over the desk, his head in one hand and holding a pen in the other, poised over the sheet in front of him, which lists the order of speakers. Andrew comes to the end of his speech.

ANDREW

13:40 (suddenly quicker and with rising pitch)

I find the King...GUILTY!

He punches the air and looks towards the teacher, who is some four metres away, still behind his desk. This outburst on the very last word of the speech is a contrast to the measured way he has recited the rest of his speech and it takes the listening pupils by surprise.

To our left, Caroline and Daniel half turn their heads to each other and smile, exhaling small giggles. Andrew's head turns towards them briefly, then to Barney, then back to Caroline and Daniel then finally to Barney. Andrew still has his arm in the air. Barney looks at him.

13:45

BARNEY

Thank you.

Even though he speaks politely, almost sternly, together with his small frame, he still has the unbroken voice of an 11-year-old.

Now it is the prosecution questions for the Knights.

Andrew lowers his arm and sits down.

Elliot pushes himself up from his seat next to Andrew and moves round the edge of the desk. He takes a breath.

13:50

ELLIOT

So...

Just after Elliot has made a series of accusations to which Fred has agreed, the comic responses seem even more purposeful:

[EXTRACT B]

FRED

(non-committal) Yes

14:10

ELLIOT

He pauses

(in a muffled and resigned voice bordering on frustration) OK, you're just gonna say yes to everything.

Elliot picks up his sheet and looks at it.

14:15

Caroline and David laugh out loud.

Fred smiles but he keeps his face fixed and his hands in his pockets, momentarily shifting his weight stiffly to the leg and back.

14:20

ELLIOT (cont)

(Picking up the sword and speaking louder again) Did you, or did - you - not, u-se this sword (brandishing it) to smash - Thomas - Becket's - head - into the chapel steps? (He keeps the sword pointing at Fred)

Caroline and Daniel's repeated laughter here seems to acknowledge Elliot's more purposeful attempt - through sarcasm - to publicly reveal Fred's own strategy of avoiding responding to the questions. Elliot here is trying to gain control of the examination. Fred then smiles. One might imagine that he would not wish to be mocked in public but perhaps it is better on the face of it to accept it and at least seem cunning in some way, and so he acknowledges Elliot's comment.

Later on, Fred uses physical comedy to try and undermine the power of the court by pretending to be a mere clockwork toy [EXTRACT C, below, 15:40] as if his trial is tiresome and repetitive.

[EXTRACT C]

15:30

ELLIOT

So why did you kill him?

FRED

Cos I was ordered to

ELLIOT

15:35

(Waving his hand down in front of him and turning back to his chair) That's it, thank you

BARNEY

OK, thank you

Fred turns to walk quickly with small steps to his desk but is stopped by:

TEACHER

Uh, wait!

Fred quickly turns and walks nimbly back to position. Elliot is also stood by his chair.

BARNEY

15:40 (Looking at teacher then forwards and calling out) Sit down.

Elliot sits and Fred turns in the same manner to walk back making show of being like a clockwork toy going round in circles.

TEACHER

Haven't you got the defence questions?

BARNEY

15:45 Oh, er, sorry (checking his list). It's...

TEACHER

(Interrupting) We don't have a defence lawyer here...

BARNEY

(Trying to improvise and keep control) Does...

Fred starts to walk back to his seat

TEACHER

(continuing) but we will let you tell us a few... (watching Fred) No, he doesn't want to. OK...

ELLIOT

15:50 (smiling) OK. Fair do's!

Caroline and David laugh, looking at Fred as he walks past

BARNEY

(reading from his sheet) Now it's the prosecu-...

TEACHER

(speaking over Barney) He doesn't want to defend himself

FRED

15:55 Oh no no! (half stood up again, his pointed finger raised, jiggling as if he needs the loo and calling out)

BARNEY

(looking at teacher and back to his sheet) Now it's the...

FRED

(calling out) Can I defend myself?

He is already moving back out to the front.

TEACHER

Shh

DANIEL

16:00 Hurry up then

TEACHER

(To Barney) Let him defend himself

BARNEY

(resigned) OK

Fred's almost rebellious actions serve to highlight the disparity between the orders of the teacher and the Judge even though Elliot manages to inject a final triumphant line (15:50) closely following the teacher's comic derision in the line directly before. Caroline and Daniel are still fickle in their amusement, although it is admittedly unclear to see whether they are more amused by: Fred as the clown or the Teacher as mocking narrator. Even though Barney then attempts to take control, the Teacher interjects, using a similar comment, to perhaps provoke Fred into seeing his error in not defending himself and into making a speech. Although seemingly successful, Fred does not give up

his informal approach, jiggling as a younger child might (15:55), but accepting the Teacher's power in being the one to give permission to speak. Daniel verbally joins the Teacher's mocking manipulation of Fred's action (16:00) before Barney, originally the one supposedly bestowed with the power, slumps and gives in.

In these two short events, there is evidence that the activity has begun to engage the pupils in a different experience to that of simply reading their prepared speeches, perhaps inadvertently moving closer to the teacher's aims of the analytical, experiential mindset. Their personal investment in the activity – both in terms of their fictional role and as a member of the class – drives them to use tactics to reassert their position as they try to defend their viewpoint. The pupils take cues from the teacher's tone and manner and almost seem to mimic their comic style, simultaneous with the teacher's own interjections, which suggest that although he has sat back to let the Trial unfold, he feels compelled to interject and reassert his own role in the classroom action.

6.6.2 The fictional and real judges

Even though the classroom has been transformed physically and the pupils have been given different roles, the Trial follows much the same rituals of key speakers taking their turn, other persons making notes, and a singular figure to direct proceedings. In terms of structure the format is perhaps even less spontaneous than an ordinary lesson might be where usually only the teacher is aware of the order of events. Ironically, in the spirit of medieval carnival, the teacher has supposedly 'de-crowned' himself and handed over responsibility to the 'Judge', however, two key factors already undermine this: firstly, the Judge has been given a list of proceedings by the teacher and secondly, the teacher is sat in their large 'throne' behind their own desk; rather like the sacred space behind a shopkeeper's till, one will be unlikely to cross that boundary and so the privileged and

secluded space remains with its assumptions of authority. It is not long before the teacher interjects to prevent Fred from sitting down, according to the 'ritual' of the scenario:

[EXTRACT D]

As Elliot begins to speak, Fred sits down on the chair

ELLIOT

Does King Henry shout a lot...?

13:55

TEACHER

Immediately interrupts him from his reclining seated position in the corner and raising his arm, pointing at Fred.

Eh!

Fred quickly looks left to the Teacher and stands up rapidly

This extract comes from the beginning of the Trial when the Teacher is keen to observe the rules of the 'courtroom' fictional space. He is then quiet but is also supported in keeping his authoritative position by the brief looks from pupil to teacher, perhaps either in a desire to be acknowledged for their good work or given a sign to continue, but both signalling to the teacher the pupils' acknowledgement of the teacher's superior position. By the end of Fred's (the Knight's) cross-examination, the Teacher is freely speaking over his temporary successor, fully regaining control of the action in a mocking commentary of Fred's incompetence as a defendant (see EXTRACT C, 15:48).

Conceptualising the relationships within the Trial scenario is aided by the following CHAT-based model (Figure 5). On top of the standard rules of classroom behaviour, the fictional scenario imposes a further formality. This is underscored and heightened by the pupils' social rules of being seen to do well and, in some instances, competitive one-upmanship. The responsibilities (division of labour) that come with each role are also in a notable hierarchy. Nevertheless, because a decision must be

made by each participant, the live event is, if only in a small way, acts upon prior knowledge to influence the decision-making.

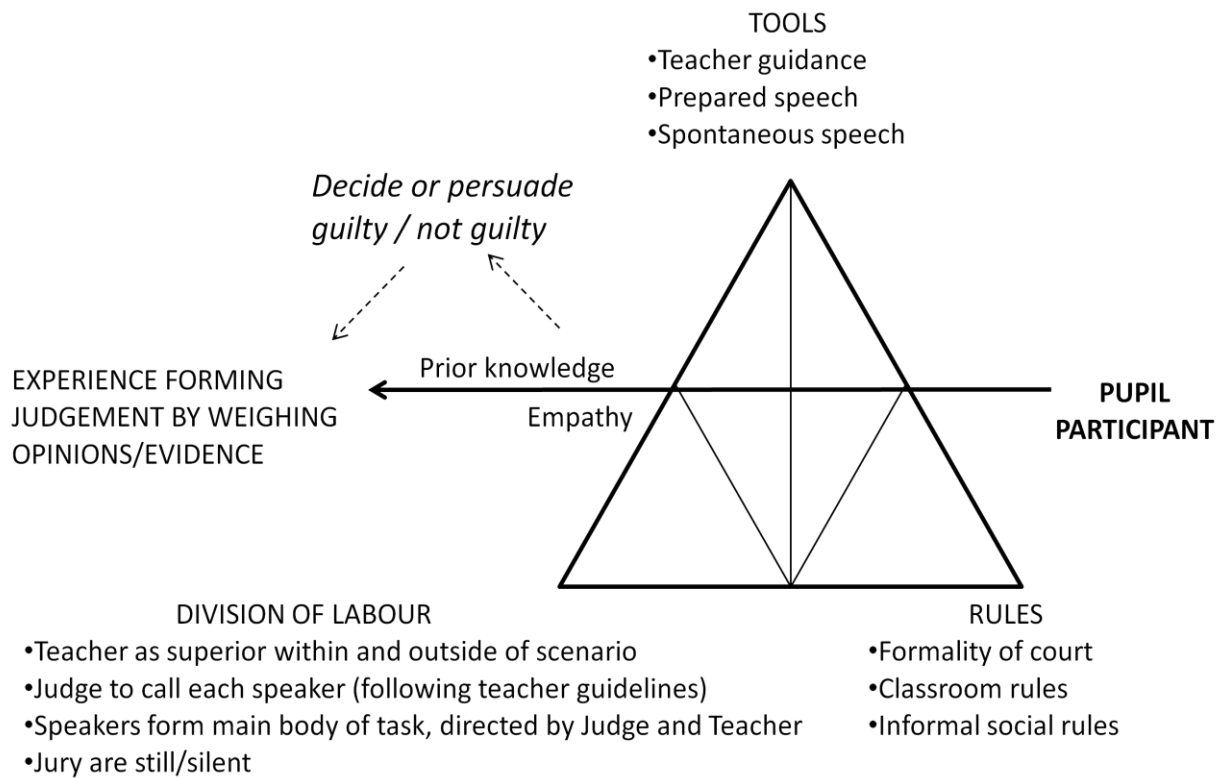


Figure 5 - Chat-based conceptualising of the relationships within the Trial scenario

There may seem to be little advantage to experiencing the Trial task if the teacher meant to allow the pupils greater control. The courtroom is still heavily scripted and controlled by the teacher: firstly the pupils are heard to directly quote the modelled phrases by the teacher and secondly the teacher interjects when he has already bestowed control to the Judge. Before the task began the teacher lectured the students on the procedure of a court trial, facilitated by the use of questions to elicit the correct response: "And what happens next?" Without any further discussion and reflection once the activity has ended, this confirms that the rules for the activity have been set entirely by the teacher, whereas there may have been opportunity in the same amount of time to set up the

scenario: in two days time there will be a trial; you need to decide how this will proceed fairly. In the pursuit of equality, the lawyers could be said to have had unfair advantage in their experience of the activity by being given extra time (40 minutes in the lesson previous plus additional homework time) and resources – books, and parental input – before their participation. In this way the ‘live event’ has already potentially become a scripted rerun and the pupils playing the jury are perhaps left to feel inadequate as they see just how much their peers excel as they sit in silent appreciation (or boredom).

The teacher’s authority and skill, both in managing behaviour and imparting crucial knowledge, is evident to the pupils:

Jane But then with Mr X he is serious in some lessons but when he is serious he’ll have a joke with it as well. He mixes the kind of...

Gareth It’s like more serious than joke because...because I think it’s good because discipline gets you into learning. If a teacher said sit down and that and you had people messing around, a) they wouldn’t learn anything because they’re messing around, not concentrating and b) they distract other people from learning so really when you have a teacher that’s good at discipline then everybody sits down quietly, everybody does what they’re told, then everybody hears and everybody learns.

(Year 7 Pupil Interview 10:00)

A pupil’s perspective of the teacher being the dominant source of knowledge is hardly surprising but to reinforce this perspective surely sets up a tension with the aim of opening their minds to other possibilities and questioning the evidence before them – the pupils may value less what they conclude themselves and more what they suppose is the correct answer as held by the teacher.

6.6.3 Spontaneity and dramatic tension

Perhaps what Figure 5 is not able to do as a CHAT-derived model is to clearly show the layering of the cultural action within the classroom culture as it exists across lessons and the action as particular to the drama task. In other words, what is particular to drama tasks that impact on action and relationships? To do so may require superimposing one triangular representation over the other. However, in doing so, one would need to distinguish clearly between the activity systems and it may be that this is equally challenging. Where does the 'real' role of pupil and the 'non-real' role of lawyer begin and end? Can the teacher as authority figure ever exempt themselves from pupil action? In his work *On the Problem of the Actor's Work*, Vygotsky (1932) similarly questions the work of the actor in firstly the actor distinguishing his own emotions from those of the character he is portraying and, secondly, recognising that these portrayals of emotion have a social consciousness with a mutual understanding of signs with the audience. If, as he relates to the work of Stanislavski, feelings cannot necessarily be generated at will, then they must reside in the world of ideas. This theoretical perspective suggests that the teacher's role is different to that of the pupil. The teacher is, as in the Trial task, concerned with the 'reality' of action – the action must conform to a preconceived ideal sequence of events, both how a court operates and the facts of Henry II's death. The pupils negotiate their own dual worlds of 'real' peer competition and the 'non-real' performance of court-room historical character, aware in both cases of the dual audience: 'real' teacher and peers and 'non-real' jury.

There is a sense of dramatic tension at the end of the Trial, caused by a real tussle between two pupils rather than a pre-planned sequence for dramatic effect on the audience. During the latter stages of Fred's interrogation, he and Elliot seem to be locked in a strategy game, framed by the nature of the scenario whereby Elliot's task is to successfully trick Fred into revealing his guilt and Fred to fend off the questions and prove his innocence. With their limited knowledge of the actual event, constricted by the nature of studying history and the teacher's own structuring of the knowledge in the preceding lessons, the game is now dependent on their own skills of interplay:

[EXTRACT E]

Elliot slams down the sword.

14:25

ELLIOT

Right!

Caroline and David both laugh and lean back in their chairs simultaneously. Barney looks up from taking notes.

ELLIOT (cont)

14:30

(Checking his notes but he is on a roll now) So you killed him. Did you have direct orders?

FRED

(looking briefly to one side) Yes

ELLIOT

(immediately and emphatically) I don't think so.

Fred takes one hand out of his pocket. He waves it vaguely in front of him

FRED

14:35

We heard him...say...

ELLIOT

(louder) Did he actually come up to you and say "Go and kill Thomas Becket?"

FRED

14:40

I...we were basically right next to him... (quieter) technically...

ELLIOT

14:45

No-o. Did he come up to you - answer the question honestly - did he come up to your face and say...no..

He has made a slip up so shakes his head and takes a breath in and a step forward on one leg

ELLIOT (cont)

14:50 Did he come up to you, to your face and say "Go and kill Thomas Becket"?

Caroline has her eyebrows raised and her mouth open. She swings back in her chair and forward again looking to Fred for his response.

FRED

14:55 (Leaning forward to Elliot, whispers) No

Fred steps back shifting his weight side to side again.

ELLIOT

So why did you go without proper orders?

FRED

15:00 Because we thought we did hear proper orders

There is a slight pause after Fred's immediate and brief response. Elliot looks down at his sheet again for the next question.

ELLIOT

15:05 So I...uh...I may be mistaken...

He looks briefly in direction of teacher then back to Fred

ELLIOT (cont)

15:10 ...is it true that you did not know the full extent of the situation between Thomas Becket and Henry?

Fred looks blank

ELLIOT

15:15 (In a less harsh tone, circling his hands outwards) I just don't see ho-w...just a Knight would know so much between...two royal people.

FRED

(raised eyebrows in blank acceptance of this) Yes.

ELLIOT

15:20 (Quieter, matching Fred) So why did you kill him? It's none of your business.

Elliot's hand gently turns the sword side to side on the desk. The dialogue becomes quick fire - as if just between the two of them, rather than for the benefit of the court.

FRED

15:25 Because he was ordering me.

ELLIOT

But he wasn't ordering you.

FRED

15:30 Well how was I supposed to know that?

ELLIOT

So why did you kill him?

FRED

Cos I was ordered to

ELLIOT

15:35 (Waving his hand down in front of him and turning back to his chair) That's it, thank you.

Each sticks to their tactics of Elliot's prepared questions and Fred's deliberately non-committal responses. Fred's confession is a surprise and draws attention from the other participants. The game moves to a different level, as Elliot has to try and develop his argument to prove the Knight was acting without orders. The pupils are now moving off-script and have to improvise and Elliot's nerves show in his pauses and stumbles (14:45). Fred rises to the challenge and employs the tactic of both

using Elliot's words 'proper orders' (15:00) and mimicking his non-verbal attempt at displaying power: the step forward (14:55). As Elliot explained later in interview, his role meant a great deal in proving how hard he had worked compared to how much or little others might do. Fred, however, had apparently done little preparation (he was also caught out by his partner's absence from the lesson) and so even though the scenario involved a contest, one might also acknowledge there was a personal game also to be played out. Unfortunately, both pupils only have the basic 'facts' to go on as acquired during the previous lessons – they do not reach for other possibilities, nor, perhaps, do they feel they could: to suggested an 'invented' history would be to get it 'wrong'.

The tension between the two is the closest the task comes to achieving real dramatic tension through suspense and the manner of their dialogue. The interchanges between the two become quick-fire and are at a lower volume (15:25), the two not taking their eyes off each other, suggesting they are less aware of the audience around them and fully focused on their objective. The teacher and other pupils are also not noted as making any obvious movement and watch the events unfold. Perhaps here, just for a brief moment, a liberated state is reached, where the normal structure of teacher direction, pupil single utterance and an acute awareness of others, is suspended.

In the context of the learning of History, the drama task would seem to 'play out' the process of exploring evidence but as a limited re-presenting of material already covered. The personal investment in defending a particular opinion maintains an engagement with the material and a reconsidering of the facts. However, it is the moments of spontaneity where the pupils are forced to make new connections and, crucially, confront each other in a social arena where new tactics, using a communicative toolkit, have to be deployed.

6.7 Conclusion

6.7.1 Conclusions from this case study

Despite evidence of some enjoyment and understanding within the tasks, the teacher's and pupils' concerns for ability and confidence can create tension and limit the desired embodied experience. The teacher senses a need to protect pupils from undue social pressure that may work against efforts to improve the enjoyment in their learning experience. Time and curriculum pressures also seem to encourage the use of scripted forms of in-role work. However, these seem to incur just as much a risk of 'getting the words wrong' as spontaneous improvisation might. The pupils are aware of, and seem engaged by, the teacher's animated comic style, for some of them even managing to mimic it at times when the power shifts minutely and briefly.

The relationships remain for the most part between Teacher and individual Pupil and the structure of the tasks and style of delivery can reinforce the teacher's dominant control of the pupils and action. However, there is evidence that moments of spontaneity can unlock the potential for dramatic play between pupils. This happens even in a tightly-controlled system, where pupils must scrutinise each other's verbal and non-verbal expression for a way forward. This may also be a moment of tension for the pupils on show, clearly creating exciting tension for the participants as co-actors and audience. The learning experience at these key points may move closer to the imaginative and innovative 'creative' state that O'Toole (2009) describes.

The dramatic form, with its spontaneity, use of space and objects, tension and multiple interpretations has the potential to counteract a simple transmission of facts and a renewed teacher knowledge authority. Sinclair identifies that the teaching of drama "demands an understanding of how to frame a situation so as to provide protection and permission, as well as dramatic tension and action, and managing groups in role and performance" (Sinclair 2009:10). With the pressure of limited time and space already in existence, one might question whether any 'creative' approach is

justified if the pupils are told that they need to remember and regurgitate that “A, B and C happened” but also that they happened “because of X, Y and Z”?

For the teacher, role play is crucial to developing the pupils’ ‘mindset’ of historical enquiry, as they make sense of evidence experienced through narrative or some participation in a related scenario, together with rational thinking. However, the teacher believes that developing pupil ability and confidence in such work is a long process, hence his close framing of tasks. Over the course of the tasks, pupils are afforded more choice regarding their verbal and physical action, although it is still limited. This is concurrent with the gradual shift in the balance between teacher and pupil knowledge and understanding.

Whilst one goal is to increase engagement with the historical enquiry, the demands of the tools within the task – of reading, interpreting and expressing – cause tension. Pupil investment can also vary, the pupils’ own sense of equality and democracy being of some importance to their valuing of the tasks and their peers. The risk of drama-as-tool is that it seems to expose and potentially heighten these already-present tensions.

The teacher’s original presentation is reflected back of this by some pupils in their own action later on. The teacher’s dynamic use of a range of vocal and physical expression is found to have a direct impact on pupils’ interpretation, positioning the historical events through frames that are the script and his own presentation. However, the final Trial task is evidence that moments of spontaneity can unlock the potential for dramatic play between pupils. Despite the ever-present authority of the teacher, it reveals that pupils can subtly and more overtly deploy communicative tools to respond to each other without script and attempt to manipulate the action and perspective of others, shifting the complex social culture of the classroom. Without reflection on the task itself, however, it is difficult to monitor or develop the pupils’ conscious understanding of how their interaction relates to their study of History.

To consider the broader question of creativity facilitated through drama strategies, this case study raises three key areas where educators may reflect on the limits and possibilities of the nature of drama strategies employed in the classroom:

Firstly, the extent to which pupils might be kept closer to the spirit of initial inquiry, rather than distanced from it, taking the risk to explore the narrative before the knowing of facts and facilitating greater internalisation through their imaginations;

Secondly, how far control of the drama task could be given over to the pupils in terms of how to innovatively use verbal and non-verbal communication (including negotiating their own conflicts within group work on how to present their ideas) to free the process of externalisation, and

Thirdly, ensuring the necessary critical reflection of the different interpretations of character or events put forward in order to highlight the dramatic and historical/analytical process, and to acknowledge the ever-present tensions between multiple perspectives.

6.7.2 Returning to the research questions

In the two case studies presented, drama is valued as providing variety and as an alternative form to reading and writing, often inserted before the business of attempting longer written work. However, whether or not it can be used at the beginning of a unit of work is debated by teachers, given that a certain level of understanding of the topic material is deemed necessary. It is worth reiterating that the teachers' gradual building of content understanding seems more conscious than structuring the drama task itself into distinct phases to gradually build the work. The 'scaffolding' of the learning process should consider both goals and tasks, however, it would seem that in practice, scaffolding is concerned more with gradually feeding curriculum content rather than structuring the dramatic

process. Assumptions are made about the ability of pupils to structure the drama process for themselves, which can result in very different outcomes, as seen the next two case studies.

On the other hand, both teachers and pupils are aware of the personal investment and focus required for a successful outcome of the lesson task. Pupils are aware of differing levels of confidence and investment, which can potentially affect the success in completing the task but also contributes to their developing relationships with each other as learners. Because of the social nature of drama-as-toolkit, these concerns are heightened or brought to the surface. The measures taken by a teacher to ensure investment in the task can vary. Teachers may feel the need themselves to build atmosphere and imagery or simply to maintain a role of behaviour management. The trust required and the social risks involved are keenly sensed, and so teachers and pupils may feel the need for a tight frame.

Crucially, the audience reflection and re-interpretation is sometimes assumed as an automatic process for the pupils, or teacher-dominated, or simply unnecessary if the ‘performance’ is the final stage of the task. This is at odds with recent research that would promote interpretation and evaluating as important to the learning process. Drama as a democratic and collaborative process may be misinterpreted as something an authority figure – in this case the teacher – has no part in. However, even in what are assumed to be pupil-driven approaches, the teacher’s structuring role is vital.

Teachers have different expectations of a pupil’s understanding of drama processes and mastery of skills. The teacher may overtly model for pupil replication, ensuring accuracy and yet hinder innovation. To the other extreme, the teacher may leave the brief open, encouraging free interpretation yet risking unfocused, unstructured action. As discussed in the literature on social interaction in classrooms, unpredictability and conflict can be a positive attribute but with risks involved. There are three prevailing issues here: the process of negotiating ideas with one’s

resources and others; the potential for spontaneity and understanding in the moment; the notion of drama as performance and the role of the audience.

In exploring the use of logical verbal and physical action, the pupils are sketching out, testing, their ability to effectively express ideas. On another level they are also at the 'scribble stage' of developing their understanding of concepts within the curriculum content. A teacher's superior and more enduring deployment of vocal and physical expression can both engage and model for the pupils. Through their own shifts in expression, teachers can create the required atmosphere or signal the required attitude to the human characters in question. At these points the teacher is the singular actor and the pupils are the audience. The teacher becomes their own resource for themselves, leading by example. Teachers might not consciously use the communicative toolkit in this way but it seems to leave some impression as the pupils occasionally mimic the teacher. Whether they are either encouraged to, or do so of their own accord, this can reinforce the teacher's authority. However, without structuring the process or modelling the practical application of communicative tools – in other words, how do it – the outcome is dependent on the existing abilities and confidence of the individual pupils with the tools. This is related to the problems raised by Mercer and others concerning the role of the teacher in modelling effective forms of talk, yet within a shared space. In considering the shifting dialogic practice, it would seem that the phases of 'teacher model – pupil action – teacher feedback' are still prevalent in teacher and pupil classroom talk. Rather than two distinct phases of teacher modelling and pupil reformulating, a solution may be an intermediate stage or space where both work co-currently.

The question of how far the drama task can be 'handed over' to the pupils within the school and classroom cultural frames continues to be raised. In both the Religious Studies and History classrooms, teachers maintain control of the drama task to ensure that the task will conform to the overall lesson goals and the designated time within a broader unit of work. Integral to the teacher's ability to guide the action are the classroom rules, part of established institutional rules for teacher

and pupil interaction. The teacher may direct or model the approach for the pupils to take, however where the teacher's input into the collective action outweighs that of the pupils, this potentially reinforces their role as singular actor in front of a pupil audience. The teacher may use framing tools – script, worksheet, modelled speech, and spatial arrangement – to structure pupil action and encourage investment in a less risky, less chaotic environment. Pupils continue to perceive the role of the teacher as knowledge authority and of managing the behaviour of peers for the benefit of achieving learning goals. Even when the teacher makes some attempts to step back, they remain influential in the learning process.

CHAPTER 7

GEOGRAPHY

‘Making sense of conceptions of culture’

7.1 Overview

In this chapter I discuss the function and process of drama-as-toolkit in a Year 7 Geography classroom. It investigates the possibilities for pupils’ developing understandings about human behaviour, cultural meaning and social change on two planes. Firstly, concerning the curriculum content, the pupils are coming to an understanding about the culture of a foreign country they are studying and how these unknown persons experienced change. Secondly, concerning the pupils’ own classroom environment, they are also operating under and developing understandings of how to effectively communicate with each other and how to negotiate the sharing and co-constructing of ideas. These ideas stem from the pupils reconciling given information with their own imagined perceptions.

I identify five distinct phases of understanding involving the pupils’ repeated engagement with their own consciousness & experience. This is an alternative to the concept that understanding is acquired and consolidated through the transmission of a singular perspective from teacher to pupils. The phases are:

1. The internal forming of perceptions based on new knowledge
2. An individual pupil’s own external physicalising and sharing of ideas
3. The negotiation and development with multiple others
4. Sharing a communal perspective with a peer audience
5. Listening/watching and responding to the interpretation of others; decoding and re-interpreting

Pupils are required to make logical choices about human behaviour, motivation and action. However, I argue that the spontaneous and potentially powerful 'lived experience' is polarised by a more functional concern for re-presenting curriculum content. Nevertheless, there are still incidental moments where pupils are forced to search for a deeper 'truth', spurred on by their own values of an imagined reality and the temporary shift to a collaborative belief.

The appropriation of drama-as-toolkit is revealing of the teacher's and pupils' values concerning the learning process. Required to work with the whole body as a medium of expression, pupils are forced to grapple with the distinction between concrete and abstract concepts. They exact their own performance standards for the generation of logical bodily action, both as actor and spectator. This is seen to tie in closely with their historically-developed views of the 'right' way to interact and knowledge 'truth', given their institutionalised context.

The pupils are given the opportunity to inhabit different spaces over the course of their tasks, and do so differently in each. As the pupils shift, so do subtle aspects of their interaction and their relationship to the business of learning Geography. I argue that, seen in this way, drama as a toolkit for assessment and consolidation still retains the potential for being dynamic. By 'dynamic' I mean that pupil perspectives can change. Where 'representing' may be viewed as a poor relation of 'experiential' – experiencing in-role - , there are still identifiable moments of transformation.

7.2 Case classroom in context

The school is an independent (fee-paying) school for boys aged 7-18 and enjoys a long history of over 500 years. With approximately 700 pupils, it occupies one site near the centre of a small city in the south of the UK. Although one school, the Junior School (7-11yrs), and the Senior School (11-16yrs) along with the Sixth Form (16-18yrs) are separate communities. This day school describes itself as operating in three parts: pastoral, academic and extra-curricular. The school's most recent

inspection report places its provision as 'outstanding' with examination results well above the national average (Independent Schools Inspectorate 2009). In 2008, the GCSE results were 99.8% A*-B (the national average being 34%).

Entry to Year 7 – simultaneously referred to under the traditional name of 'Second Form' – is selective, by testing and interview. In order to offer the broadest possible curriculum, based on but not strictly adhering to the National Curriculum, science subjects are taught as a carousel in this year, and Drama alternates with Design Technology halfway through the year. Drama is not taught formally in any other year and pupils will only experience school drama through involvement with extra-curricular plays or musical productions, unless it is incorporated into the subject lessons.

The forms are mixed ability and so the pupils take most of their lessons together. They also have fortnightly tutor periods. There are 23 pupils in the class and many, though not all, have come from the Junior School.

The classroom is on the third floor of a classroom block built in the 1990s, flanking one side of the main playground courtyard. The ceiling is double-height and huge windows on two sides allow for a well-lit, airy space. On a third side there is a desk for the teacher in the corner, facing the pupils, and a large white board with white projection screen above. The desks are arranged in two layers – an inner table for 6 pupils and single outer horseshoe for the rest. There is a spacious depth of 3 metres between the desks and the whiteboard, from where the teacher conducts some talk or where the pupils present. The teacher is also able to move freely around the large space to the back of the room and in between the rows of desks.

At the other end of the corridor are two rooms of the same large proportions that have been knocked though to form one large seminar room. It is here that Drama lessons, play rehearsals, other large group enterprises, and the final lesson of this unit of work take place.

All lessons of 40-50 minutes in length were video and audio recorded and field notes made during the lessons. The teacher was interviewed on two occasions prior to the first lesson – once regarding her general teaching practice and experiences (Teacher Interview A) and again more specifically regarding the unit of work (Teacher Interview B). The teacher was then interviewed together with her Head of Department (Teacher Interview C), who was also observed for four lessons. A group of 5 pupils in this Year 7 case study were interviewed in the lunch break after the final lesson (Pupil Group Interview). 6 pupils also returned a written questionnaire (see APPENDIX B).

7.3 The unit of work and the teacher's developing practice

Although the department is not required to follow the National Curriculum for Geography, it is useful to highlight here the key aspects of the Key Stage 3 syllabus in order to understand the broad learning outcomes the teachers are working towards. In Figure 1 (below), particular aspects that are relevant to this unit of work are the requirement for pupils to: develop 'geographical imaginations' (1.1), understand the process of human activity that leads to change (1.5) and appreciate the difference between people's values and attitudes (1.7). In the context of this study of drama-as-toolkit, curriculum content that has a ready focus on human behaviour would seem to welcome lesson tasks that are equally based on social interaction.

KEY STAGE 3 GEOGRAPHY – KEY CONCEPTS

1.1 Place

- Understanding the physical and human characteristics of real places.
- Developing ‘geographical imaginations’ of places.

1.2 Space

- Understanding the interactions between places and the networks created by flows of information, people and goods.
- Knowing where places and landscapes are located, why they are there, the patterns and distributions they create, how and why these are changing and the implications for people.

1.3 Scale

- Appreciating different scales – from personal and local to national, international and global.
- Making links between scales to develop understanding of geographical ideas.

1.4 Interdependence

- Exploring the social, economic, environmental and political connections between places.
- Understanding the significance of interdependence in change, at all scales.

1.5 Physical and human processes

- Understanding how sequences of events and activities in the physical and human worlds lead to change in places, landscapes and societies.

1.6 Environmental interaction and sustainable development

- Understanding that the physical and human dimensions of the environment are interrelated and together influence environmental change.
- Exploring sustainable development and its impact on environmental interaction and climate change.

1.7 Cultural understanding and diversity

- Appreciating the differences and similarities between people, places, environments and cultures to inform their understanding of societies and economies.
- Appreciating how people’s values and attitudes differ and may influence social, environmental, economic and political issues, and developing their own values and attitudes about such issues

Figure 1 - Key concepts of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3 Geography (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 2007)

The Unit of Work focuses on Nauru, an island in the South Pacific known for its economic boom and bust. The island’s decline stemmed from the discovery and over-exploitation of phosphate reserves and the subsequent rapid spend of income. The initial lesson tasks build a sense of narrative and the people involved through descriptive accounts of the island and its recent history. Drama Task 1 links this narrative to broader geographical concepts. The lesson tasks then shift to a more discursive approach, debating ecological and economic concepts and issues. Drama Task 2 brings together both descriptive and discursive elements, chronologically charting the main events and experiences of the inhabitants in the country’s history.

LESSON ZERO	<p><i>(one lesson before half term, not observed by the researcher)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher reads a descriptive newspaper article about Nauru and its exploitation. • The pupils underline key phrases.
LESSON ONE	<p><i>Goal – to revise and engage with the events; form an opinion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupils read aloud the same descriptive newspaper article as revision. • The pupils stand along an ‘opinion line’ (the space in front of the white board) showing how far they agree or disagree with the exploitation. • They look at a satellite image of the island and make written notes.
LESSON TWO	<p><i>Goal – to understand key concept and further imagine the island</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama Task 1 - Mime – Two boys are given 10 minutes to prepare two mimes that represented a key concept (given by the teacher) that related to their topic of study – in this case ‘the over-exploitation of natural resources’ – to be then guessed by the rest of the class. • They listen to a radio broadcast describing the island.
LESSON THREE	<p><i>Goal – to revise events and form an empathetic, creative response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupils are required to sort statements and images into chronological order and stick them into their books. • Their homework task is to write a poem about Nauru.
LESSON FOUR	<p><i>Goal – to understand and weigh the pros and cons of exploitation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst sticking an information sheet into their exercise books, a few pupils read aloud their poems. • The teacher and pupil discuss for and against a motion concerning the island’s exploited phosphate reserves.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupils write a paragraph justifying their support for either. Two pupils read out their statement.
LESSON FIVE	<p><i>Goal – to consolidate learning and deepen understanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Drama Task 2 – Group improvisation</u> – In the fifth and final lesson the pupils work in groups to represent scenarios in the island’s history (such as transporting goods by railway and the workers’ poverty) The groups present to the rest of the class and analysed to deduce ‘what is happening’: once at a frozen moment during the piece and then at the end of each group’s presentation.

Figure 2 – The content of observed lessons

The teacher is in her first fully-qualified year of teaching, having joined the school as an NQT. Her teacher training involved some workshops that explored the use of drama strategies, and it is mainly from these that she has drawn her ideas for lesson tasks. She teaches both History and Geography but as her training was in Geography she feels more confident incorporating drama strategies in these lessons. She believes her own practice to be informed and supported by her department which shares diverse practices and design new works, her teacher training and her own learning experiences.

Classroom drama is valued by the teacher as having diverse functions. Again, this is as much informed by previous experiences as the demands of the curriculum. In the first interview she refers to achieving variety, engagement, focus and investment, enjoyment, multiple interpretations, and empathy. She also believes in the need to have a baseline understanding of a scenario before being able to creatively portray events – to “act it out well” (Teacher Interview A). By striking a balance of more mime than dialogue she also believes that a participant’s understanding is deepened as they more consciously have to find gestures to convey what might be more easily explained with speech:

Because you’re up out of seats and I like that. We’ll have done a lot of work on this by then so they should have good enough background knowledge to come up with something good. So it will make them think about their group...the effect of that group...how they can actually communicate that in a way that is different, I suppose, by acting, and I feel that that will really consolidate their knowledge. And I think

by the end of these two weeks (smiles, almost laughing) they'll know a lot about Nauru. And I just think it's good to get them doing things. They really enjoy it - especially as Year 7s - getting up and acting. I think they really enjoy that sort of thing. So it's as long as I'm doing it constructively...

(Teacher Interview B, 20:40)

The teacher describes how she feels she has a better relationship with this class because they respect her "trying different things". In interview, the teacher pondered a previous unsuccessful practical activity with another year group that she believed may have suffered from a lack of preparatory work and planning, and described how the Nauru group improvisation task should work better because of the longer build-up of knowledge and understanding. She also talks of keeping spontaneity in her own teaching and of trying new approaches.

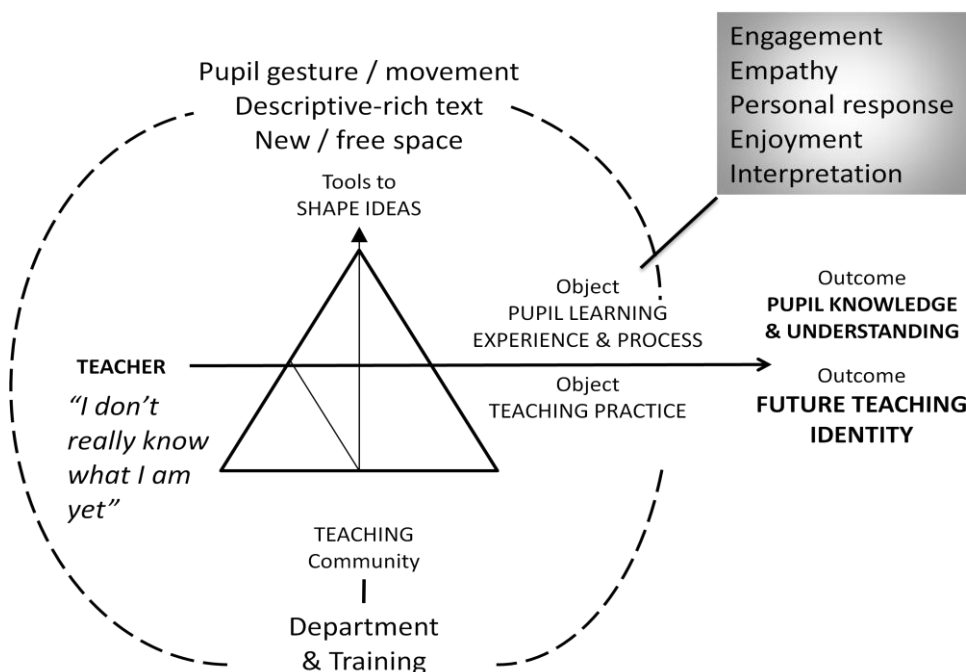


Figure 3 - Model conceptualising teacher's goals and widely-informed practice

Figure 3 (above) helps to show the way the teacher's previous training and current context inform her ongoing experimentation with tools. She is keenly aware of her own developing practice as a

teacher and the gradual building of a teacher identity which she is not able to classify yet in her second year. As she says, “I don’t really know what I am yet.” In contrast to the Religious Studies teacher reflecting on a career-long development, and the History teacher developing a departmental ethos, her experimentation is caught up in her own journey as a new teacher and whether these tasks will remain part of her own practice. However she reveals a similar concern for the pupils to engage on a personal level with the curriculum content.

7.4 Internal perceptions and external physicalisation

In this section I discuss the process by which the pupils form perceptions of the culture they are studying and the manner in which they physicalise their ideas. Without personal experience of the Nauru culture they are studying, the pupils must reconcile the factual information presented to them with their own experience of social types and interaction. This forms a hybrid version of their own and a foreign culture but one that also concurs with their peers, given their common context.

The goal to achieve a deeper understanding of the context resonates through the other desk-based activities in the series of lessons: poetry is described by the teacher as having the potential to be “profound” and she asks the pupils to visualise the radio description. This suggests that the desire for a closer, more imaginative association is already embedded in the teacher’s pedagogy alongside the value of drama strategies; an understanding of her students’ own cultural context of multi-layered texts (Engeström 2005).

I argue that given the structure of the unit of work and the material they are presented with, the empathetic process begins earlier than the drama task and is firmly part of the developing internal understanding. The pupils are then challenged to make logical sense of the imagined scenario they are given or decide upon. The actions used in their presentation are informed by their understanding of a) their own world around them, b) the Nauru culture as constructed by the previous resources

and c) what their peers will interpret – i.e. their commonality of sign system within the realm of communicative tools.

7.4.1 Mastering Empathetic Tools

Figure 4 (below) helps to show the cyclical nature in which empathetic tools are appropriated during this process. The pupils are presented with information about the culture and they translate this into an imagined version in their own minds in order to make sense of how the people referred to in the historical account (might have) acted or reacted in the way they did. This contributes to their developing understanding of the culture.

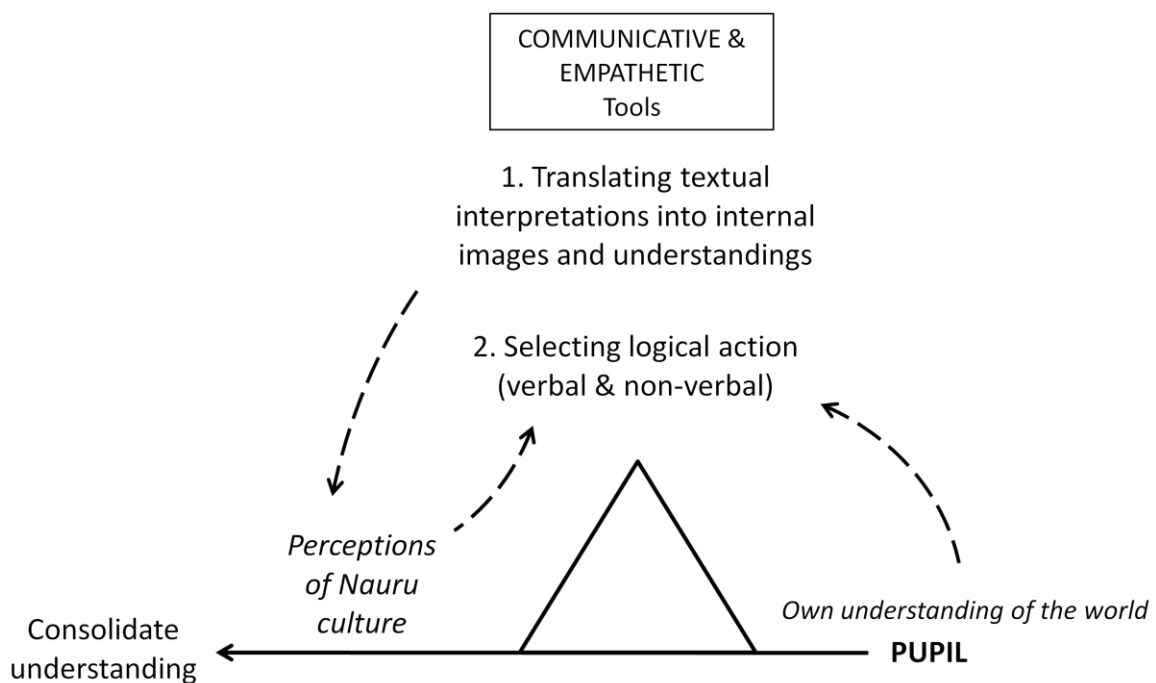


Figure 4 – Pupil process of working on perceptions of culture

With only a few lessons to learn about a foreign culture, the pupils are in possession of limited information, delivered via the teacher who is the knowledge authority. There is limited space to explore plural meanings. The variety in interpretation comes from their reconciling this limited

information with one's own personal perspective of human interaction, through one's own voice and body, creating these hybrid versions.

In the following event, the teacher (referred to using the pseudonym Miss Rowell) visits the two pupils (pseudonyms Isaac and Max) who have been set the task (Drama Task 1) of miming the concept of 'over-exploiting a natural resource'. Just before she enters, the teacher has been discussing what the words 'corruption' and 'exploitation' mean with the rest of the class. The ensuing dialogue reveals a concern on both the teacher and pupils' part for logical action and the interpretation by the audience.

LESSON TWO (2min15sec):

MISS ROWELL

02:15

Right. Do you understand what you're doing?

ISAAC

Yes

MISS ROWELL

So first of all I've written you out a...

She teacher refers to the slip of paper she has given the boys with a simple phrase: 'Over-exploiting a natural resource'

02:35

Over exploitation is therefore if you're overusing something. But remember we talked about other different types of natural resources as well. So water, min -

ISAAC

- Minerals

MISS ROWELL

Yeah

ISAAC

We're going to do an example of minerals...

MISS ROWELL

OK

ISAAC

02:45

Cos I'm going to start mining...

MISS ROWELL

Ye-es

ISAAC

Then he's going to be like a businessman on Nauru ...then he's going to -

MISS ROWELL

- Is it obvious where the money comes from?

ISAAC

02:55 Yes. When he...when I mine he's going to pick up some stuff put it in his pocket and start spending.

MISS ROWELL

You might...you could think a bit more...you might need to make it quite obvious to them...just do that, but also think of a back up...So will you try and think of another scenario -

ISAAC

03:15 - Well, can we use props?

MISS ROWELL

She pauses

(cautiously) Mmm...like what?

ISAAC

Well, just like a slip of paper -

MISS ROWELL

- Yeah -

ISAAC

- or a pencil...and you can just give it...

MISS ROWELL

03:25 Oh right, yeah.

ISAAC

- and pretend that it's money.

MISS ROWELL

They might not realise that's money though. It'll be really hard.

MAX

03:35 ...(inaudible under teacher) down and then I pretend to buy them...

MISS ROWELL

Well, you think about it now. You can do one scenario and you could do another one so it could be a different resource if that helps. But really make it obvious because they're all gonna struggle; they're gonna think "What on earth are they doing?" So, where would the money come from? Maybe you need to build something to have an exchange thing.

ISAAC

Sell jackets as some props

03:55

MISS ROWELL

But will they understand what the jacket is?

MAX

No-o

MISS ROWELL

So just have a think about it. I'll give you a couple of minutes, all right?

MAX

What I think we should do is mining.

The noise from inside the classroom is heard as the teacher opens the door and steps inside, shutting it behind her.

ISAAC

I'll be the miner and...then...what should you be?

MAX

Well, you could try...bringing...you could do this...if you wrap something...

04:10

ISAAC

(suddenly brighter) I've got some money in my po- po- ...wallet...that you could use. So they understand but if you give me mon-ey...it's my money...

The teacher makes an attempt to generalise the concept of over-exploitation by reminding the pupils of other resources that exist. The pupils, however, quickly locate their understanding within the more concrete situation of the story have been reading and hearing about. The pupils seem to have latched onto the idea of a businessman and hastily describe their chosen narrative. The teacher hints at hoping for a different interpretation, however, instead of telling them not to do it, she asks for another version, a "backup" (02:55).

The teacher also encourages the pupils to be very clear with their gestures and she emphasises the tough challenge for the audience in understanding the mime. She seems unsure, perhaps even discouraging, about their use of props but allows the pupils to operate in their chosen way whilst challenging their suggestions. Whilst the teacher tries to focus the pupils on her intended use of gesture and movement as communicative tools, the pupils feel they need material objects, even if they are representational rather than the actual miner's sack or businessman's money. To the pupils, the essential action is the business transaction of buy and sell. It is how to logically mime this transaction that then preoccupies them after the teacher departs.

7.4.2 Scribble Stage

In trying out actions that may be diffused into the final performance or rejected, the verbal sharing of ideas seemed to be matched by non-verbal interaction as part of the 'scribble stage' (after Lowenfeld & Brittain 1975). I use this term with dual purpose: firstly, and quite simply in terms of the task they have been set, they have not preset the structure of their presentation but test the action with and for each other as the piece evolves. This does not seem unusual, although at the time it provided a stark contrast to the structured teacher talk and individual responses taken place within the classroom they had been temporarily permitted to leave.

Crowder (1996) identifies such 'interwoven gesture-talk' as being potentially significant in helping pupils to shape subsequent language and that pupils using in-the-moment non-verbal gestures (as distinct from more prepared describing) do so in the same intimate space around them, rather than proclaiming to an audience. This is evident in Isaac and Max's simultaneous improvising of their actions as they plan their narrative. Even though Isaac dominates the sequence, Max is able to physically join him in building the scene (04:55) They are also able to quickly discover what does and does not logically work, making adjustments in who is representing what and how (05:10):

The term 'scribble stage' relates more widely to the concept that in a child's educational development, actions are tried out without full understanding. The pupils' actions may be experimental as much in the development of an adequate use of the drama toolkit as in the development of their understanding of Geography concepts. They have a limited understanding of both what they are to show (the abstract concept of over-exploitation) and a limited understanding of how to show it. Nevertheless, it can be an example of the capacity for new knowledge and understanding to be generated.

The opportunity to build visual images is important to their developing skills of physicalisation, considering these pupils will be using them again in Drama Task 2, but the tool also features in their co-construction of meaning with each other. The two pupils are observed showing their ideas in gesture form rather than solely verbal explanation. In the paired mime, the two boys, Isaac and Max, do this, simultaneously communicating their developing ideas for the narrative whilst using the drama tool. In the extract below, Isaac physically shows Max his ideas for their mime, accompanied by short phrases and pauses that indicate their ongoing spontaneous construction. Max's clarification of the meaning of Isaac's shocked expression through quoted speech "It's gone" suggests (and confirms with his partner) that he is aware of the capacity for physical gesture and facial expression action to directly replace it.

LESSON 2 (7min47sec) :

ISAAC

Just go...

Mimes taking money out of wallet

And then once you've done that you go back to where you've been chopping down the wood and go...

Mimes realisation of depleted forest, open-mouthed, holding up hands

MAX

(quiet but mock cry) 'It's gone!'
(back to normal tone) OK, and...

ISAAC

And then you walk over there and you sit down and go...

He crouches down with his back to the wall, in a begging fashion.

The two actors come to a co-constructed understanding of what relevant narrative and gestures and movement might be successfully interpreted by the audience. They have to select what content from what they have previously learnt about the culture would be relevant – mining, a businessman, poor workers (they later show a lumberjack). With no further knowledge of the culture and in order to make sense for their peers, they then have to marry this with elements of their own culture – the businessman trades with a wallet of money and the worker sits on the pavement like a homeless person begging for money. A shift is also evident as the two pupils experiment with the scenarios they have created. Once they have established a scenario, they begin to add moments of detail and emotion such as shock and despair.

Their characterisation reveals a degree of empathy – an understanding of how these strangers might feel. However I do not classify it as a spontaneous lived experience as they are planning in advance what they *will* do in the future presentation. It is not the focus of the task to generate emotional meaning for the audience in the presentation. In the same way one might play a game of charades, the focus is primarily on the selecting of appropriate signs (facial expression, gesture) to indicate shock or despair. These in turn perform the function of suggesting a depleted forest, a result of over-exploitation. Nevertheless, rather than simply miming the cutting of trees, the pupils chose to form a narrative that involved human consequences, which is perhaps more tangible than the symbolic representation of inanimate objects. They are negotiating the problem of the actor's work as discussed by Vygotsky (1932): of consolidating their own emotional perspective with the social signs to be shared with the audience.

TEACHER

(hastily) - it could be phosphate, we don't know that yet.

BRIAN

Well, ... And uh he's giving it to the boss who's giving him money and he's trading it for a phone and eventually he's squandered all his money and he's looking in all his pockets to try and find some cos he doesn't have any and eventually he goes down to begging on the streets and doesn't have money...

14:45

TEACHER

OK, so you've described what's happened, really well actually, so that means (turning to the actors) you've achieved your goal really well, but what is the concept that is being mimed here? You've done a really good description, Brian, of what happened, but what's the concept that I have given them, that I wanted them to mime? Luke?

15:05

LUKE

Exploration?

TEACHER

Explor-?

LUKE

Exploration?

TEACHER

Exploration?

LUKE

Well, uh, the, uh, thing that, uh...

15:15

TEACHER

Do you mean exploitation?

BOY

Yes!

TEACHER

Um close, but not just that simple, it's a bit more complicated than that.

2 boys still have their hands up

I'll give you one more guess and then we'll watch it again. Gareth.

GARETH

Is it the...um...

He looks at the white board, which other pupils then do.

15:30

TEACHER

Don't get too distracted by what's up on the board.

Isaac walks across to the white board and waves his arms in front of it.

GARETH

Was it, like, sort of exploitation? And sort of like corruption?

TEACHER

Honestly, don't get preoccupied by what's up on the board.

She stands up and crosses her arms in and out, gesturing towards the board.

15:50 Isaac gets his blazer and holds it up over the teacher's writing.

In asking "What do you think was going on?" (13:55) the teacher highlights the narrative content rather than drawing attention to either the concept or the emotions of the characters. However, by emphasising "do you think" (13:55), she reiterates the possibility that there might be more than one interpretation. Even though Brian correctly identifies phosphate mining, the teacher interrupts (14:45), eager to then dissuade Brian and the rest of the pupils from making too close a link to Nauru. The pupils, however – both actors and audience – make the connection with their present topic of work rather than their broader study of the world. The actors are praised for a clear, readable mime (14:45), as if they themselves have become a resource, a tool for other pupils to watch and test their understanding on. The teacher remains in possession of the 'correct' answer (15:15) but because this also lies with the pupil actors, their position becomes more authoritative. This is typified by Isaac's move to cover up the white board (15:50) – physicalising the teacher's instruction to the rest of the pupils not to dwell on it.

The effect this has on the classroom activity is a shift in division of labour. The actors – Isaac and Max - are still operating under the teacher, attempting to successfully portray the concept. They are also operating for the teacher, becoming a 'living resource' to test the pupils understanding from the teacher's talk on exploitation and corruption. Thirdly, they operate alongside or on behalf of the teacher, empowered by their knowledge of the phrase.

The pupils' grappling with the idea of the concrete and the abstract was touched upon in their focus group interview. We discussed the usefulness of practical tools in bringing a sense of truth to their

group scenes (Drama Task 2). The pupils felt that props were beneficial but they did not all agree that the audience would find it impossible to believe in an action if the inanimate object was mimed rather than actually carried by an actor. One pupil – Carl – linked this difficulty to their dealing with abstract concepts in a more general sense:

Isaac You can't say ... cos then you could pick it up here
let's say. Let's say you placed it there then you'd
move your hand when you picked it up again. It
would move.

Carl (surprised) What?

Isaac Then people would think...well, it was there, you're
not holding anything, it was actually there when
you picked up something from over there

Carl (quizzically) What?

Researcher You want proof that you've picked something up?

Isaac Yes.

Michael But do we need...?

Carl I think it's just a mindset. When you've got
something concrete, as with everything, it's harder
to believe something that's nothing..
(Isaac and Michael talk over each other)

Researcher - Carl...

Carl It's ideas and concepts. Anything that you can't
actually touch or feel. It's like um particular
ideas and ideals you want some kind of concrete
reassurance...something there...

(Pupil Group Interview 06:30)

The drama task of externalising ideas by physical/bodily representation presents a challenge of how to signify meaning to an audience who may not accept the logic of one's own interpretation. The risk involved is trusting that the viewer will also enter into the same spirit of collective belief for the purposes of the exercise and accept a more abstract or symbolic representation. The success of the task mostly depends upon the common knowledge of the actors and audience – knowledge of the content (Nauru's history) and of the types of characters and interactions (buyer and vendor, manager and worker, mining, purchasing, begging). In this task, the pupils, directed by the teacher, focus on identifying the narrative and matching this to the selected definitions they have been told. They search for the correct connection and answer that the teacher seeks having witnessed the fixed

interpretation of the actors. What the actors' interpretation – their physicalising – might suggest in terms of viewing these characters or events in a particular way, or identifying their emotional response, is not reflected upon. There are subtle elements of deeper consideration of human behaviour but these are consumed by a more pressing need to fit the practical action to the acquisition of factual knowledge.

7.5 Negotiating ideas with those of others

This section chiefly concerns Drama Task 2 in the final lesson and the ways in which pupils interact and share ideas in their groups to devise improvisations. Here I discuss the third identified phase of the process of developing understanding, as exemplified through the pupils' study of Nauru and appropriation of their communicative toolkit.

Figure 5 (below) highlights how the first two phases (see p213; also discussed in 7.4) take place across the space between teacher and pupil, whereas this third phase predominantly concerns the interaction between pupils.

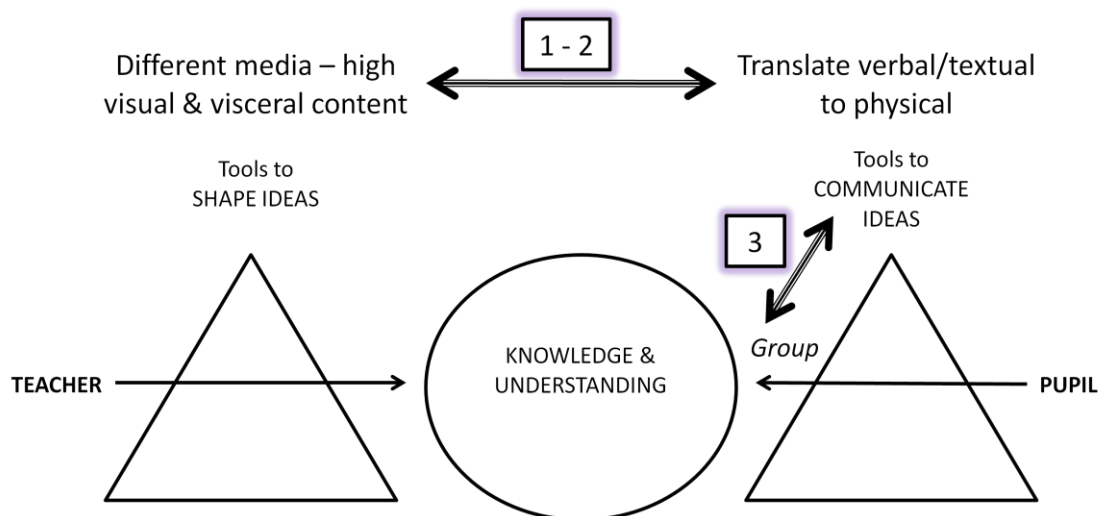


Figure 5 - Model conceptualising the first three phases of the process

7.5.1 Hierarchies

During desk-based tasks the teacher is observed talking to the whole class and then engaging individual pupils in a direct question and answer pattern, which contemporary students have become accustomed to (Crowder 1996). The teacher selects who is to respond and when, and decides for herself when to add additional praise to the pupil for their response. The praise is a frequent occurrence, suggesting a conscious effort to further encourage the pupils; however the structuring of questions may serve to reinforce the perspective of teacher as all-knowing, only giving reward for the 'correct' response. At their desks, the pupils themselves have little interaction with their peers, save for odd periods of chatter or sharing bookwork. Very occasionally pupils are able to attract the teacher's attention by talking directly to them but are mostly reminded firmly of the 'hands up' procedure.

When the pupils work in groups they are liberated from the structured verbal interaction procedures and the communication structure appears to change and they are then required to find other ways of making their ideas heard. Whereas pupils are not normally given the same rights to question or to interrupt (Clarke, 1992), within the group drama task, pupils are suddenly given the freedom to engage without supervision. They are observed to talk over each other, sharing their ideas with whomever would listen and resorting to physical force (hitting, pulling, leaning into) to gain the attention of others¹. Alternatively, leaders emerged and some other pupils conceded control, preferring to agree and comply whilst occasionally injecting their own ideas. This is more apparent in the paired mime between Max and Isaac:

LESSON 2 (06:00) :

MAX

And then that's it...

ISAAC

¹ This level of interaction may be partly due to the single sex education context. A student teacher at a girls' school that I visited (but not a case study school) expressed how she had noticed more physical contact between girls at that school compared to other mixed schools she had been in.

And then, (louder) and then, after that, once you've taken them away, you turn around..

MAX

(slowly and quietly) Ye-ah

ISAAC

You pick up...I'll...so I'll...I'll give you the wallet...for that part... you pick up the wallet, you open it and you're like... He mimes looking through the wallet

MAX

(venturing) And then I..

ISAAC

And then you go "Where's the money?"

MAX

So basically..

ISAAC

Yeah

MAX

(smiling, almost gushing) OK, that's...really good

ISAAC

And then we walk back.

MAX

Ye-ah. We could try the logging

ISAAC

Yeah. Because we could just go pashussch, tsch.

Mimes logging.

And we'll just carry it like this.

Mimes, taking large steps away.

In focus group interviews in other case studies, the pupils elaborated on this, describing a preference for teachers who set clear boundaries within which the pupils have freedom of expression as opposed to less structured environments when pupils can clash and disrupt, making collaborative tasks unsafe or risky for personal ideas to be shared. Nevertheless, although the pupils had an

Isaac, one of the pupils who had taken on the director role, who related that he had said to the others in his group: “you have to do this and basically if [you] don’t follow it from the beginning it’ll completely become a mess. And everything will become a mess” (Pupil Group Interview, 08:30). Their own sense of a need for structure and clarity seems to be an underlying motivation in taking on this responsibility.

Initially, most members of the (5 or 6-member) groups speak at once, though often break off into pairs or threes in order to be heard, or perhaps because their ideas are more in agreement. Some individuals attempt to enforce their ideas simply by speaking louder or repeating the same phrase over and over as in this example from Group 2:

LESSON FIVE (14min55sec):

SID

(shouting to the others and pointing to his right)
That's the audience. That's the audience.

He starts to mime pick axing some phosphate but his opinion is challenged by Dexter who continues to face the other direction.

SID (cont)

That's the audience!

Sid seems to only have this reply. Dexter walks over.

DEXTER

No, no...

SID

That's the audience!²

This extract highlights an understanding of dramatic conventions. In this event, both boys are of the opinions that one should face the audience or at least be able to show clearly what one is trying to

² The pupils were working in a corner of the space and so in actual fact it was unclear at that point what exact direction the audience would be in.

convey. Their actions are no longer for the sake of their own externalising or for the communication with others. It now has a sense of purpose of working towards a performance event.

7.5.2 Collective understanding

Transmission of meaning is not just verbal/aural but visual and kinaesthetic, which occurs socially (Kress et al 2005) and the pupils in this case study demonstrate their capacity to express their ideas non-verbally, even replacing the need for lengthy verbal utterances. Once away from their desks, pupils are observed using their physicality to both gain attention from peers and ignoring others, or even walking away, to signal their lack of interest. Just as they are able to 'read' images as an audience, during the group improvisation activity pupils are also seen to spontaneously interact non-verbally, sharing and agreeing with ideas by mimicking the gestures:

LESSON 5 (06:50):

KEVIN

(shouts) Tai can be the chief!

He throws his hands into the air.

Not speaking, the rest of the group follow suit in an unsynchronised Mexican Wave, leaping and smiling.

In coming together, pupils are faced with the possibility of conceding their ideas to others' or rethinking their perspectives. Whereas in desk-based tasks they relied on verbal transactions, here they tussle for space, dance across it or move out of it. Working and communicating in such a way facilitates the sharing of and reflecting upon ideas external to oneself. However, tension occurs within group work when these externalised actions are blocked, ignored or suddenly changed. This might not seem different to a verbal disagreement, however it is the ideas for physical action that are directly at stake given that this is the primary medium for communication with the audience.

Individuals are therefore perhaps more aware, and protective, of their personal contribution to the collective effort. Some pupils were determined to remain focused on their own interpretation and their own individual role, at least initially until they were forced to concede to others. The groups sometimes operate in sub-units of pairs and threes of common interest or agreement, where the whole group is initially too large a unit to support such diverse ideas.

In groups – divided across four equal quarters of the room – the pupils carve out their own personal or paired space to develop their roles, positioning chairs to create the environment around them – perhaps to solidify their role, create something as ‘real’ as possible (encouraged by the nature of the task and demands for clarity) but also perhaps to stake their individual claim to some part of the performance space. Even without being told explicitly by the teacher to emotionally and physically immerse themselves and their audience in a semi-fictional world, pupils hold their own values of drama conventions up as markers. The pupils are forced to struggle with the concept of the abstract, in other words, what constitutes as believable in the eyes of the audience. They grapple for material objects, favouring props and furniture to build their imagined reality.

The following event is from the final lesson, half way through one group’s devising process:

LESSON 5 (07:40):

NEIL

(proclaiming) This is my private jet

He arranges more chairs

SID spots an opportunity as NEIL looks away for another chair. SID leaps forward and sits in the second chair holding an imaginary wheel:

SID

No, this is *my* private jet

NEIL

No, this is my private jet

He does not attempt to remove SID but arranges another column of chairs next to the first.

Other boys in their group approach the new space.

NEIL is still moving chairs at a fast pace

NEIL

(whining) Guys, this is my private jet, damn you!

No one visibly reacts, although DEXTER who is nearby decides not to sit down.

'My private jet' seems to become a metaphor for the subjectivity of their own ideas and knowledge and having a voice to extend their creativity and demonstrate their understanding in the communal space. Verbally they put forward ideas either as hypothetical statements "We could..." or as definitive statements in the present tense such as "You go there and I..." or "This is a..." In doing so they seem to be aware of a - socially more acceptable - democratic approach to take into account the ideas of others whilst also wanting to include their own ideas. They encounter an internal dilemma in placing their own self within the external boundaries of social expectations.

Verbally sharing ideas is not satisfactory given the short time to devise a piece for presentation; hence the miming of ideas happens simultaneously. One of the rules of the task is clarity, hence the need to draw on common frames of reference. They seemed to be divided in the issue of abstract and concrete representation. Group 1 lay out a whole train in chairs, with miners scrabbling under the tables for (school) bags of minerals, even though they realise they could not be seen by the audience. And yet one boy becomes a crane for hoisting the bags. Group 2's 'businessman' is pushed forward on a chair to be his car and yet one pupil, crouched over as an inanimate object, represents the stock to be sold. The pupils fall into different responsibilities in their groups and although working towards one single performance in which they were all to be involved, they are not necessarily equal in their contribution.

Figure 6 (below) helps to demonstrate the interrelationships between the communicative tools, social and task rules, community and division of labour. Both the rules of the task and the social

rules inform the appropriation of tools. The development of understanding about the Nauruan culture and making meaning in relation to the pupils' own cultural experience depends on their common frames of reference. The 'community' in this respect does not only mean those pupils and teacher present but is much wider, relating to the references they have accrued over their young lives. The division of labour is dependent on the pupils' social negotiation of a collaborative structure. This collaboration involves pupils taking own differing degrees of leadership or compliance to further the work of their group. They may also keenly feel a need to impress their own ideas for physical action in the final performance piece, hence an added incentive to demonstrate, physically, their ideas. Each pupil's ownership of the task is therefore in a state of flux and the collaborative activity of the pupils in the final performance masks a more complex and uneven process of negotiation preceding it.

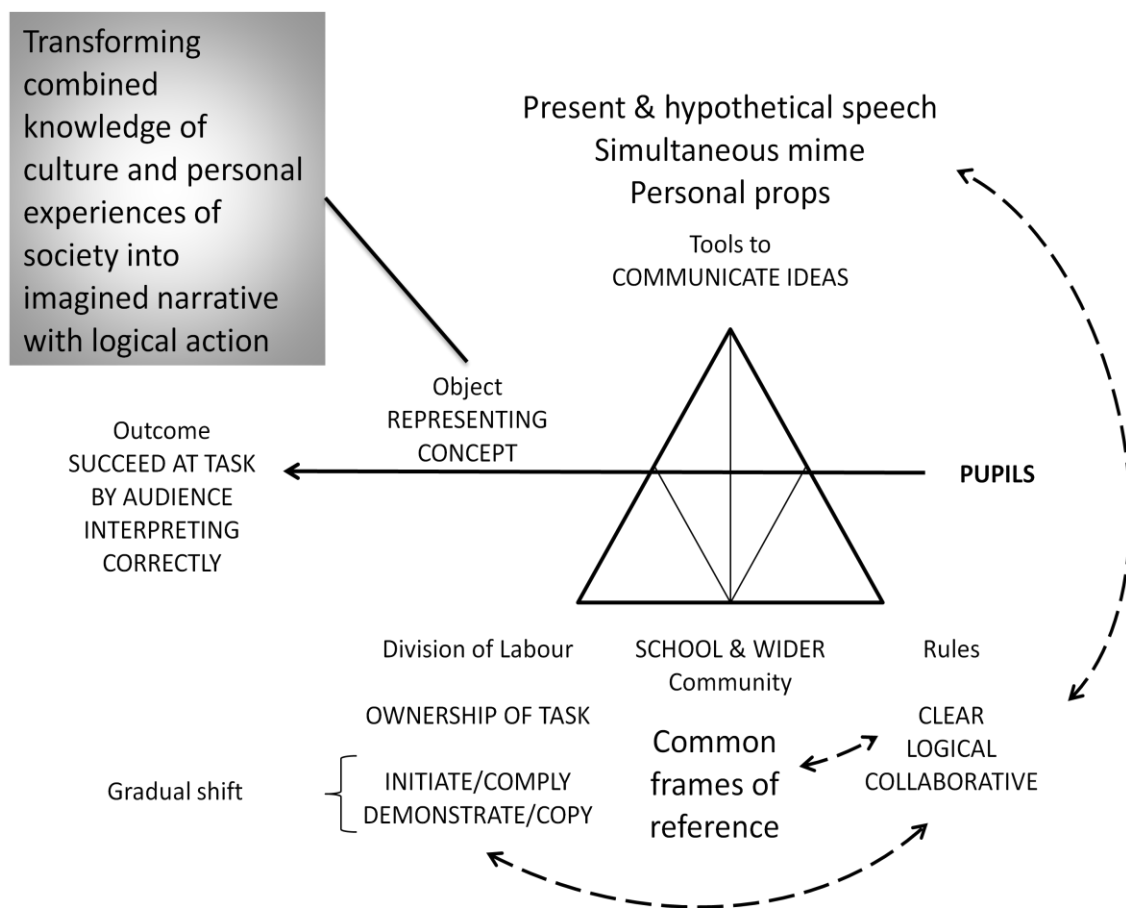


Figure 6 – Interrelated tools, rules and division of labour

Two issues still remain concerning the learning process: firstly, the teacher's goal of firstly stepping back and encouraging pupils' interpretations that are independent from the teacher's view; secondly encouraging varied and personal empathetic responses. These are addressed in the final section where the discussion focuses on the presentation of the groups pieces and teacher-led debrief.

7.6 Sharing with an audience

The analysis of the presentation and subsequent discussion of group pieces raises three issues regarding the dramatic event and the co-construction of knowledge. These issues are: teacher as authority figure, authenticity and the coming to fixed and/or new understandings. Each is discussed in turn in this section, exploring the fourth and fifth phases of the process.

7.6.1 Teacher as authority figure

I argue that the historical role of education institution as knowledge provider works against individual efforts to redistribute responsibility for knowledge construction. Along with the inherited assumptions about the role of the institution comes the role of teacher as knowledge authority. For pupils, who experience this first hand by entering the education system from an early age, their deep-rooted belief is that the teacher knows more about the content to be taught but also that the teacher authoritatively decrees the way this factual content is to be transferred. The result of this status quo is that despite attempts to hand over responsibility to the pupils, such as through drama-as-tool, the teacher is still assumed to be a very powerful force in the learning process.

During the creation of the group scenarios for presentation, the teacher visits each group once to check their progress, yet spends interim periods stood a few metres back, surveying the room from her own space. This appears a more conscious effort to present herself as literally 'standing back'

and allowing the pupils “more freedom” (Teacher Interview B). In the focus group interview it becomes apparent that the pupils are very aware – but also very appreciative - of the teacher’s attempts to allow them space to express their opinions whilst still making sure that they are on the ‘right track’:

Michael She didn’t sort of speak out saying “This is wrong or right” It’s “This is what you want; this is what I’d do”

Isaac Yeah, she never goes “Ok that’s completely wrong”. Well, unless it’s a fact.

Carl Yeah

Isaac Like this is Oceania

Carl Yeah

Isaac In stuff like this she’ll go (higher pitched & slightly sing-song voice) “OK, this is your idea, this is what I’d do”

Michael And that’s what you can do

Sunil I think she’s trying to push us to the right way but in a way that isn’t making us realise...kind of just helping us along -

Isaac - Cos basically -

Sunil - to the right thing.

Isaac - the road has two lines (he outstretches his arms) and say we go onto the other one she’ll come and push us (he diverts one hand towards the other arm) back on course.

(Pupil Group Interview, 10:18)

The pupils see through the teacher’s façade of there being no right or wrong. This is not because the teacher does not make a significant attempt but because a) they have a more deep-rooted trust and belief that the teacher’s role is to nudge them on the ‘right path’ and b) from their experience the teacher also cannot keep up her act for long. She must call them to order, to decree which groups will perform in which order and be the central discussant afterwards.

It remains the role of the teacher to call forward and start and freeze each group piece, and the teacher manages the subsequent pooling of interpretations, affirming the likelihood of each one and moving on to the next individual pupil. After both the paired mime (Lesson Two) and the group pieces (Lesson Five), the teacher's key question to the pupil 'audience' is "What is happening?" Pupil's tentative responses – "I think..." "Is it...?" "Um...that they...they're probably"...– follow the teacher's implied intention that a description of the narrative was required. They select appropriate examples of characters and events from their previous class work but did not develop the discussion of the scenario further than this. This means that the function of the drama task becomes a recall and matching exercise. They are seemingly not meant to see this culture in a new light, only to recognise what they already know as fact.

Being a lone figure, the teacher can only manage one response at a time in the discussion. This returns the post-presentation discussion to the individual transaction, the IRF sequence, of desk-based tasks. The teacher's affirmation of responses – "Yes...Well done...They do look like...Could be..." suggests an attempt to level herself with the pupils as an equal member of the audience, however her positioning as the one asking the questions and her ability to pass judgement still placed in a more powerful position in relation to the rest of the pupil audience. I argue that this still undermines the pedagogy of choice that the teacher attempts to create throughout the unit of work.

If the type of questioning reaffirms the requirement for a 'correct' response it the pupils are perhaps mindful of demonstrating their own abilities to the teacher. This position and the nature of the questions seems to have given some pupils a sense that their knowledge and understanding could be or was indeed being assessed, on top of contributing more to the understanding of their peers. With this perspective it might be easy to disregard the task as being anything but a revision exercise. However, the demands of the task in terms of drama-as-toolkit to encourage empathic perspectives hint at some possibility for new understanding.

7.6.2 Authenticity within the dramatic event

In setting up the task in the final lesson, the teacher makes a brief reference to expectations of dramatic form. She uses some terminology of 'role' and 'performing' and 'acting out' but the pupils are not required to reflect upon their intentions or experiences as actors or audience. This potentially places drama-as-toolkit alongside the other teaching strategies as an empathetic task, rather than becoming the object to be worked on with goals relating to verbal and physical expression and audience response. The teacher does not lay down any detailed instructions for undertaking the task or how to structure their time. However, she does reinforce the importance of 'thinking what their character was doing' and perhaps having something they are doing to indicate who they are because the action would be frozen and the "other people watching" would be required to read and understand the image "like a photograph" (Lesson 5, 05:30).

Authenticity in this instance refers to both the logical action chosen by the pupils (discussed above) and the reinforcing of a communal interpretation of the culture as initiated and approved by teacher. New understandings are possible but they are subtle and buried because they are concerned with individual pupils' characterisations. In interview, the teacher expresses a desire that the pupils will not perform types but with the exaggerated characters described in the article and the lack of time or focus on developing individual roles, superficial 'types' – downtrodden worker, fat businessman, and so on - are perhaps inevitable. These types do in fact appear in the final lesson presentations, seemingly reinforcing the transmitted material of the original newspaper article. Does this mean that drama-as-toolkit has been unable to shift from Freire's (1970) 'banking' education metaphor? I argue that there is some shift as in the act of physicalising, pupils are still required to transform the information. It is the simple principle of role-play - to act as one thinks the character logically might.

New and empathic understanding in this case occurs in the third group to present. In this improvisation, John is playing a father whose son repeatedly complains of hunger whilst John works

his shift in the mine. John speaks softly to his son, patting his shoulder. When his son dies John cries over the body, although this prompts some laughter from the audience at the heightened emotion in the scene. The rest of the piece concerns typical visitors, drivers and managers the pupils have read about in the previous lessons, which makes the personal narrative stand out as something new. The post-discussion picks up on this and two pupils in the audience offer their suggestions for why John's character ended up suffering the way he did. John has also brought his own understanding of a caring, selfless father figure to this perspective through his own choice of vocal and physical expression. The historical events now have a new significance in identifying the consequences for individuals.

Social change 'agency' is not an explicit part of the Geography curriculum. However, a pupil's empathetic reading of the world involves being able to interpret and understand connections with their own experiences. It is a skill of Geography to be able to think critically and the pupils engage in a discussion of possible causes and effects on a human level when they are required to variedly interpret human action. The process has still occurred in externalising the internal – both by actor in their devising and performance and by the audience in their sharing of interpretation. This makes public, makes social, what is previously individual and private. In order for it to be public it must be authentic to be acknowledged by the other participants in the event. In this way the learning process becomes a place of social transaction. However, as discussed next, the interpretations are limited.

7.6.3 Fixed interpretations and new understandings

By the teacher asking 'what is happening' I argue that the pupils are diverted away from the social change potential of the drama and directed to deciphering logical gesture and movement. It becomes a game of charades. Pupils are used as 'living resources' – as new descriptive text – as tools for generating multiple meanings and new sources to be interpreted for each other. However, the

phrasing of the discussion closes down the meaning rather than opens it up. Who is 'most right'? What is closer to the 'truth'? Rather than asking what the body movements or gestures might make the audience think differently or what the audience are surprised by, the ultimate meanings are fixed. In the questionnaire, pupils were asked if they thought that working in-role allowed them to show their knowledge and understanding. Those who responded 'yes' were asked to say why and wrote the following, indicating a clear link between physical/visual representation, transmission of accurate internal understanding, and recall.

People will know that you have understood the part you're playing and if you show it well it will get stuck in their minds and they will know it too

You act the way you think it is supposed to be and it shows weather [sic] you have the right ideas

Everyone can see what you are doing, making things easier to explain

(Pupil questionnaire responses)

Another pupil also responds:

Q.14 What do you think are the main reasons for using activities like these in subject lessons?

Getting the thing you are trying to learn stuck in your mind

(Pupil questionnaire response)

The performance event requires spontaneity as none of the groups had reached a fully fledged or scripted and rehearsed piece for presentation. Nevertheless it still becomes more a vehicle for showing fixed impressions, than generating new ideas. In terms of the placing of the task at the end of the unit of work, they are coming to know a fixed way the culture is being presented and to a fixed understanding of the culture within themselves. Therefore their communicative tools become modes of re-presenting their increasingly communal perspective rather than making spontaneous empathetic decisions or challenging perceptions.

However, there is still potential for new and spontaneous interpretation despite the fixedness of the content and decoding of the action on a superficial level. In the same questionnaires, although a limited return, five out of six pupils said they did not realise something they had not previously thought of, whereas one boy wrote that he “learnt [by acting] it was more realistic instead [sic] something I’d just heard about”, hinting at a new empathetic understanding.

In the final lesson, one group are given a scenario to improvise that covered a previously unstudied concept. They demonstrate their ability to cope with new knowledge at the point of creating and improvising, or at least incorporate knowledge gained from outside of the subject lessons. The teacher briefly explained the gist to this group once the improvisation task was underway.

I’ve never told them about subsistence farming before that lesson and at the end he... just gave a perfect answer of subsistence farming, which had clearly sunk in during the lesson but it was something new to him that they’d never done before which suggests as long as they get the right information and time to think it through and arguably maybe that would be difficult if there’s one of me and lots of groups of them, but it still was beneficial dealing with something that was a new topic.

(Teacher Interview C)

The acquisition of new knowledge is valued. When drama tasks function only to consolidate, then it is not valued as contributing to new learning. The pupils’ perceptions of such tasks make a distinction from what they seem to believe they ‘should’ be achieving in the lessons. As the teacher expresses to another class, she believes that there is no value in using practical or drama-based tasks if they are not taken seriously, but it might also be argued that pupils are unlikely to take it seriously if they feel there is no value in doing so. As we discussed ‘learning through drama’, this pupil focus group’s response explicitly comments on the value of the tool as consolidating:

Carl: I guess you have to...if you think...I think you couldn’t do something like that every week it would have to be a lot less often. Maybe not even every two weeks. Because whilst on the one hand you want to do things like this to enjoy it, if you did it all the time or more often you wouldn’t get

any learning done. So you have to strike a balance.

Researcher: So you're not learning during this lesson?

Carl: You are but it's kind of different.

Isaac: A recap.

Carl: Yeah. It's recapping what we've learned rather than going ahead

Isaac: What we've done. We're learning what we've done but not learning anything new.

(Pupil Group Interview, 24:00)

This adds to the view that the pupils' value of this process in the context of their overall learning is influenced by their historical institutional context. In this case, the pupils are only a few weeks away from their first formal testing (end of term exams), placing emphasis on recall and assessment, and heightening the pupils' awareness of what they have acquired as factual content during the series of lessons. Isaac reveals the tension bound up within the term 'learning'. Whilst pedagogical approaches such as involving drama can be useful and enjoyable, learning is more about the acquisition of new facts. New understandings of the culture are possible through empathy and reconciling ideas with logical physical action. However, for the pupils, this making sense is past the point of learning.

7.7 Conclusion

7.7.1 Conclusions from this case study

The teacher is acutely aware of the potential of drama-as-tool for unstructured, unsuccessful use, which prompts her to create a safer space of serious focus with positive encouragement. In her early teaching experience her approach is to incorporate a range of tasks and resources as several steps

towards a broad preparation for a drama task. The empathetic process begins earlier than the drama task and is firmly part of the developing internal understanding.

Their social and task-based communication relies only partly on verbal exchange, whilst movement across physical spaces and gestures form a greater part of demonstrating their own ideas or signalling compliance with the ideas of others. Released from the teacher's control of interaction, pupils seeking feedback from peers or continuing along an individual route until the group falls into a workable hierarchy, contributing to the dynamic rule-making for peer interaction. In both drama tasks pupils are more at liberty to share and collate ideas than they are in their desk-based activities, although the suspension of social rules and regulation of verbal communication leads to some frustration and conflict until they settle into hierarchical roles that facilitate decision-making. Nevertheless, the teacher's control and structuring of interaction is never distant – spatially or temporally.

The actors have to develop their ideas simultaneously with practical solutions based on a mutual understanding of signs. In presentation, this is co-current in a live act with the audience interpreting the signs, as well as the spontaneity of the actors and the reflexivity of the audience being co-current. The pupils' actions may be experimental as much in the development of an adequate use of the drama toolkit as in the development of their understanding of Geography concepts. Interpretations of the culture are fed back to each individual pupil throughout the process as they work together to make sense of each scenario.

The collective activity has the potential to feedback a collective understanding to the Teacher, but if the individual pupil is initiated to respond, and a single view recognised as 'correct', this process may be undermined. In this collaborative and performative process, the teacher's structuring of the task in accordance with their own aims for the topic to be studied still gives the teacher knowledge authority.

The teacher's aim to use drama as a tool for engagement and to add variety to her teaching seems to be valued by the pupils and they recognise the role she takes on for herself of facilitating, moulding and guiding with some attempts to step back. Although the use of drama task could facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and understanding, in this case the way the drama tasks are adapted and incorporated into the unit of work makes it more of a toolkit for consolidating and assessing.

The capacity to both let go and take up responsibility and control (both for pupils and teachers), to embrace the as yet unknown rather than the 'right' way, is a significant challenge but a possibility. The statement "you act the way you think it is supposed to be" (Pupil Questionnaire), reveals not only a surface belief in the limited value of drama tasks in this context but also, perhaps, a more embedded belief drawn from their historical experience of a learning process based on teacher to pupil transmitted knowledge. Nevertheless, the learning practice does change in the pupils' physical meaning-making reconciles their current world view with the new culture in question. There are temporary opportunities to develop new knowledge and understanding – to explore drama's transformative qualities - even though without proper reflection it might remain subconscious.

7.7.2 Returning to the research questions

For both teachers and pupils in all of the case studies thus far, drama tasks are not necessarily considered a distraction in curriculum subject lessons but must be channelled towards learning goals. However, the purpose of drama-as-toolkit is potentially changed from discovery to consolidation. The kinaesthetic act of 'doing' is perceived by both teachers and pupils as helping the pupils to 'remember', whereas much of the literature that actively promotes the use of drama tasks does not prioritise recall as a chief purpose. When pupils are required to make their own choices about logical action based on emotions, this democratic and social act perhaps realigns the task

towards the goal of exploring and understanding human behaviour. Vygotsky's notion of 'lived through' experiences and the integration of cognitive and affective elements is potentially realised here. However, making this explicit and part of the learning process requires some meta-awareness of the communicative tools.

Given the evidence from across the case studies, pupils are capable of drawing on curriculum content in drama tasks. Vivid imagery and a sense of narrative are important and where they do not already exist, the pupil attempt to create them. However, there is a difference between their understanding of concrete and abstract concepts. The perceived formality of presenting to an audience and the perceived finality of performance can encourage thorough preparation but it can also inhibit developing new understandings if they conform to a fixed interpretation. This has implications for achieving a sense of empowerment.

Important here is considering how the drama tasks address the need for subjective as well as objective reflection, as discussed in recent literature. Reflecting on the drama can be limited to 'what is/was happening', in other words, the action and sequence of events. What is left for pupils to make connections between is 'why' someone acts in a particular way and how that relates both to their internal emotional state and physical action. By making this process explicit, pupils may reflect upon such abstract concepts as empathy, exploitation, democracy, trust and faith. Without reflection following the task it is left for pupils to make connections themselves. If they do make the connections it may not necessarily be during the in-role work but later. Relevant here is Vygotsky's observation of the adolescent's capacity to objectify subjective experiences. However, I would stress that this is not automatic and that pupils of 11-12 years of age are on this border. Without developing a meta-awareness of the pedagogical practice, it may be that pupils are told that drama tasks are a 'good way to learn' but without fully understanding why.

Even in scripted tasks (except in the case of mirrored mime), pupils are afforded choice by the teacher in their verbal and physical action. In the absence of explicit standards for drama work, the

pupils exact their own performance standards for the generation of logical bodily action and the suspension of disbelief, both as actor and spectator. The pupils' social and task-based communication relies only partly on verbal exchange, whilst movement across physical spaces and gestures form a greater part of demonstrating their own ideas or signalling compliance with the ideas of others. They operate under their own assumed commonality of signs, taking references from their own experiences that they deem relevant to the task at hand. However, their choice of verbal and physical action may not be critically reflected upon, meaning that their understanding of the impact of the communicative toolkit is not necessarily developed further. Influenced by varying degrees of appropriation, pupils may operate at a surface rather than a mastery level. The pupils' full use of the communicative toolkit seems entirely 'natural', however, making the link between the detail of human expression and the internal processes of themselves and their role is not necessarily made clear or their understanding assessed.

In improvisation drama tasks pupils are at more liberty to share and collate ideas than in their desk/chair-based tasks. In the process of embodiment they must translate their mental images and constructs into verbal and physical form, according to what they perceive as logical action. The 'they', is not just the singular pupil but also the other members of their group. They must develop their ideas simultaneously with practical solutions based on a mutual understanding of signs. The challenge is to embrace the unknown, to hint at new understandings, rather than continue to play in the safe space of pre-existing knowledge. Given the pupils' historical experience of the transmission of factual knowledge for recall, it is a challenge to encourage them to take risks rather than represent what is perceived as 'right'. As seen in the case studies, this 'originality' and 'innovation', called for under the heading of 'creativity' (Sinclair et al 2009. Ofsted 2003b) is only achieved to differing degrees.

There is some sense of frustration at the lack of space, atmosphere and resources to aid their imagination, revealed in the use of props. However, this might also be perceived as a frustration

with their own inability to convert their internal ideas to a sufficient external representation. Where the space is changed, the pupils are positive about its suitability in conforming to what the 'real' version might be. Where the space is free of furniture or walls, the pupils sometimes rely on their own understanding of dramatic form, designating an 'audience' or a 'stage'. As much as they struggle with abstract concepts in their subject concept, the tool also presents a challenge in negotiating what must be imagined. Here there is a sense of adolescents struggling on the boundary between a child's imaginative play and the formalising of aesthetic judgement that may restrict the adult.

Where there is no script to be used, pupils will create structure for themselves in the devising process, however this may also lead to mere recitation when placed in front of an audience. Where pupils are forced to act spontaneously and are driven by a motivating force within the scenario, rare moments of personal investment may occur where the sense of belief in, or commitment to, the scenario is also heightened. Transformation is a shift from acting from purely the perspective of the pupil to a new perspective where motivations, reactions and their counterpart externalised (verbal and physical) action depend on a consolidation of both 'as if' and the pupil's real thought, feeling and action. Motivation to change the perspective of others, through the use of the communicative toolkit, is particularly powerful in helping to achieve these rare moments. Further research is needed to understand in-the-moment empathetic experiences.

The pupils show an embedded belief, drawn from their historical experience of learning environments, in teacher-to-pupil transmitted knowledge. The teacher possesses the knowledge authority and even in more open tasks, the teacher's opinion is the generally held truth. This is reinforced by the teacher's role in the drama tasks, particularly the framing of reflective discussion. Reiterating the importance of multiple interpretations and the new role of the pupil(s) to dictate action requires particular emphasis by the teacher to make a convincing shift in the relationship. Despite the ever-present authority of the teacher, there is evidence of a significant increase in pupil decision-making in drama tasks. The pupils must seek their own creative solutions to practical

problems and negotiate shifting power relations. The potential negative effects are the risky, unsafe, chaotic interactions and the diverted goals as individuals collide. This returns us to the question of achieving an appropriate level of structuring and modelling by the teacher.

CHAPTER 8

CREATIVE CURRICULUM

'Thinking Through School'

8.1 Overview

The teacher and pupils in this case study are following a unit of work on learning skills as part of a Year 7 Creative Curriculum programme. These timetabled lessons are fairly unique for Key Stage 3 in that they are not driven by singular curriculum subject content, but, by gaining timetable periods from Religious Studies, Geography, and Personal and Social/Citizenship Education, they are designed to facilitate cross-curricular project-work. Lesson tasks include reading, writing, class discussion, and art work. As a new course, designed by the school for the new pupil intake, there is neither established framework of assessment nor any progression to Key Stage 4 qualification. The focus in this current unit of work is solely on the processes and practices of learning. They are exploring the concepts of interpreting visual images and empathising with others. As well as group discussion, their drama tasks require engaging in in-role verbal and physical action. These have a bearing on the analysis of data as attention is explicitly drawn to the teacher's and pupils' communicative toolkit and interaction, given that these are some of the 'skills' they are investigating.

The teacher's goals align with an 'inner oriented' (Wells 1999) pedagogical concept of developing understanding through the internal process of experience. However, I argue that the potential realisation of learning goals is constricted without explicit and structured connection of the chosen practice, drama-as-toolkit, and the events of the task to the object of the learning process. In this case, there are extended periods of pupil group work causing the teacher to relinquish full control of pupil action and usual classroom rules to be suspended. In response, the pupils are seen to impose their own structure and criteria for successful completion of the task. I argue that the use of drama-

as-tool both exposes and perpetuates the tensions that exist between the communicative tools, as they are varyingly appropriated by the pupils. It also does so between the collaborative investment in the task and the culture of social rules for behaviour in the classroom. The shift in relationship of participant to task has a bearing on how the pupils are understood to operate in the classroom culture. It reveals the pupils as being not so much individuals interacting with their separate social context but more being an integral part of it and transforming the cultural practice through shifts in membership and responsibility.

By examining evidence from observed lessons this discussion reveals tension points on all planes of activity. It concludes that where there is a complex constellation of tools, and shifts in rules and responsibilities, such as are required in drama tasks, pupil interaction may be difficult and fractious. Without expert guiding structure and renewed focus on learning goals at each stage of the creative process, the freedom to experiment and make decisions may divert, or even impede, collaborative work and learning.

8.2 Case classroom in context

The school is a co-educational, comprehensive secondary school with approximately 1450 students aged 11-18, located in a small market town in the South of England. Students come from the town but also from a number of feeder villages. Although overall relatively advantaged socially and economically, the community also has significant areas of disadvantage (Ofsted 2009). It has specialist status in Maths and Computing and in its most recent inspection (Ofsted 2009) was graded 'good' in overall effectiveness, achievement and standards. At the end of 2008, 54% of students achieved 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths. In Year 7 pupils are taught in mixed ability form groups, covering all subjects within the National Curriculum. Additionally, there are 8 periods a

fortnight of a Creative Curriculum provision which “delivers RE, PSCHÉ and Geography through a project based multi-skilled approach” (School Policy Document).

The teacher is Head of Geography and also part of the core team responsible for designing the Creative Curriculum. Her recruitment to this research study and initial interview took place in July 2008 when the initiative was still undergoing planning and review. The research period therefore coincided with the very first term of the Creative Curriculum’s implementation, with the new Year 7 intake of the 2008/09 academic year. The teacher is familiar with research studies of this kind, having previously participated in a university study, and was recommended as being someone keen on experimenting with different teaching practices. She travels to regional meetings to discuss different practices in Geography teaching.

The classroom is part of a four-room temporary structure, the two adjoining Geography classrooms and two History classrooms linked by two sets of wooden steps, a ramp and a horseshoe-shaped raised walkway. This structure sits like a green island in the middle of a concrete playground, in between the main school building and the sports centre, and is flanked on the other sides by an Astroturf and tennis courts. Inside, the teacher’s desk sits to the right of the door with a whiteboard behind it on the wall. The desks are arranged so that the pupils sit facing each other in groups of four or six. Pictures of locations around the world adorn the walls and when the class are seated there is little floor space for manoeuvring between the groups.

8.3 ‘Thinking Though School’ Unit of Work

The class has recently started the ‘Thinking Though School’ (De A’Echevarria and Leat 2006) unit of work centred on a narrative of a girl teaching an Artificial Intelligence boy about learning. Each part of the story raises questions about particular skills for learning. The accompanying text book provides the narrative in chapters along with exercises for the pupils to complete. The pupils have

already started work on the unit when the first lesson is observed. This discussion centres around three key events that are indicative of the classroom culture and particular tensions in the drama tasks: Episode One is the teacher’s introduction to the first presentation of group scenes in Lesson 3; Episode Two (2a & 2b) are presentations of two group pieces in Lesson 3; Episode Three is the devising of a group piece in the final lesson (Lesson 6).

LESSON ONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher demonstrates a spider diagram that encompasses details of a person’s life. • The pupils create a spider diagram about themselves.
LESSON TWO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher leads a whole-class interpretation of a photographic image, projected onto the white board. • Groups are the given an image and a blank chart to help them interpret their own. • The pupils are told they are going to ‘act out the scene’ in the next lesson. • The groups start to devise their scenes, some by working on a pre-planned written script, others by discussion and improvising movement.
LESSON THREE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Episode 1: The pupils have an introductory talk by the teacher • Episode 2: The pupils present their scenes after five minutes to rehearse • The pupils evaluate each other via slips of paper that require allocating marks out of 10 for various aspects of the performance.
LESSON FOUR (2HRS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher begins by addressing the class on the use of expression to evoke emotion in drama. She makes a link between street signs and physical images that the pupils might use or things they might say. • The teacher shows the pupils projected images of masks as a medium of expression and tells the pupils that they are going to make masks to use in a second identical dramatic interpretation of an image. • The pupils create masks using papier mache and paint, whilst others plan the group scenes.
LESSON FIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through question and answer, the teacher attempts to remodel the thinking process of interpreting pictures, focusing on portraying the emotions of the characters and the mood of the scene. • The pupils spend the rest of the hour discussing their images in groups.
LESSON SIX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Episode 3: The pupils work practically in groups to create a dramatic presentation of their given image. They work both inside and outside the classroom. • They present their scenes to each other.

Figure 1 – Observed lesson content

8.4 –The value of drama as a pedagogical toolkit

In this section I argue that the realisation of the teacher’s goals is constricted because the practice of drama-as-toolkit is without explicit and structured connection to the goals of the learning process.

8.4.1 Teacher goals

The first part of this discussion centres on the teacher’s goals as revealed both in observed teacher talk with the pupils and in conversation with me. The teacher desires for pupils to have a conceptual understanding of the task they are engaged in - that the process of experiencing, of verbal and physical action in-role, facilitates empathy. This is different to the pupils’ apparent understanding of the task as being for mimicry and representation. The teacher also appears to want to encourage the pupils to think for themselves, however she also reveals concerns that the pupils are possibly blind to the required (i.e. the teacher’s knowledgeable) perspective on the task and the value of it.

In Episode 1, the teacher has the pupils sat in a horseshoe around the edges of the room with the desks pushed to the back and sides, creating a potential rehearsal and performance space in the centre. She stands in the space addressing the pupils in an explicit attempt to draw their attention to the purpose of the task and the value of drama-as-tool – “why we’re doing drama”. The following sequence has been transcribed from video:

EPISODE ONE: INTRODUCTION

00:50

TEACHER

I think it's really important that you understand why we're doing drama rather than anything else, so there are reasons behind it, OK, bearing in mind what we're doing.

One boy puts up his hand. The teacher points at him to acknowledge him but continues speaking.

01:00 TEACHER (cont)
 So can anyone think...cos we all know what the lesson's about
 cos we planned it yesterday...

BOY
 (quietly, still with his hand up) Miss...

01:10 TEACHER
 (louder) So, can anyone think...um...what our objectives may
 well be today. So it's got to come from you today. So...yes?

BOY
 To perform our drama

01:20 TEACHER
 Why do you think...shh...It's not that I'm trying to steal
 somebody else's lesson. We're using drama as a tool...

Drama is in one way presented as a transferable skill that can be used in a variety of contexts and the development of transferable learning skills is part of the school ethos in their investment in the Creative Curriculum program. The concept of cross-subject learning is valued by the teacher, who does not want to “pigeon-hole” her own subject, Geography (Teacher Interview 1). However, the lesson task goal is to understand empathy and see the purpose of a learning process that achieves it and so drama seems to be presented as a fixed vehicle – it is not the object of enquiry to be worked upon and developed. The pupils seem to appreciate the value of drama-as-toolkit in other subjects, such as History, although they are quick to distinguish that “it wasn’t proper drama it was playing around drama” (Pupil Group Interview 22:20). In the extract above they reveal their preconceptions of drama being primarily a performance event and at this early stage do not seem to be aware of or open to the teacher’s perspective of drama-as-toolkit (although she uses “tool” (01:20)).

8.4.2 Shared understandings and tensions

What the teacher and pupils do share is a recognition of the value of drama-as-toolkit as being the potential for a memorable experience without the need for writing, which some pupils, “particularly boys” (Teacher Interview 1) are less inclined towards. As a pupil says in interview, “If you do

something and it's more fun...If you just write it down then you don't really remember it...But is you do like a drama performance then you remember it..." (Pupil Group Interview 23:25). The pupils' description of drama as being useful for recall of lesson content sheds light on their responses in this first episode. The pupils seem to understand their goal as 'showing' as a normal progression from devising - "to perform our drama" (Episode 1 - 01:10). One might assume this is part of an institutionally-inherited understanding that a pupil is required to follow a teacher's instructions, perform the work and then present it back for judgement. However, their understanding of the tool seems to be entwined in an understanding of drama as a performative event and one that transmits information verbally/aurally and physically/visually rather than transforms (either in group exploration or performance).

The episode continues:

Two boys enter late. They are told to sit down but there is some delay whilst the pupils shuffle round as the boys have been told by another member of staff not to sit next to each other.

TEACHER

01:50 OK, so...listen! I'm talking. You need to take your coat off

COAT BOY

But it's a nice...

02:00

TEACHER

Right, I'm waiting for everyone to be sensible and the longer we take over this, the less time we have to do what we're going to do. Now, we've got to understand why we're using drama as a tool because remember it all goes back to the Elfi and Jazz situation: she's trying to...um...y'know... um...use the operator's manual to incorporate skills so that she can get Elfi to think to think about things. So why do you think we're used a situation where we've looked at a picture and we've used all the questions and

02:20

we're going to act it out. Why do you think we have chosen this as a good way of erm (she rolls her hands round each other in mid air as she searches for the word) programming the computer to help it

02:40

02:50

learn. Why do we think that's an important tool?

BOY

It's not that but can we have five minutes just to....

03:00

TEACHER

No I want to...just hang on, I'm interested in this at the moment. This is really important. Can anyone think why...I mean you looked at this image and we're going to act it out. We're not acting it out because I want to waste time. You know. I value lesson time and this is really important. So we looked at the image and you had to

03:20

you know really discuss what you thought it would be like to be in that picture. Use your sense. And why do you think you are acting it out? How do you think that would help a Artificial Intelligence to learn? Or anybody to learn? Why do you think it's really

03:40

important sometimes to use drama as a tool?

GIRL

So they can copy what you've done and then...[inaudible]
Cos if like you do it right, and you're like acting it out...[inaudible]

03:50

TEACHER

Right. So, sort of. Can anyone add to that? Harriet said so that you then, the Artificial Intelligence can then imitate...

04:00

She stares hard at some boys at the top of the horseshoe.

TEACHER (cont)

You two, if you want to remain in here you've got to concentrate. So that the Artificial Intelligence can imitate what we're doing. We need to take it further.

04:10

BOY

Um, so like, uh, it's easier to understand. Yu can understand it more.

04:20

TEACHER

It is easier to understand but by you being in the picture and you're taking on the role of someone else - you're not in the picture but you're going to imagine you are - how do you think that's going to benefit how people can think about things?

No hands go up

04:40

TEACHER

Cos it's obviously made you think about the things that were in the picture. You've obviously gone through a thinking process in what you planned yesterday. And there's one word...can you put those bottles down? There's one word that you sometimes use in History, I know, but you use it in Geography as well. It's so you can get empathy.

05:00

The teacher makes a clear commitment to varying teaching methods. This is a statement she makes in her initial interview, describing the risk-taking required. She is also committed to promoting collaborative goals, signalled by her use of “our” (01:10) and “we’re” (03:00) to encourage the pupils to see the task as a joint venture towards a common goal. Their perception of mimicry and representation as a purpose is shown in their responses, “so they can copy...if like you do it right” (03:40) and “it’s easier to understand” (04:10). By using the phrase “acting it out” the teacher reinforces the idea of bringing an image to life with the purpose of superficially representing its contents. This is not, however, her purpose as she attempts to explain verbally, drawing attention to engaging with “thoughts and feelings”. Whilst the pupils are concerned with showing the external action, the teacher wishes to engage with internal processes. In a post-lesson conversation she describes how she wants to use evaluation to make the experience “meaningful”. In the same conversation she also describes her concern that physical action might be detracting from the pupils’ focus on interpreting thoughts and feelings – i.e. the drama tool potentially distracts from the object.

The teacher has perhaps less faith in the pupils’ understanding, revealed by her second guessing that they might think the task wastes time (03:00). She emphasises the toolkit to be “good” (02:40 and 05:20, below). She tells them again how it can help understand how other people feel, however the way this potentially happens is not discussed – to her they have “obviously gone through a thinking process” (04:40). In interview, the pupils later compare their experience to their History lessons where they describe how the task/game served a purpose to grasp different concepts. The difference between the task formats seems to be that in History, their work was much more structured and allowed only a little room for improvising action, alongside a purpose that was made clear to them: “Actually it was about...how things changed...” and “We knew what we were doing” (Pupil Group Interview 23:45). There seems to be a gap between the teacher’s perception of the pupils’ ability to understand purpose and their actual understanding, compared to other similar

experiences. The teacher makes a final attempt to impress the usefulness of drama-as-toolkit and develop the pupils' understanding of empathy.

[LESSON ONE, 5min10sec]

There has been another delay as a boy knocks over some bottled water.

05:10

TEACHER

Year 7, I'm not happy and we're going to carry on with this at lunchtime unless we can get it sorted today.

She pauses and then continues.

05:20

Right OK. It's so you can empathise, you can imagine you're there, you're acting it out. Why do you think...? SO you're taking on board other people's thoughts, and feelings of what it's like to be them. Why do you think that's a really good way of learning about things? Harry?

05:40

HARRY

Uh. So it kind of er er I forgotten the word.

TEACHER

06:00

Can anyone else help out here? Well, what's it making you do? It's making you think, isn't it? It's making you think in a particular way. You think what it's like to be in a situation like that. Um and the sorts of thoughts and feelings. So if you hadn't actually been in a situation. There might be someone who's got the skiing photograph who's not been skiing but they can use other people's experiences because there might be someone else in the group who said "Well actually you'd be feeling this way" so you're using other people's thoughts and feelings.

06:20

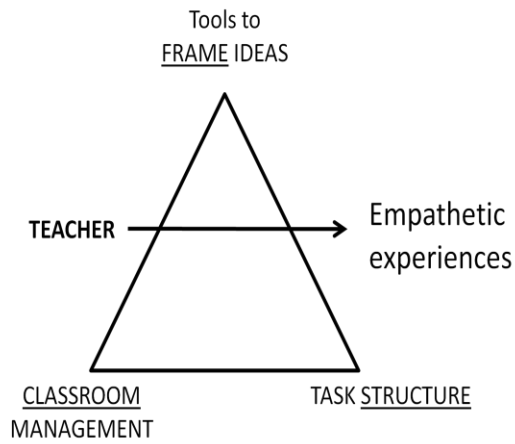
I have to say Year 7 we're not really tuned in this morning. I want you sharper and I want you thinking...you know...really carefully. Steven, I had to tell you yesterday to empty your mouth. I'm going to ask you today and that's going on report.

It is difficult to conceptualise and understand the tensions between the differing values of drama-as-toolkit. By separately constructing and then bringing together CHAT-derived models, it is easier to realise how the teacher and pupil are operating under different assumptions of the task.

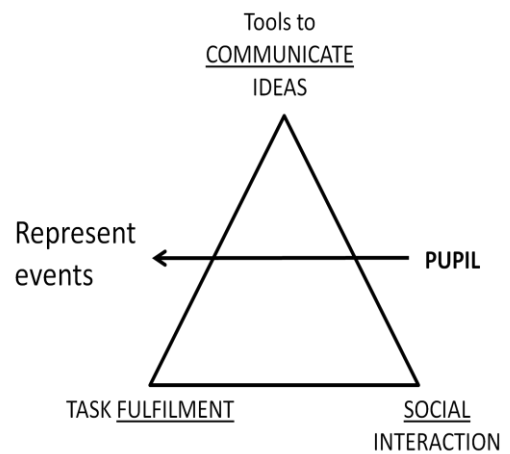
The problem to be worked on for the teacher is the internal experience whereas for the pupil it is external representation. This is associated with their conceptual understanding of drama-as-toolkit. The teacher frames the pupils' response to an image (which becomes an imagined scenario) by requiring contextual information to be 'acted out', hence externalising the action but the creation of a performance diverts attention away from the experiential process. The pupils understand that the tools communicate their ideas but the 'internalising' that takes place is of the narrative content they need to successfully memorise and transmit. This is rather than an inner/personal process of transformation through the consideration and expression of the emotions and experiences of others.

Whereas thinking may be transformed by reason into intellectual imagination (Vygotsky 1998), this may be hindered when communicative tools only attempt a surface level representation rather than are employed as part of a deeper consideration of revealing the motivating emotions of another. This creates tension between the tool and the goal. As discussed in Chapter 2, Ayman-Nolley (1992) highlights Vygotsky's belief that some departure from reality, through the activity of the imagination, is necessary for the true understanding of reality. In other words a combination of subjective thoughts and realistic thoughts constitute a creativity that is part of intellectual development. This supports the teacher's attempts to engage the pupils with drama-as-toolkit for exploring emotions. What Figure 2 (below) does not reveal here is how the teacher's tools relate to the pupils' tools. It also does not reveal links between the classroom and social rules and the action of the teacher and pupils, or tensions with other areas of the systems.

Teacher system:



Pupil system:



Overlapping systems:

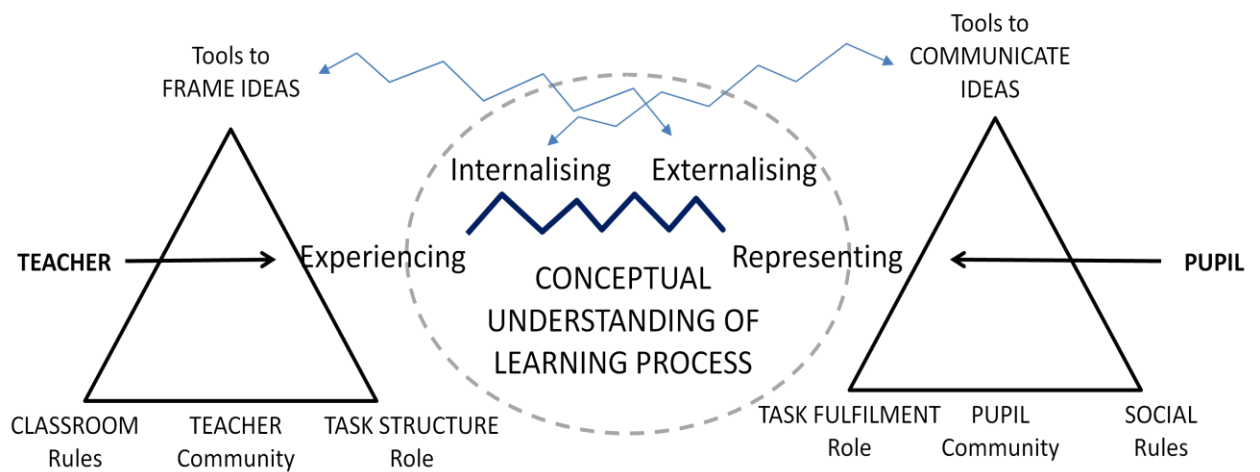


Figure 2 – Tensions relating to perceptions of the task

In pursuit of developing a conceptual understanding of learning processes, drama-as-toolkit – including the appropriation of the different communicative tools - is not identified to be developed as part of this goal, even though an understanding of its value may be. As a result it potentially remains with the same preconceptions and level of skilled use as before. The link between concept and practice is only modelled or described verbally by the teacher, perhaps encouraged by her determination to allow the pupils more control over their decision-making. Without extended scaffolding of the internalisation process, the pupils do not reveal any signs of coming to new understandings of the learning process with particular regard for empathy. This process, as supposedly facilitated by drama tasks, is discussed in the next section, based on evidence from pupil presentations.

8.5 Drama conventions – learning concepts and learning practices

In this section I examine tension along the tool – object plane. I argue that teachers’ assumptions made about participants having the necessary command of the toolkit required for the task leave participants underprepared and only partially able to achieve the set goals. I observed three elements necessary to the successful completion of the task (This was through observing the process rather than them being stated in interview by the teacher).

- i) A framework for interpretation of the image
- ii) Some command of the communicative tool kit and how they relate to dramatic conventions
- iii) The critical skills and opportunity to evaluate and respond

As a framework the teacher uses a demonstration image projected on the white board and asks questions – Who are they? What has happened? - to model the interpretation process of question and response. A worksheet then structures pupil group discussion so that they respond to the modelled questions when working under their own jurisdiction. However, there are no guidelines for

the practical transferring of these responses to devised physical realisation. The pupils' own concerns then override the task. Similarly, after the group presentations, the teacher alone evaluates the content – what 'she would say' – and the pupil comments are only kept private and written on pieces of paper. This also only happens for the first set of presentations meaning that the evaluation process and the explicit linking of interpretation, visual/aural signs and the internalising of mood and emotion to achieve understanding of character and situation are not followed systematically but lost.

8.5.1 Creating and sustaining a role

In this next episode, groups present their interpretation of the images. Tension points of interest arise as a result of the pupils' devised content but also where the presenting pupils break out of role and the pupils in the audience actively participate in and disrupt the action. In Episode 2 Part a, the group of boys have been working from a picture of an igloo in an Arctic landscape. Not all of the roles they create for themselves offer opportunity for empathy. They struggle to create a plausible scenario that the audience might engage with, rejecting reality for a more fantastical narrative. The teacher's subsequent evaluation that she portrays as a modelled response implies that the pupils have completed the task to some degree and shifts the focus to the transmission of the experience of the fictional characters without the transformative effect for the actor and/or audience.

EPIISODE 2a – PRESENTATION

We see the classroom from the end furthest from the door, facing the teacher's desk and white board, from just behind the horseshoes of pupils' chairs.

At the far end the boys in the first presenting group have placed a table. Two of them – the EXPLORERS – crouch under it with a third – NARRATOR – standing next to it. A fourth boy – TRANSFORMER – is preset behind a cupboard door and the fifth, BEAR, is on all fours at the other end of the horseshoe, near the camera.

The teacher calls for the pupils to stop talking and holds the original image up to the class

17:00

TEACHER

(briskly) Right, this is the picture they were originally in.

We cannot see what the picture is of. The pupils nearer the teacher may be able to but the pupils who are unlikely to see do not make an effort to look.

TEACHER

(over her shoulder to the actors) OK, you can start.

She walks straight across the performance area, between actors and audience, and round behind the actors, pausing to challenge a boy face to face:

17:10

TEACHER

Stop talking. Do you understand the rules?

WILL

Yeah

He is pushed in the face by his neighbour

TEACHER

Right. Thank you.

(Louder, to the whole class) Right what I going to do is anyone who talks - this is really crucial - will go outside and I will deal with them afterwards. (briskly) OK. Start.

17:20

NARRATOR

(quietly, one hand in his pocket) One day in, um, Alaskus...uh...wait...ah...

He looks to the boys under the table to his left and then to the teacher on his right. She looks blankly back.

TRANSFORMER

(opening the door slightly and through gritted teeth) One day at the North Pole

Some of the class turned round to look and giggle.

NARRATOR

(breaking into a half laugh and looking back at the table) One day at the North Pole...some...(then appealing to the teacher) I don't know what to say.

TEACHER

Well just...(she shakes both hands in front of her vigorously)...elaborate.

NARRATOR

Two people were in an igloo.

EXPLORER 1
17:40 (sat crossed legged and hunched over) Oh I'm really cold.

EXPLORER 2
So am I

EXPLORER 1
(slight American accent) Can't we get anything to eat around here?

EXPLORER 2
(mumbled and lying down again) We're in the desert

EXPLORER 1
17:50 No we're not, we're in the Antarctic, you imbecile.
(Sighing) We haven't got any food either.
(Holds head in his hands) This gun's no use.

EXPLORER 2
(still mumbling) Go and shoot something

EXPLORER 1
(Shaking his hands, exasperated) There's nothing here!

EXPLORER 2
18:00 (his voice muffled because he doesn't move from lying on the floor with his head buried) Polar bears
The class giggle and they look towards BEAR at the other end.

TRANSFORMER
18:10 (poking his head round the door) Steven.
BEAR
What?
TRANSFORMER
Go over there
The class giggle again

BEAR
18:20 BEAR crawls down the centre of the horseshow towards the 'tent'.
TRANSFORMER
(still calling instructions) Roar
BEAR
Rauh!

18:30 EXPLORER 1
(Standing up behind the table) Oh look it's a polar bear! Get my gun out. (Pulling out his mobile phone and speaking in a mock Hollywood action film voice) Good-bye Polar Bear.

There is a pause as he fiddles with his mobile phone. The pupils in the audience giggle, as does BEAR. EXPLORER 1 manages to extract a small gunshot sound, holding the phone to his face as if a rifle.

18:40 TOM
(from the audience) He just shot your head

18:50 BEAR reacts to this and dies by falling backwards onto his back. At the other end the two EXPLORERS, joined by a boy in the audience, are preoccupied with switching off the mobile phone. This causes more laughter as they struggle to do so. Eventually the EXPLORERS emerge to approach the BEAR,

19:10 accompanied by smiles and giggles, tugging, amused at his legs.

19:30 EXPLORER 1
Mmm tasty. Oh no it's all gone. I need a hero!

TRANSFORMER
(dancing out from the cupboard, singing) "I need a hero..."

19:40 EXPLORER 1
(laughing) It's a Transformer! Can you take us back?

TRANSFORMER
Yeah.

19:50 He grabs their necks and dances and sings his way off with the EXPLORERS, accompanied by laughter from the watching audience. When they emerge again they receive a smattering of applause from the laughing audience.

20:20 TEACHER calls for silence and denotes which groups are going next.

20:40 TEACHER
(gesturing to the group in the audience who have been marking the performance on slips of paper) We'll wait for the evaluation to come from that group at the end, but if I were to evaluate it my idea would be...What went well, you actually transported us to the scene. What I think you could do better next time, I think you should...my personal view is that...(she gesticulates, holding both hands up) um, I would have liked you to give us more of a sense of the place and what it was like in terms of using your senses. So you did talk about the cold...but...you could have given us, you know, a bit more

21:00

21:20 flavour of (she winds her hands round in the air)...of the actual image.

TRANSFORMER

We should have done the disco bit.

NARRATOR

(tired) No.

I argue that this group piece plays on the boundary between 'make believe' or 'playing at' and a more formalised drama process of creating, refining and presenting. Where drama is to function as a tool and there is a degree of requiring meta-awareness of how character and meaning is transferred; there must be that conscious leap from individual internal narrative to external, collective narrative. The boy presenting 'Explorer 1' seems to respond most closely to the demands of the task. His hunched body (17:40) and desperate tone (17:50) give visual and aural clues to his sorry state, more subtle than the obvious statement of there being no food. Although this is plausible, it does not last long. The less plausible offering of Explorer 2 has prompted the audience to giggle, exacerbated by the Bear who has to be told what to do by the Transformer, breaking any belief in the scene. Explorer 1 rejects his previous efforts and favours a mock action-film style (18:30).

Without set parameters the piece can go in any direction according to the desire of the most forceful participant. Right at the beginning of the devising process (in the previous lesson), the Transformer had decided he wanted to be one and that he would sing "I Need A Hero". As it appears in the final piece, it is apparent that this decision stayed, regardless of the ideas of the rest of the group, and that they obliged. His third idea for a disco – something that supposedly would maximise the entertainment in his eyes - was only quashed when the Narrator begged the teacher to stop him, hence the weary comment at the end of the episode (21:20).

The audience have been told that the rule is not to talk (17:10) but even without words they make their own understanding clear through their audible laughter: this is comic, not serious. By 18 minutes, the sense of belief has been broken and there is no need to observe dramatic convention

of staying in-role. The Transformer freely instructs the Bear, who acknowledges this break by doing so himself, and the audience laughter increases, shifting the mood further away from its origins. There is perhaps little surprise in this: the boys playing these two roles are some of the most vocal and frequently teacher-reprimanded pupils in the class. The pupils, although they have only been together less than a term, have a measure of each other, and to an extent, fulfil these prophecies. As one girl says of the 'Transformer', "he can be quite silly and mess around in some lessons" (Pupil Group Interview 26:28). Regardless of their individual performance on the day, the pupils generate a persona across their school existence that influences their in-lesson interaction with peers.

As discussed in the Review of Literature, Franks (1997) notes, as I do, how the transition from game to aesthetic event is made when the contemplative, external audience exists. I expand on this and define the transition as being when the actors acknowledge the audience and that the actors are not merely performing to (acting with) each other. The problem for the pupils is negotiating this perception of themselves and each other. They need to satisfy their own ideas for presentation of themselves as social beings as well as their constructed role, and satisfy their desire for succeeding within the learning task. Without a collective commitment to the dramatic event and explicit use of the toolkit from all actors and audience, the performance teeters on the boundary between game and aesthetic, between lesson event and learning experience.

Empathy, in an in-role context, refers to an actual internal process undergone by the actor, not simply an external representing of the assumed internal process of the character being portrayed. In this case, the interpreting of images as a task seems to become merely about stating 'what is happening'. Firstly, this can bypass any empathetic experience for the actor during the devising/exploring of a scenario. Secondly, without due concern for the effect on an audience, the external communication of a character's inner processes is hindered. On the other hand, the audience can also threaten the actor's work by disrupting the shared experience or communal belief, causing the actor to alter their performance.

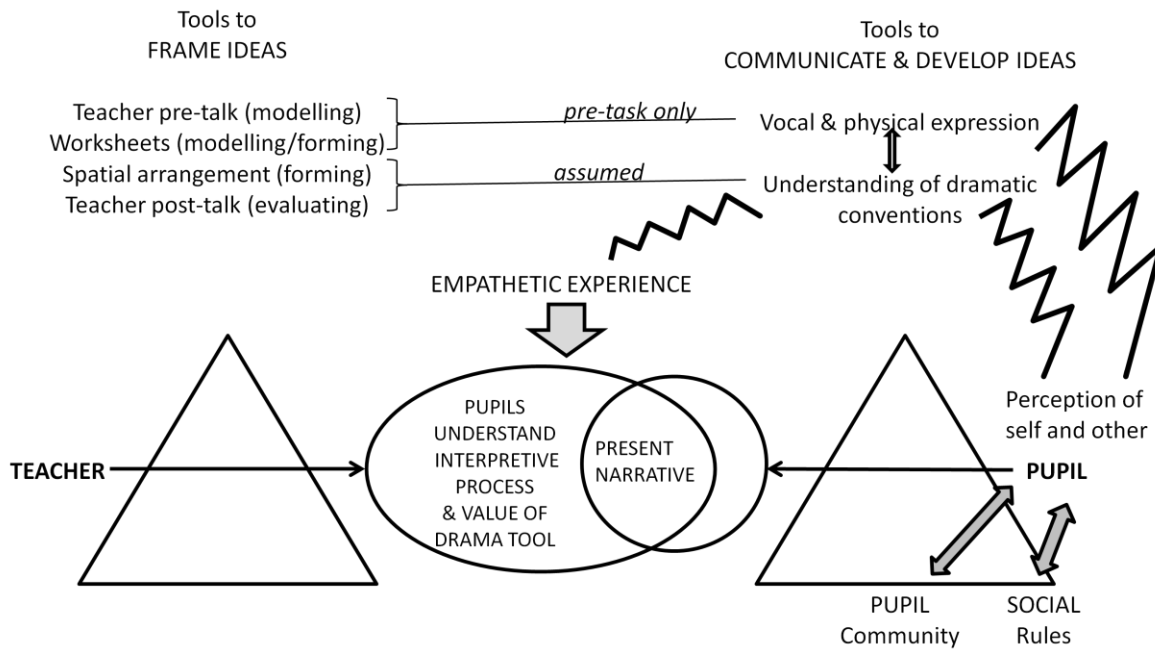


Figure 3 – the relationship between tools, pupil perspectives and the development of the empathetic experience.

Some of these tensions are represented in Figure 3 (above). On the far right, the pupils' perception of self and other is entwined with their evolving persona across the school community and the social rules for behaviour that the pupils develop – what is serious, what is comic, what is worthy of respect. This seems to have a bearing on way they approach their in-role action; in other words their vocal and physical expression and their adherence to their own understanding of dramatic convention. This varied 'investment' in in-role action – both on the part of the actor and the audience – can potentially detract from the empathetic experience through which participants might value the tool as being useful for exploring different situations.

8.5.2 – Role and impact of the audience

In the next episode - 2b – more is revealed about the impact of presenting to an audience of peers and the tension arising from a varied and changing attitude to the performance event.

A group of girls have interpreted the image of a tropical beach and present a simple narrative of four girls going on holiday and wanted to do different things on the beach. Even though the pupils appear to have carefully planned and rehearsed their piece, with scripted dialogue and props, conventions of a performance event that might contribute to successfully conveying mood and atmosphere are eventually rejected by both them and audience, dissolving the potential for dramatic effect.

EPISODE 2b - PRESENTATION

22:00 The next group to perform are 4 girls. They have with them bright holdall bags, towels and a beach ball. They set about positioning their chairs in two pairs, one behind the other, in the centre of the space, facing the white board. This means that initially we only see their backs. The audience engage in their own conversations whilst the actors talk amongst themselves. WILL(BOY) saunters up on two occasions and kicks their beach ball.

23:30 The teacher calls the class to attention and the girls begin to speak and play pat-a-cake but many of the audience pupils continue to talk so that we cannot hear the dialogue.

TOM

(calling out from the audience) They've started!

23:50

TEACHER

Uh.. just a minute. There are some rude people at the back.

(Calling the performers to stop) Right, girls..

TOM

Can you be louder?

LUDO

Yeah, speak up!

24:00 [TEACHER goes across to a group of 3 boys by the door. They lose a House Point for talking and one is sent outside, much to his protestation. The class are reminded about not talking and if they can't listen, they can't do this again. The girls begin again.]

24:50

ANNABEL

(pinching her nose to effect an announcer) We have now reached our destination. Please exit on your left hand side.

25:10

The girls move their chairs away and the scene transfers to a beach, with laying down of towels and passing the beach ball. The latter catches the interest of the audience.

25:40 SIMON (just in front of the camera)
Yes! Yes!

He raises his hands to invite a pass but is ignored by the actors. The next one goes unintentionally astray and hits someone in the audience on the foot. It is passed back but again goes astray and two other audience members pat it back.

25:50 RUSSELL
Oo, on me 'ead, son!

The ball floats over and skids across the teacher's desk, the teacher retrieving it.

25:55 RUSSELL
Ooo, Health and Safety!

SIMON

Yeah, this isn't sensible is it?!

More pupils start to audibly react and comment on the passing and catching, laughing, with another cry of 'Health and Safety!'

The girls are now huddled by the teacher's desk, still continuing the scene but blocking their expressions from the audience. Two are sat down and the other two stand over them. The audience continue to laugh and comment.

26:30 ANNABEL
Do you want to join in?

BETH

(lethargically) No-o

The standing girls giggle as they attempt to deflate the ball via the valve.

26:40 ANNABEL
(still giggling but continuing according to the planned narrative) You've punctured it.

26:50 RUSSELL
(amused) This isn't supposed to be happening. I thought it was Health and Safety.

27:00 The standing girls beat the sitting girls on the head with the beach ball.

RUSSELL
That's bullying. This wasn't supposed to be physical violence.
General laughter and agreement from the audience.

27:10 The girls get up and walk across to their bags. They stand, red-faced and giggling to each other. An unidentified boy's voice from the audience calls out:

BOY

It's done.

TEACHER

27:30 (sighing) Right...girls can you sit down...(louder) Right, I would say about that one...

The girls are sitting down and more of the audience talk.

TEACHER

27:40 (raising her voice and taking a central position at the end of the horseshoe) I would say that we got the idea of the beach, so we knew it was on the beach, and...uh...I would say that perhaps you needed to paint the picture a bit...(gesturing outwards as if pulling small curtains open)..you needed to say something more in your interpretation about the surroundings, you know, so whether it was hot...you didn't say whether it was hot or whatever, so...next time I would say...you know...let's have some impression of what you hear, what you see...a bit more...

In this episode the potential for understanding the use and value of the tool is reduced. This happens by devising content that does not allow for full empathetic exploration, by breaking from role (initiated by self and audience), and by reducing the potential for audience interpretation and evaluation/discussion.

The group have made decisions in devising by creating roles close to their own life experience – girls on holiday – and injecting a narrative device - conflict over what to do at the beach – in order to have their characters show different emotions. In this case the goal is not that the teacher intends to achieve a deep understanding of wider social contexts as one might in a Geography lesson, for example what it might feel like to be a coffee bean worker and experience the issues they face. The aim is to understand the importance of empathy *in a learning* context of understanding the emotions of others – in other words, empathy is the object and drama is the toolkit, even though empathy is the tool whereby one might make sense of the social world. It is possible that by creating

the scenario and narrative to fit the task of 'showing positive and negative aspects' rather than being immersed in a scenario and making spontaneous decisions, the empathetic process becomes reversed and voided.

Contrary to Franks' (1997) observation of a positive desire within pupils to share their ideas, in this case study I would argue that the presenting of ideas to peers in this formal setting is not necessarily a positive experience. In interview, pupils share concerns of not wanting to look foolish and the embarrassment is evident in the girls as their performance dissolves into blushes and giggles (26:30). Whereas empathetic processes might be initiated internally in the individual pupil, and then shared locally within the trust of a small group, the public arena is a strange and risky environment to express emotion. It is not that they are not aware of each other – they are and this plays heavily on their ability to invest in-role.

Even if their actions were spontaneous reactions at the time of devising, by refining their work to present to the class, the actors may have lost some of the original internal justification for action. They then depend upon the logic of vocal and physical expression to show these character relationships to the audience. Moreover, they have to depend upon their peers to interpret and accept their ideas in order to communicate with the audience.

Their lack of volume is immediately challenged by the audience (23:50). One boy has already moved from audience to performance space to kick the ball and now two boys take on the teacher's role of issuing instructions to the actors. This intrusion is not challenged by the teacher but she does reprimand pupils who are talking amongst themselves. It seems that as long as pupils are attentive to the presentation, the teacher is satisfied they are behaving appropriately.

Their transition from plane to beach by movement around the space (25:10) is accepted by the audience without comment. However, even before the ball hits a member of the audience, the pupils, beginning with two boys, start to interject. This reflects a relaxing in the teacher's

authoritarian rules and an increase in the power of certain pupils, particularly those who are the larger audience. The pupil, Russell, makes a sporting reference, in itself an impression from the wider media culture that surrounds the pupils. It is a performative act designed to entertain his peers and invites the actors to break out of role and disrupt the performance. His repeated interjection, “Health and Safety!” (25:55 and 26:50), seems a deliberate mocking of authority figures who restrict behaviour with such bureaucratic guidelines. The teacher made a deliberate move to set out ‘Health and Safety’ guidelines before the presentations, asking the pupils to refrain from anything that might hurt others physically or emotionally. Russell seems to mock the action by mimicking the teacher. The action within the piece seems secondary to the entertainment provided to and by the pupil audience. In this way the intrusion of the audience in the second presentation is also a vehicle for pupils to present self – as anarchic, as comedian or as commentator.

The group becomes more huddled, blocking out the audience and shielding themselves from further comment. Even though the pupils attempt to follow their scripted action, when they laugh and move out of role, the performance has, in the audience’s eyes, clearly gone awry (26:50). The roles dissolve as the pupils become themselves, embarrassed and moving, still huddled, to the side. Even so, the performance is signalled as being over by a member of the audience (27:10) rather than by the actors or the teacher.

In discussion with the teacher after this lesson she expresses an idea that the existence of an audience was the problem in the less than desirable standard of presentation. The teacher at this stage thinks that if she had kept the pupils at their desks then they might have been more focused and behaved more appropriately. The teacher associates being ‘sensible’ and ‘thinking’ with desk-based discussion, as it well might facilitate. Here I argue that it is not just the size and control of space that is a factor in the collaborative work but also the nature of the space that is influential. Desks have a cultural link to institutional rules and expectations of pupils engaged in learning. An audience sat in rows in a theatre also adhere to socially and culturally accepted modes of behaviour.

However, in these episodes, the transition is uneasy and the break away from desks seems to encourage interaction but the move to formal audience does not automatically encourage associated behaviour of subscribing to a collective belief (as witnessed in the Geography case study) or of critical reflection. I would claim the understanding of the importance of the audience function is the problem. This is potentially compounded by the lack of pupil evaluation, undermining the purpose of watching and interpreting in the context of this task.

Even though there is a constructed narrative of some sorts, the lack of content for the benefit of the audience to interpret makes it a rejecting of the actor-audience relationship fundamental to the interpretation and evaluation process. This is a missed opportunity to qualify the task as contributing to an understanding of how verbal and physical sign systems operate. In other words the audience are not invited to figure out and verbalise what internal or external process the actors might have been through. Where the actors present little in terms of dialogue or movement, there is even less for the audience to critically reflect upon.

The teacher takes pains to identify her own opinion (Episode 2a, 21:00) as being one of potentially several, however, hers is still the only evaluative voice and is one of authority. The teacher's evaluation becomes the model. The pupils have a chance to comment on their slips of paper but only in a superficial manner of marks out of ten and additional comments. The evaluation is not collaborative and is not the voice of the audience even though the teacher speaks on behalf of the pupils: "I would say that we got...so we knew..." (27:40). The pupils do not have the opportunity to share reflections with each other, undermining the collaborative nature of the work, or to demonstrate their understanding to the teacher. It is not clear whether the teacher believes the pupil comments are not worth hearing or whether she is more concerned with modelling a balanced critical appraisal – the appropriate manner of evaluating. In both episodes she begins by praises what the group did achieve and then highlights what was missing or could be improved upon next time. This modelling approach is similar to her pre-task talk to guide the interpretation of images.

The content of the teacher's evaluation in 2b gives clues to the pupils as well as the researcher as to what she expects from the task. The teacher calls for more "about the surroundings" (27:40) and suggests saying something about the heat. This seems to swing away from the focus of characterisation and emotive response to conveying the environment and doing so in a perfunctory verbal manner. By dominating the post-talk, albeit in an attempt to frame ideas, the teacher makes an assumption about the pupils' ability to unpick the empathetic experience. In reflection, the original goal of the task is lost to perhaps more tangible evidence in the pupils' presentations. Thus the value of drama-as-tool as experiential versus representational, as discussed in the previous section (and previous chapter), is not resolved.

8.6 Social Rules, investment and decision-making

This section examines tension along the lower plane of the system of rules, communities and division of labour plane; and between this and the rest of the system. I develop the argument that the use of drama-as-toolkit both exposes and perpetuates the tensions that exist between the communicative tools, as they are varyingly appropriated by the pupils, and between these tools and the rules pertaining to culturally-accepted behaviour in the classroom. As suggested in the previous section, I argue that it is not just the size and control of space that is a factor in the collaborative work but also the nature of the space that is influential. Where the transition from desk to audience formation brought tension, in this section the boundary between classroom and playground is examined.

I argue there are four distinct goals to be worked towards from the pupil's perspective,

- 'What our teacher said she wanted us to do',
- 'What I want to happen',
- 'What our group have decided / are still deciding to do' and
- 'What our text (script or image) has set in stone so we have to do'

These pull the group work and focus in different directions and the collective action moves in one direction when one force dominates. In this section I focus on the tensions between the rules of engagement and the division of labour as the pupils devise their second group pieces.

8.6.1 Spontaneous improvisation

In the following episode, a group of boys have gone to work outside of the mobile classroom unit with permission from the teacher. The 'voiceover' incorporates some of Ludo's comments in a focus group interview held after the lesson in order to reveal some of his (reflective) thoughts¹.

EPISODE 3 - DEVISING

20:00 It is a Friday, 12.45pm. Four groups have been allowed to work outside. Ludo's group - Group 1 - are on the walkway between the mobile classrooms. Group 2 are on the History walkway talking in a huddle. Another - Group 3 - swarm just outside the Geography door, telling each other what they think they 'should' do. Another - Group 4 - is on the bottom playground area, and in the distance, pupils in a P.E. class run through hockey drills on the Astroturf.

LUDO VOICEOVER - 'At my old school, the classroom I was in was twice the size of this, basically, with the same amount of people. I can't basically move around in one like this cos every time I try to move around, there's someone's chair in the way. Cos everyone's out of their seat you have to jump over the tables to actually do it.'

20:05 Ludo stands on the top walkway and Sam, being shorter, is looking up and talking to him. Peter, actually not an official member of any of these groups says something to Ludo. Five seconds later, Ludo and Sam walk down the ramp, leaving Peter standing at the top, holding the mask he spent most of the last lesson making by cutting up an old plastic bottle. Two boys from Group 2 who had deserted their group discussion run up the ramp, one wearing an uncut, undecorated papier mache mask on his head and carrying another unfinished mask in his hand.

Ludo steps backwards up the ramp to halfway and Sam runs round following him, looking up at him, whilst Ludo is looking towards the people on the walkway.

¹ These are not all comments linked directly to specific action he watched during playback of the video but are comments he made during an open discussion on group work and the standard of work.

20:20 Finding the space unsatisfactory, the group that had been down in the playground (Group 4) walk back up the steps and into the classroom, which the group at the top of the steps (Group 3) decide to take advantage of and go down to the open playground area themselves. This leaves Ludo's group (Group 1) the only group left to roam the rest of the platform area. The one group on the History walkway (Group 2) do not appear to disturb them, remaining in their tight circle rather than trying out any movement for their drama piece.

LUDO VOICEOVER - 'Acting out? They were just standin' there and speakin'...'

Suddenly, it is time for Ludo's carefully drawn image to come to life.

SAM

20:30 (shouting and crouching low) Get down!

Ludo also crouches, looking to his left then stepping sideways down the ramp looking back at Sam. Ludo surveys Dominic coming round from the Geography platform to the top of the ramp, followed by Rory driving the police car from the picture.

RORY

20:35 Reor!

Even though he has to stand up and walk, by turning an imaginary steering wheel and making "reor" car noises he seems satisfied with his mime.

At the bottom of the Geography steps Ludo hunches over his mobile phone, Sam bent double at his side. They both creep up the steps, Ludo first, as Dominic and Rory simultaneously start down the ramp. Ludo stops at the top of the steps, still looking at his mobile with Sam bent over a few steps behind him, when Christopher comes up the steps, grinning.

LUDO VOICEOVER - 'Then Christopher...he kicked me...'

20:40 Ludo stands bolt upright, arms out, and spinning round. The High Street, the bank, and the police car fizzle out in an instant. Ludo chases after Christopher so fast that in two seconds they are out of sight behind the Geography mobile, leaving Rory and Dominic staring after them and Sam partnerless at the top of the steps.

20:45 Rory and Dominic disappear in the same direction and Sam decides to go down the steps to have a look.

A BOY'S VOICE

(from behind the mobile) Ludo, if you don't want to..

20:55 A second later, Ludo reappears to walk back up the steps, with Dominic then the others following.

LUDO VOICEOVER - 'Some people were messin' about and they soon realised that I was getting' annoyed and then...and then they came up to me and went "Oh, all right, Ludo, we won't do anything again..." Cos they know when I get really annoyed, cos there's one guy who sits on my table and he knows what it's like whenever I get annoyed and...I'm not happy when I get annoyed.'

Ludo, content to face the rest of his group, walks backwards onto the Geography walkway. Christopher breaks round the outside of Dominic to make a new suggestion.

CHRISTOPHER

21:00 No, we start...

RORY

(Calling from the ramp)

Dominic! Dominic! I think we ended up here.

VOICEOVER - 'Some people can sound bossy like "You say that..."'

Sam stands by the classroom door and then leans on the wall, looking at Rory who does a little hop to himself whilst Dominic runs round the bottom of the ramp to join him.

21:05

SAM

(calling to Rory) No you're inside, then...

Dominic runs to the top of the ramp, Rory to the bottom. Moments later they disappear from view.

SAM

21:20 (to Dominic) No you have to go inside, while we stay out here.

His small voice falls on deaf ears.

Ludo! Ludo!!

LUDO VOICEOVER - 'When they go off I'll just think of my own ideas and then, um, just wait for them to come back and tell them and if they don't like the ideas I say, "Well, it's your fault for going off," which some people do in my group...Yeah, disappearing and that like "Oh, where've they gone?"...To do it all by myself...that's what's freaky. Cos "Can you stop messing around cos I really wanna do this..."'

21:25 Ludo is already running to the steps, Dominic in close pursuit. Sam - not as big as the other boys - follows momentarily but gives up. Christopher is close by, watching the chase from by the classroom door.

Rory charges up the ramp, pursued on the History walkway by Ludo, now a bank robber once more, cradling an imaginary shotgun in his arms.

LUDO

21:30 Pshew!

Ludo the Robber 'shoots' Rory the Policeman and escapes down the ramp just as Dominic the Policeman and Sam the Accomplice make it to the top of the ramp via different directions.

SAM

21:35 Uh!

Sam mimes punching Rory in the face and Rory sinks down, hands on his nose as Dominic also leans against the wall in defeat. Christopher walks slowly towards the fight scene.

21:40 In the distance, beyond the bottom of the ramp, Ludo presses the buttons on his mobile phone with great concentration to ensure it is set to the crucial sound effect - 'gun shot' - before edging back up the ramp.

Meanwhile, Dominic runs down the History steps and round to the bottom of the ramp. His lips are pursed and his arms set high as he points his imaginary rifle up the ramp.

DOMINIC

22:00 Pow!

The 'rifle' kicks up in his arms with the force of the shot. Dominic moves up the ramp to 'assess the damage'.

Ludo is back at the bottom of the ramp again, his eyes and mouth open in excitement. This time his 'pistol' is already set with the required sound effect and he fires another shot, dashing up the ramp once more.

VOICEOVER - 'What I think is that if we do do drama then I think like we should do it in a drama place, as there's more space for people to have ideas and to run around...Drama's fun but learning's not, basically.'

8.6.2 Structuring the improvisation

Ideas are generated in the space between participants. This is important when the space is not fixed by classroom furniture, dictating (restricting) the gaze and distance of interaction. Therefore when the physical space is crowded or invaded, the forming of ideas is constricted. The use of space by the pupils defines the way the group operates. By moving, pupils pull and stretch it, and if the dominant actors move, others are required to follow in order to be part of the action (20:40). Participants need a large enough space to be able to speak and move as they wish without obstacles; however, too large a space and they may struggle to keep all members within their boundaries as well as struggle to communicate across it vocally and physically. The ability to move freely about the classroom space also reveals the pupils' overriding desire to interact with friends, as well as the limited authority that the pupils have over each other. Their only motive for remaining locked to the designated space is if they were sufficiently invested in the group task and/or if the teacher's dictating of boundaries overrode their own.

The problem for the pupils in terms of the devising process is how to structure the group action in order to fulfil the task as directed by the teacher and yet 'manage' each other's ideas and self-interested desires. 'Structure' here refers to what the pupils choose to do in terms of the tools they deploy and their division of labour but the guiding force comes from the social rules of engagement that the pupils negotiate once the usual classroom rules are suspended. Whilst Ludo's group rehearse, two other groups were witnessed talking about what they might do and say rather than trying out ideas and revising them. Given that they are all required to be part of the presentation, it is unsurprising that they would want to state their own preferences and clarify precisely what each person's function is. In interview, however, one boy reflects that by spending most of the time discussing ideas, they left themselves very little time to actually prepare physical action. On the other hand, both Ludo's group and a different, all-girl group demonstrate their ability for the whole group to commit to in-role spontaneous improvisation. They are able to stop and restart their scene

and improvise both physical and verbal action. Some groups rely on producing a written script to give their piece structure, however, as Ludo comments, in presentation this sometimes resulted in pupils merely reading aloud. This is rather than what one supposes he means by ‘acting out’ which involves bringing the characters ‘to life’ with physical action.

I argue that there is a tension between the spontaneous nature of physical and proximal exploration and the self(pupil)-imposed structuring of verbal content, sometimes through textual (written script) means. On the one hand the inhabiting of a fictional world and role might give rise to spontaneous decision-making that can be later reflected upon as part of internalising events and perspectives. On the other hand, by pre-empting ‘what is going to happen and what we are going to say’ as was observed in several groups, the ‘lived-through” element is potentially reduced as the task becomes more focused on recalling what words one should be speaking and where according to the script and not forgetting or looking foolish in front of one’s peers. By filling their devised pieces with verbal exchange and little else, vital exchanges such as gesture and facial expression also lose their potential for a discussion on interpreting visual images and communicating mood and character.

In this episode it is apparent that even with limited information or planning about the scenario (derived from the image), they are eventually able to negotiate a spontaneous improvisation of the narrative whilst shifting in and out of role. By glancing at the text of the transcribed episode, it is also very apparent how little the pupils communicate verbally compared to how much is explicit or implicit through gesture and movement (as seen in the previous Geography case study). The content is derived from their experience of media culture – the fantasy of playing ‘cops and robbers’ more preferable than an experience similar to what the pupils may have had in person. Nevertheless, the pupils instinctively go to some lengths to incorporate realistic elements to the action, including body movements and sound effects (22:00). In the final presentation, their movements and physical communication are noticeably more subtle. This may be due to the constricted space inside the classroom as opposed to outside, as Ludo hints (22:05), and the close proximity of the audience. The

existence of the audience may also put pressure on the actors, causing them to reduce their energies so as not to look foolish for over-investing. Thirdly, it may be that without the spontaneity of the devising period, the pupils believe that they do not need to physically communicate but to impart information to the audience about what is happening via dialogue, which was also greater in 'performance' than in the devising episode.

8.6.3 Responsibilities

The action and participation is guided by the most forceful member of the group. An all-girl group paused more to clarify each stage of the scene – “I go...then you say...” (said mostly by one girl) – and yet with more sense of supporting each other with positive feedback as another girl replies, “Oh, that’s good”. As Ludo is the creator of his scenario (it was mostly his ideas injected into the sketched image) others are permitted to contribute as they are unable to lead the action in any distinctly different direction. The image – being created at the moment of devising a narrative – becomes their text, rather than the other groups who have a fixed image as a starting point to work from. Nevertheless, they seem aware of their collaborative duty as part of their responsibility for fulfilment of the task. Reflecting in interview, the pupils are certain of the negative impact of either disruptive/disaffected behaviour - “messaging about” (20:55) - or taking too much control – sounding “bossy” (21:00). In this way their predicament is similar to that of the teacher – how to manage and negotiate the collaborative process without dominating.

This can be conceptualised in the following way:

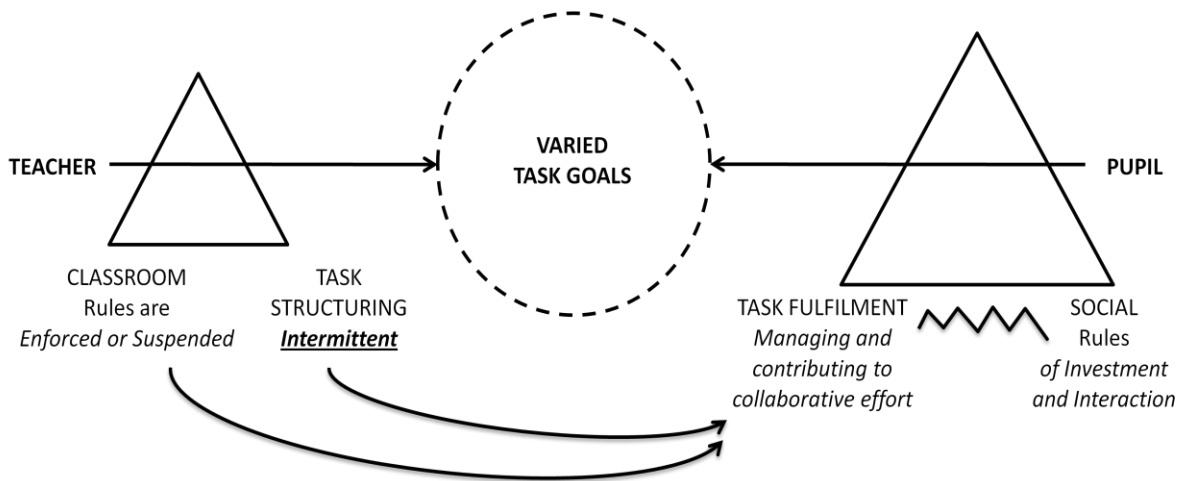


Figure 4 – tension and interrelations along the lower plane of classroom activity
 (The dashed line is used as the goals are varied and the focus is on the lower planes)

This social struggle formed a significant part of the pupil interview where they reveal the importance of being able to trust their peers in order to invest in the task and the lure of rewards that can put their ability to ‘blend in’ in jeopardy. Where drama-as-toolkit exposes effort and interaction, peer relations become even more important.

Eric (2a Narrator) With people you’ve known for a lot longer because you can be more like yourself. I know it’s a bit weird but when you’re with people you don’t know...you can’t really be yourself as much.

Ellie Because I find if you’re with other people you don’t ‘act’ as much...When you’re with people you know, you just like...do it and you get on because you’re with your friends but if you’re not with your friends then you don’t want to do it so you’re like...

Researcher OK

Ludo You don’t want to work with them
 (Pupil Group Interview, 07:15)

Researcher Would you say doing Drama like this is actually quite daring?

Eric It’s scary (half-laughs)

Ellie (giggles)

Researcher What’s scary about it?

Ellie Cos some people take the Mickey and like...
 (giggles)

Eric (giggles)

Ellie They'll be stupid about it and..

Researcher Do you mean when you're in the groups or when you're performing to an audience?

Ellie In the groups. They just mess around...the whole time...and not actually pay attention...And sometimes you're with people you don't get on with...and nobody else is doing anything...and if you do something, like, right...make it happen or something, then...I'll like blend in with the group cos otherwise they'll say "Oh, goody two-shoes, you're always doing that thing" or actually doing the work while they sit around and not do it. It means if you do that then you get bored and also...if you do things the right way then you get rewarded (giggles) like...you get House points, and stuff like that. So you actually get stuff out of it if you do the work. Also you get told off if you don't do it. You get told off (laughs loudly).

(Pupil Group Interview, 08:20)

8.6.4 Tension across the system

I argue that tools exist as both problems and solutions. After the first set of presentations, the teacher introduces masks as a way of trying to make the pupils think more about what they are portraying, a kind of framing device. This is her 'solution' to the interpretation 'problem'. The pupils, however, do not have previous experience or an understanding of how to use the masks effectively according to dramatic conventions. They know that they 'have to use' them so do so (in most cases) but they become another problem of what to do, rather than a solution for the pupils' perspective. Space is also a problem in how to move around and adapt to it but also a solution in unlocking possibilities for constructing and presenting narrative/interpretation. The final comment of the girl in the interview also reveals a pupils' perspective of the task in terms of the end goals – task fulfilment is measured in terms of getting it 'right' and the short-term achievement in the teacher's eyes. The concern for getting the task done whilst negotiating social relationships and satisfying personal needs overrides any long term perspective of their developing understanding of learning processes.

Figure 5 (below) brings together the tensions identified on the lower plane (see figure 4) with a way of understanding the teacher’s and pupils’ appropriation of communicative tools (see Figure 3). This gives an overall impression of the classroom activity system, and visually highlights just how complex the interrelationships are. The teacher, by enforcing or suspending classroom rules, frames – or attempts to frame - pupil interaction through discussion and reflection, creating an audience, and use of physical space. This has an impact on the physical, proximal, verbal and textual means by which pupils communicate their ideas.

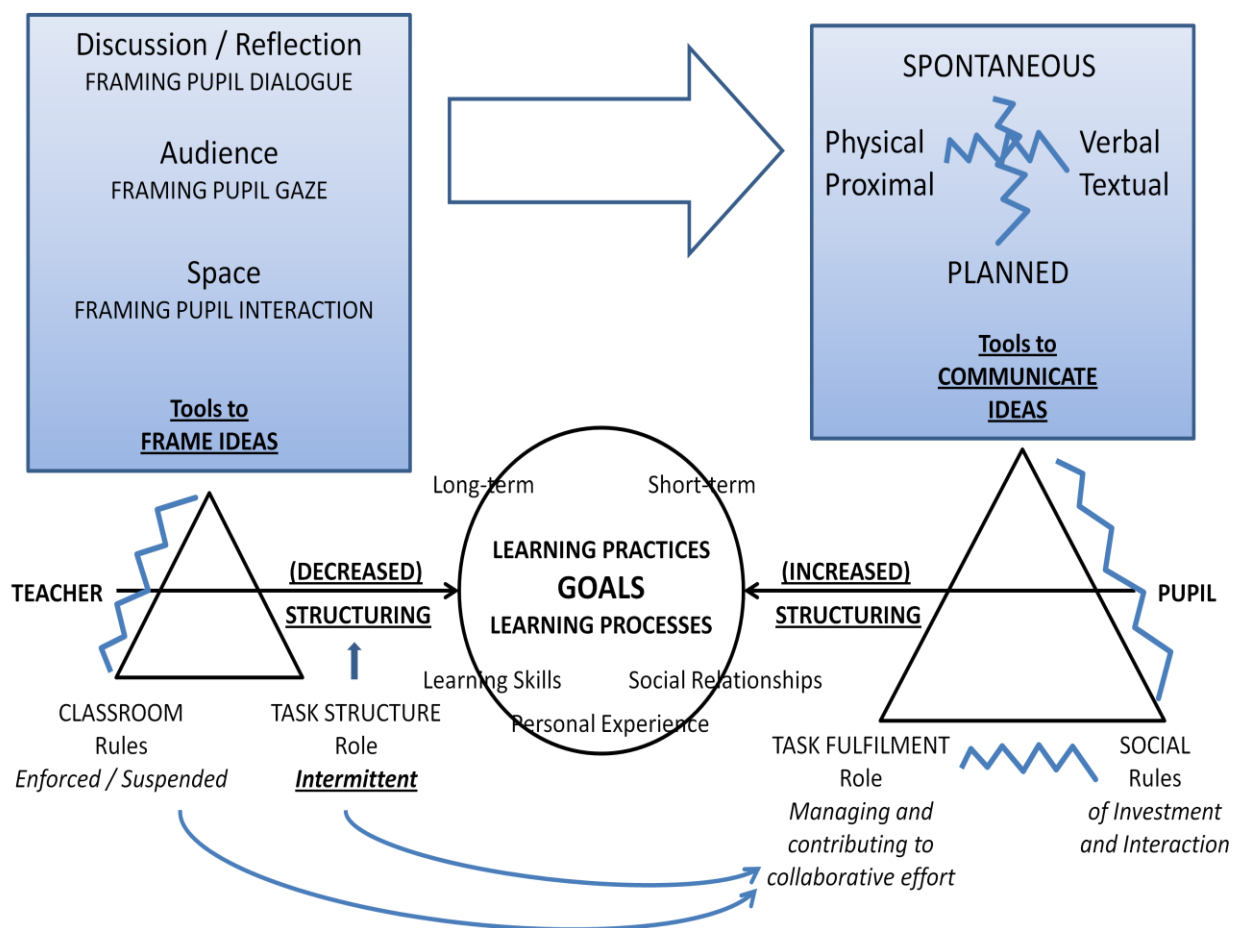


Figure 5 – tensions across the classroom activity system

Within this toolkit there are also tensions as the pupils attempt to spontaneously develop and share ideas whilst increasing the amount of structure as they deem necessary to the task and their

interaction. As the teacher shifts in role from dominant to intermittent enforcer of structure and rules, the pupils must increase their own responsibility for their action. Social rules of accepted behaviour, according to their own culture, friendship groups and confidence or trust play a large part in their ability to manage the collaborative effort. With their heightened awareness of their peers, and their limited understanding of dramatic form, their ability to develop an understanding of the empathetic process and value of drama-as-tool as something different to representation is potentially restricted. Without extended scaffolding of the internalisation process, the pupils do not reveal any signs of coming to new understandings.

8.7 Conclusion

8.7.1 Conclusions from this case study

Figure 6 (below) returns the very basic organisation of roles and action of the teacher and pupils as interpreted from the observations and interviews.

The teacher's appropriation of framing tools is directed towards structuring pupil action and their developing understanding of learning processes and practices. Integral to the teacher's ability to guide the action are the classroom rules, part of established institutional rules for teacher and pupil interaction. The pupils deploy communicative tools in order to interact with the other members of their community and to fulfil the task as set by the teacher. Instead of the classroom rules by which the teacher regulates action, the pupils are influenced by their own complex social rules that guide their interaction and their investment in working towards goals.

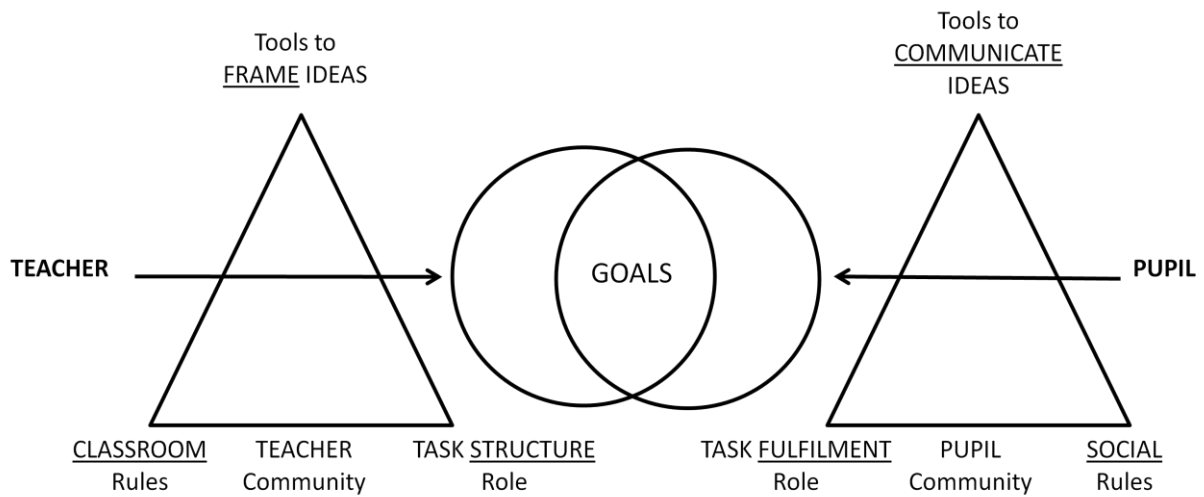


Figure 6 – basic organisation of classroom activity in this case study

In the appropriation of drama-as-toolkit, tension points exist between:

- framing and communicative tools
- the expectations and motivations of the teacher and pupils
- the way of working and the lower plane of rules and division of labour.

The relaxing of classroom rules creates chaotic spaces where the pupils sometimes struggle to communicate. When they are no longer restricted in proximity and direction of focus, their self-interest and relative power is revealed. When restrictions – including dramatic conventions such as the audience - are reemployed, there is an uneasy transition.

Tension exists between the required investment (defined by teacher and task) and the social force of appearing to comply with the culture’s accepted attitudes to the learning process, in other words, showing effort or taking the lead may be approved of or frowned upon. This is important as the nature of drama-as-tool makes it obvious when effort is or is not made. The expectations of the genre are that the actor will commit to the fictional scenario as will the audience, and breaking from this hinders the ability to suspend disbelief. The group contribution of verbal and non-verbal action (including in-role stillness) also makes it more apparent when individuals do not add to the collective

creation of the scene. The understanding of the logical action of a character, and the supporting and developing of others' roles, is important.

Even though the pupils constructed narratives for their scenes, the lack of content for the benefit of the audience to interpret made it a rejecting of the actor-audience relationship fundamental to the interpretation and evaluation process that would qualify the task as contributing to an understanding of how verbal and physical sign systems operate. One might also wonder if the lack of a link between pieces also meant that pupils in the audience had little base understanding of the scenario. As discussed in the previous chapters, pupils are challenged to improvise and interpret physical action, but where learning goals are clearly defined by subject content the focus on dramatic form is potentially diverted away and yet the curriculum content can also provide valuable material for improvisation.

A successful realisation of the type of task in this case study seems to require:

- A shared understanding of the goal
- Equality of labour
- Knowing and using verbal and non-verbal action that is logical within the scenario
- The ability to deploy this action
- The ability to sustain and clearly communicate this action and focus, being aware of the gaze of others, i.e. other actors and the watching audience

Pupils may be aware of these criteria in part and they are only achieved to a degree.

There exists an implicit sense of democracy – that one should not dictate; that it is 'fair' but also necessary that everyone is clear what action is expected of them. There is then a tension here with and within those who have clear ideas or a definite sense of how to structure the action.

What makes these requirements unique in a classroom context? This level of pupil decision-making is unparalleled in a positive manner: the pupils potentially become independent, unlocking their potential for creativity and shifting power relations. The potential negative effects are the risky,

unsafe, chaotic interactions and the diverted goals as individuals collide. This returns us to the question of achieving an appropriate level of structuring and modelling by the teacher, the opposite end of the spectrum having already been investigated in the case of the Religious Studies classroom.

Although the rationale for deploying drama-as-tool is for pupils to engage empathetically and offer a space for independent, collaborative creativity, the assumption that pupils do not require structure or modelling of the toolkit raises tensions and contradictions in the process that restricts the potential success in achieving learning goals. A teacher may attempt to use drama strategies to work empathetically and physically in order to achieve a deeper, more meaningful and longer-lasting connection with the curriculum content. However, without structuring the process or modelling the practical application of communicative tools – i.e. how do it – the outcome is dependent on the existing abilities and confidence of the individual pupils with the tools. The pupils struggle to manage each their own and each other's contributions due to the tensions within the negotiation of social relationships between peers, once the teacher has stepped back and relinquished control of interaction.

'Drama helps you remember' and 'drama is fun', but the willingness to openly invest on a personal and emotional level is counterintuitive in a risky social space. This does not mean it is an impossible goal. The teacher in this case believes in the value of drama-as-tool and the object – empathetic experience – to be worked on. The pupils find the tool rewarding for different reasons and when given free reign, they use it for their own purposes, including to subvert rules. Ironically, they do share a goal of engaging in a figuring out of social relationships: coming to an understanding of empathy is the teacher's concern, but the pupils have perhaps more pressing need to understand each other and where they fit in the classroom culture whilst creating and reinforcing their own social rules. These social rules seem to become even more prominent in the case of drama-as-tool.

8.7.2 Returning to the research questions

As seen in other case studies, pupils can reject the expected actor-audience relationship by breaking out of role or intruding into the defined performance space verbally or physically. This can break the suspension of disbelief, divert attention and interrupt the experience, highlighting the problem of trying to conform to theatre performance conventions, noted by Way and Boal in their desire to cross physical and metaphorical boundaries between actor and spectator.

I perceive the communicative toolkit as operating a primary level, having the direction function of making. The process of drama and concept of empathetic thought are at the secondary level as they are more abstract modes of action. I propose that when drama is conceptualised solely as a toolkit, its application is perceived as direct and immediate, however, it is actually more complex, abstract and therefore more problematic. Empathetic intelligence can be perceived as being made up of a number of processes, adding to the problem for the teacher of assessing how far the goals of embodied experience and empathetic understanding are reached. The group contribution of verbal and non-verbal action (including in-role stillness) makes it apparent when individuals do not add to the collective creation of the scene. This can be a source of frustration for the pupils as well as the teacher. There is a transparency of personal investment on a practical level. However, the issue of monitoring emotional connection is again unresolved.

As seen in the previous case study (Geography) and this, when released from the teacher's control of interaction, pupil groups fall into a workable hierarchy, contributing to the dynamic rule-making for peer interaction. There is tension here within and between individuals who have clear ideas or a definite sense of how to structure the action. They fight for and yet struggle with an implicit sense of democracy – to dictate roles and action is wrong; to be 'fair' and also to invest equally is right. The nature of drama makes it obvious when effort is or is not made. However, tension exists between the required investment (defined by teacher, task and peers) and the social force of appearing to comply with the culture's accepted attitudes to the learning process. These attitudes may result in

showing too much effort (being a 'goody') or taking the lead as frowned upon, and, conversely, a mocking or apathetic air being celebrated. In considering the historical development of the tool, there would seem to be a shift from the performative nature of drama to process and possibly, in these circumstances, to the performance product again. In helping pupils to negotiate the social complexities of the classroom, it would seem necessary to focus more on the process.

Teachers express a concern to protect pupils from undue social pressure that may work against efforts to improve the enjoyment in their learning experience. When pupils are no longer restricted in proximity (sat independently at desks) and direction of focus (facing the teacher), the pupils' self-interest and relative power over each other is revealed. Without an 'expert' guiding the structure and a renewed focus on learning goals at each stage of the creative process, the freedom to experiment and make decisions may divert, or even impede, collaborative work and learning. Away from the obvious source of control the pupils are seen to impose their own structure and criteria for successful completion of the tasks. The pupils find the tool rewarding for different reasons and when given free reign, they use it for their own purposes, including subversion of classroom rules or dramatic conventions. This is particularly obvious when classroom rules or rules of the drama are suddenly reinforced – there is a struggle to establish who controls the action.

The pupils are not so much individuals interacting with their separate social context but are more an integral part of the classroom and transform the cultural practice through their own shifts in membership and responsibility. The pupils share a goal of engaging in a 'figuring out' of social relationships and through drama tasks they directly confront each other. The way in which the pupils choose to operate reveals as much about the established practices of the classroom as the way these practices are reinforced or changed. Developing knowledge, understanding and skills is primarily of the teacher's concern. The pupils, on one hand subscribing to this, on the other hand seem to have a more pressing need to understand each other and where they fit in the classroom culture whilst creating and reinforcing their own social rules.

CHAPTER 9

DRAMA AS A SOCIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN SECONDARY CLASSROOMS: CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Until now the student has always stood on the teacher's shoulders. He has looked upon everything through his teacher's eyes and judged everything by the way his teacher thought...Whether someone is an inspiring teacher is not the point in the least. Nor is the problem the fact that this inspiration does not always reach the student. The real point is that the student must be made to become enraptured by the very same thing. (Vygotsky 1997:342-343)

9.1 The aims of the research

The purpose of this research is to explore the ongoing historical development of drama in school classrooms, specifically, how drama tasks are currently being incorporated into secondary curriculum subject lessons other than drama in order to work towards specific learning goals.

I wanted to explore beyond the individual's action, to understand a) their relationship with others and the environment in, and with, which they interact; b) the culture of established practices in the classroom space that is developed over time.

The review of literature I undertook highlighted the ever-shifting views on the purpose and nature of secondary education, particularly since the mid-twentieth century, and the changing status and nature of classroom drama in response. With such broad interpretations and values of drama-as-toolkit, it was hard to anticipate what would emerge from the case studies. By focusing on individual

classrooms as the cultural and historical contexts, I have been able to present unique narratives. Moreover, I have been able to discuss the cases in terms of both varied appropriation of drama-as-toolkit as well as broader perspectives on teaching and learning in contemporary settings.

9.2 The research process and original contribution to knowledge

Through my chosen case studies, my research contributes to an understanding of drama within the social space of the secondary (non-drama) classroom, rather than the popular research site of primary or secondary school drama lessons and workshops. The demands of the curriculum, as pupils approach an age of public examination, also provide a particular direction to this research. Equally distinct are the participating teachers, who have not received much or any formal training in the appropriation of drama as a pedagogical toolkit. Whereas recent research may focus on intervention partnership projects or the experiences of teacher undertaking professional development courses in classroom-based drama, this study contributes to an understanding of what lies beyond these projects with those teachers who are developing drama as a pedagogical toolkit within their own practice.

9.2.1 The researcher's and reader's perspectives

I have interpreted and represented the classroom contexts and events as accurately as possible. However, in my attempt to provide a rich and lively description for the reader, I know I will have used words and phrases that make particular assertions about events. Without being able to share the live or video recorded events, this is a compromise I have attempted to make. By being open and flexible in my approach to observation and interview, yet rigorous in my analysis, I believe I have presented a trustworthy account of the case studies.

As a researcher, but also as a trained drama teacher, I was aware of my own bias towards many drama conventions and towards their positive potential for exploration and expression of ideas. I had to acknowledge that I would encounter different views that I may be tempted to judge. I was also aware of what would be my own preferred structuring approaches when undertaking drama tasks and had to observe the lessons of others with a clear mind in order to focus on the unique contributions of the participants. I did not wish to fall into an intervention study as my focus was very much on the teacher's own developed practice.

I am aware that those reading and interpreting my findings for themselves are likely to have experience of classroom drama. They may be equally disposed as I to passing judgement on whether the cases are examples of 'good' lessons involving drama tasks. As with my own approach, I stress that although much can be gleaned about teacher and pupil interaction when tasks are structured in a certain way, the purpose is to discuss this in the context of the teacher's and pupils' own goals. The case study lessons may not all be examples of good practice of in-role work, however, the distinct way of working highlights important underlying issues regarding the culture of each classroom. This draws our attention to the contexts in which pedagogical tools are developing and adds to our understanding of historical change.

9.2.2 Methodological consideration of Cultural Historical Activity Theory as a heuristic tool

Methodologically, my research explores ways of recording, analysing and presenting complex classroom interaction, and that which is made more complex by the nature of drama tasks. In particular, I reflect on the generation, analysis and presentation of video data. My analysis is not concerned with the minutiae of interaction, but takes both verbal and non-verbal communicative tools and places them alongside ideas about relationships and hierarchies, investigating the 'live event' as a whole.

Cultural Historical Activity Theory can help to provide a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis but one that is not static. At its core is the study of the possibility for change, and this goes hand in hand with a study of the possibilities of drama-as-toolkit. Having only been developed over the past two decades, it might still be considered in its infancy as a theoretical tool. My appropriation of this tool is a distinctive contribution to its development, given its previous and continuing strong association with research in the adult workplace and industrial sites, and comparatively limited use in classroom-based research.

The rationale for taking a cultural-historical perspective in my analysis stems from a desire to understand meaningful appropriations of drama as a pedagogical toolkit by examining social interaction and communication within the classroom cultural context and developing practices over time. This encouraged me to create a focus for the research questions that is broader than individuals' experiences, and views the classroom and its diverse elements as influential in the learning process. CHAT allows for multiple perspectives and voices. The resulting approach for the study is one that does not focus on a small number of participants in isolation, even though it is possible to use the theoretical tool with a few individuals. By having to take into account all members of the classroom, and the wider cultural context, there is a greater demand placed on the researcher to maintain a broad focus whilst exploring events in detail.

From this theoretical perspective, the human participants are not reacting directly to their environment, but their action is mediated by cultural tools. In my research I view drama as the mediating toolkit that includes the communicative tools of proximal, physical, verbal and spatial relations. Drawing on Pavis' work helped to observe and acknowledge the range of tools that can be appropriated in making meaning, and the particular relationship and mutual understanding held between actor and audience. The tensions between the points of the activity system, and the recognition of desired outcomes, have brought me to a closer understanding of how each classroom system functions. Whilst appreciating that each case study is unique, by utilising an analytical

'blueprint', it enables common themes and tension points to be recognised. The act of attributing data to elements of the system also highlights its integrated nature and where elements are so closely related. By considering what relationship or impact each could be seen to have with or on another part of the system provides a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis but one that is not static.

Despite this positive evaluation, the tool has not been without its challenges. On a practical level, the translation of abstract ideas from my own mind, to a diagrammatic form and then to written text exposed these difficulties. Whereas the social interactions in a classroom, and moreover in a drama task, are ever-changing, the representation of this in a two-dimensional diagram can appear fixed. By committing to a reworking of one's interpretation by physically reworking the appearance and labels attributed to the triangular diagrams, I have taken a dynamic approach to the analysis. However by including the diagrams amongst the text that describes the case studies, there is a risk that the reader may be put off by their complexity or the fact that the interpretation does not quite match their own. To not include the diagrams would be to ignore a core part of my methodology and my contribution to research. In each case study I have focused on a distinct part of the activity system at a time to progressively up an impression of the overall system.

Engeström's third generation activity theory model considers a) action along different planes, b) tensions between elements of the system, and c) historical factors. In this research, classroom activity is conceptualised as two dynamic systems whereby the teacher and pupils are the subject of each. I have come to appreciate that it is through the particular feature of this theoretical model of identifying the subject and goals, that the researcher achieves a core understanding of the motivation behind action. In Engeström's model, the systems are overlapping, however this presents a challenge when considering teacher and pupil goals as it is difficult to determine how far, if at all, they are shared goals. As seen in the case studies, the motivating forces are many and varied and the stronger desire for change seems to come from the teacher. This will – analytically and

socially – weaken the stance of the pupil. If we consider the powerful force of drama-as-toolkit and the impact it has on classroom relations, a teacher-centric model is also false. The key then is the shared use of toolkit. The teacher and pupils are bound by their joint engagement in the drama task. By analysing the relationship between the points of the system, we discover where goals are shared, but also are not; equally how these tensions impact on the appropriation of tools by the participants and, vice versa, the appropriation of tools (influenced by knowledge, expertise and other social and cultural concerns) feeds back to the problem of shared goals. It is difficult for a researcher to work with CHAT in the complex setting of classrooms, but equally one can acknowledge the benefits and deep understanding that can be gained by embracing these challenges.

The teacher has defined aims for the learning practices and eventual learning outcomes, and they and the pupils operate within a structure of rules and roles that are evolving over time. It is the relations and tensions between these elements that form the focus of my inquiry, taking into account the cultural context and its capacity for change. This has influenced my perspective during observations to look specifically for participants responding to others and to values that are both social and relating to learning. A problem here is the fact that in diagrammatic form, the system can appear fully operational and smooth-flowing unless the tension points are clearly highlighted (for example, in this thesis the diagrams use the symbol $\wedge/\vee/\wedge$). It is vital to remember and convey the transitory nature of each event, each moment of action. This is a note for researchers when analysing data but also to readers of these diagrams: they can only relate to finite periods of time.

The specific contribution of CHAT to the analysis is that researcher selection and analysis of data is often succeeded by a workshop laboratory that directs participants to consider change. I did not take the process this far in my research, although it would be interesting to consider the responses of participants when faced with an interpretation of their activity system. In this way, research studies can move into a new sphere in contributing to developing educational practice.

My chief reflection is the recognition of the need for a clear framework when considering complex social interaction. In enquiring what relationship or impact each element of could be seen to have with or on another part of the system, CHAT provides a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis but one that is not static. At its core is the study of the possibility for change, and this I recognise goes hand in hand with a study of the possibilities of drama-as-toolkit.

9.3 A summary of case study findings

Even just through exploring the teacher's goals, it is possible to trace the historical legacy of drama as a pedagogical toolkit. Most certainly within curriculum subject lessons it is deployed as a toolkit to achieve specific curriculum goals rather than being of stand-alone worth, a goal in its own right.

The teachers' structuring of lesson tasks is directed towards goals, three being distinct in across all of the case studies. Firstly, and perhaps overriding, there is a concern for improved and lasting knowledge and understanding of curriculum content. Here, concerns of the 1960s are still prevalent in addressing child-centred and motivational approaches. Secondly there is an interest in developing the social values of the pupil and engaging them on a personal, emotional level. The perceived importance of social problem-solving and playful exploration, emergent through the 1970s, is influential, as are opportunities for empathy and creativity from more recent educational priorities. Thirdly, the teacher desires and promotes a 'better' practice in their own developing approach, paying particular attention to the way pupils engage and learn with each other.

The first case study I present (Chapter 5) explores a Religious Studies classroom where the Year 10 pupils are studying a GCSE unit on Judaism. The teacher's two main goals are to improving exam results and providing an opportunity for moral and spiritual development. Analysis of the observed lessons and interviews reveals tension between the goal of engaging pupils both on an emotional level and with them assimilating the curriculum content for recall in examination. The second case

study explores a History classroom (Chapter 6) where Year 7 pupils are studying the Murder of Thomas Becket. It highlights tensions between the concepts of drama as process of enquiry and drama as mode of representation. The value placed on drama-as-toolkit highlights ongoing concerns for the broad engagement of pupils and consolidation of individual pupils' acquisition of factual knowledge. Despite evidence of some enjoyment and understanding, the teacher's and pupils' concerns for ability and confidence can create tension and limit the desired embodied experience.

In the third case study of a Geography classroom (Chapter 7), I identify a process with distinct stages where the pupils are developing understandings of how to communicate with other and negotiate the sharing and co-constructing of ideas. The Year 7 pupils are studying Nauru's economic rise and decline. In their drama tasks, the potential for a 'lived experience' faces conflict with a functional concern for re-presenting curriculum content. The fourth case study explores a Year 7 Cross-Curriculum classroom (Chapter 8). Through the interpretation of photographic images into short improvised scenes, the teacher aims to develop the pupils' use of communicative tools and their understanding of its potential to convey meaning. However, there is tension surrounding pupil investment and democratic decision-making that shifts their focus from the dramatic form to a greater concern for their own social interaction.

9.4 How is drama appropriated as a pedagogical toolkit in secondary classrooms? – response to research questions

9.4.1 What are teachers' rationales for incorporating drama tasks in secondary curriculum lessons?

Teachers who incorporate drama tasks into their lessons do so without necessarily being an experienced teacher or having had specific training in drama processes and types of tasks. Teachers are motivated to incorporate drama tasks by different, and often multiple, goals. The overriding concern is for academic performance but this does not mean that other goals such as personal

engagement and pupil choice are not important; in fact they are considered key objects to be worked on en route to other learning outcomes. In terms of drama's contribution to the learning process, although teachers may be particularly disposed to developing empathetic responses or in-role tasks, drama-as-toolkit is infrequently incorporated. Whilst this may retain its uniqueness as a positive quality, its unfamiliarity may potentially make any cultural shift temporary and risky. Where there is a strong concern for factual subject content and assessment, drama-as-toolkit is found to mediate work on recalling knowledge previously generated through other means. It becomes a vehicle for consolidation and assessment. New understandings are possible through empathy and reconciling ideas with logical physical action. However, for the teacher and their pupils, this more free exploration can threaten precious time required for learning.

9.4.2 How is dramatic form appropriated in drama tasks when working towards learning goals?

As the development of skills in appropriating drama-as-toolkit is secondary to other learning outcomes, and being similar to forms of play experienced by the pupils earlier in their lives, it is easy to miss evidence of ways in which the teacher and pupils work on understandings of dramatic form. Important to both teachers and pupils seems to be: personal investment, focus, trust, narrative and vivid imagery. In some tasks, teachers will structure the drama closely; in others, pupils may script their own action in an attempt to ensure a successful outcome. More spontaneous action is, therefore, quite rare, as is the potential to achieve new meanings within a fictional space that is driven by empathetic thought and action. The perceived formality of presenting to an audience and the perceived finality of performance can encourage thorough preparation but it can also inhibit developing new understandings if they conform to a fixed interpretation.

9.4.3 How do teachers and pupils appropriate communicative tools in drama tasks?

A teacher's more developed, skilful and enduring deployment of vocal and physical expression can both engage and model for the pupils. It can be an important factor in the pupils' own understanding of the necessary atmosphere and attitudes required for learning, even though it may reinforce the teacher's authority. Nevertheless, whether in scripted or spontaneous action, the pupils are still required to make a choice about their own appropriation of communicative tools. This happens on a direct, primary level, whereas a more complex process of making links between internal thought and external action seems to remain implicit and not expanded on in reflective discussion. Despite a seemingly innate ability to play, create, tell, and show, the more prolonged and time-consuming process of exploring through, feeling and action is not so easily or independently negotiated. Equally, external vocal and physical action may more easily indicate commitment to the task and use of subject content knowledge, whereas emotional investment may be more, or remain, hidden.

I argue that the use of drama-as-toolkit both exposes and perpetuates the tensions that exist between the communicative tools, as they are varyingly appropriated by the pupils. It also does so between the supposed collaborative investment in the task and the culture of institutional and social rules for behaviour in the classroom, hence the particular focus of the fourth research question.

9.4.4 How do teachers and pupils negotiate rules and responsibilities in drama tasks?

Although teachers express a desire for more pupil choice and engagement with the learning process, the classroom activity does not shift away from being highly-structured and teacher-dominated as much as one might expect. Regardless of the degree of shift, the pupils operate under a set of social rules, almost independent from the institutional classroom rules that define peer interaction. The question is how do the drama tasks figure in these shifts and what other factors are influential?

Certainly, the risk of integrating drama tasks is that it seems to expose and potentially heighten these already-present tensions.

Classroom activity is mediated by not only classroom rules historically developed by the teacher and the institution. The perceived rules of dramatic form and culturally and historically developed social rules of interaction are also appropriated by the pupils. The teacher's position as authority figure is continually reinforced by their own actions and the embedded perceptions of the pupils. The teacher is seemingly responsible for knowledge acquisition, behaviour management, task structure and critical reflection. Although risky, there is evidence of shifts to increased pupil decision-making and creativity in negotiating multiple perspectives. However, there are tensions between a sense of democracy, of required effort and, conversely, of an apathy or resistance to the process. The way in which the teacher and pupils operate in these intermittent drama tasks reveals as much about the established and reinforced learning and social practices of the classroom, as the way these practices change in an attempt to transform the classroom culture.

9.4.5 Conclusion

Through this study I have come to understand that the way in which the teacher and pupils operate in these intermittent drama tasks reveals as much about the established and reinforced learning and social practices of the classroom, as the way these practices change in an attempt to transform the classroom culture.

Teachers are motivated to incorporate drama tasks by different, and often multiple, goals. The overriding concern is for the acquisition of factual subject content and drama becomes a vehicle for consolidation and assessment. However, other goals such as personal engagement and pupil choice may still factor when achieving empathy and reconciling ideas with logical physical action. Although some teachers may be particularly disposed to developing empathetic responses or in-role tasks,

drama-as-toolkit may still be infrequently incorporated, which leaves it a positive rarity, or risky in its unfamiliarity. However, for the teacher and their pupils, this exploratory 'meaning making' may threaten precious time required for learning. Certainly, the development of skills in appropriating drama-as-toolkit is secondary to other learning outcomes. Important to both teachers and pupils seems to be: personal investment, focus, trust, narrative and vivid imagery. Both teachers and pupils may structure the drama closely. More spontaneous action is, therefore, quite rare, as is the potential to achieve new meanings within a fictional space that is driven by empathetic thought and action. The perceived formality of presenting to an audience and the perceived finality of performance can encourage thorough preparation but it can also inhibit developing new understandings if conforming to a perceived fixed interpretation.

Despite a belief that young people have some innate ability to play, create, tell, and show, the more prolonged and time-consuming process of exploring through, feeling and action is not so easily or independently negotiated. The process of making links between internal thought and external action seems to remain implicit and not expanded on in reflective discussion. This does not mean that it does not occur in other classrooms, although it may have implications for teacher training. A teacher's superior and more enduring deployment of vocal and physical expression can both engage and model for the pupils, but may also reinforce the teacher's authority, accentuated by the embedded perceptions of the pupils. The teacher is seemingly responsible for knowledge acquisition, behaviour management, task structure and critical reflection. Nevertheless, pupils are still required to make a choice about their own appropriation of communicative tools and creativity in negotiating multiple perspectives. The perceived rules of dramatic form and culturally and historically developed social rules of interaction are also appropriated by the pupils. There are tensions between a sense of democracy, of required effort and, conversely, of an apathy or resistance to the process.

9.5 Possibilities for further research

In considering the place of this research in the field of drama in classrooms, there are other related areas in which further study could provide useful evidence and perspectives.

Firstly, further research could explore the use of drama-as-toolkit in other curriculum subjects. This would build on this research into Humanities subjects by broadening the perspective across the whole curriculum to include subjects such as Science, Maths, and Modern Foreign Languages. These new classroom cases would be expected to encompass different goals, established practices and types of task, although there may be similar values and tensions. Data collection could be similar to this research, based on medium-term observation and interview.

Secondly, research could explore the concepts of thought, emotion and logical action in classroom drama, and the influence of Western theatre on drama-as-toolkit in educational practice. This would build on the way this research examines the internal and external processes demanded by drama tasks and the way they are negotiated with learning goals. It would focus very specifically on what process pupils are required to go through when undertaking in-role work and what principles of dramatic form they base their work on, either independently or under teacher guidance. In order to understand how drama tasks figure in the learning process, it would be necessary to examine how pupils think and act in much more detail and from moment to moment. Data collection may be more problematic as specific pupils would need to be tracked more closely and in more detail, perhaps through personal microphones, by interviewing the pupils independently, and using reflective journals for extended personal reflection. Here, Vygotsky's problematising of the actor's work could again be used.

Thirdly, research may investigate explore potential longer-term effects of drama tasks across the curriculum, as units of work continue in these subject lessons. This is prompted by teacher goals to increase attainment by depth of understanding and recall, and their incorporation of drama-as-

toolkit alongside other lesson tasks. It could extend the investigation of drama-as-toolkit to trace its specific contribution to written work, which was not examined as potential data in this doctoral research, but which has previously been studied (Cremin et al 2006, Crumpler 2005, Grainger et al 2005, Booth & Neelands 1998). The investigation would seek to discover links between the experience of the drama task and the subsequent content of classroom work, whilst taking into account other influencing precursors. It may also consider the shifting attitudes of pupils to other lesson tasks, including their written work. Data could be generated through classroom observation of these tasks and through examples of pupil written work. Rather than track the class as a whole, although this is still necessary, the research would interview and track the written work of specific pupils. This would further investigate and understand their perspectives as a through line. It would also generate a dialogue regarding thought processes that may span different types of lesson task, again drawing on Vygotskian perspectives on thought and language.

9.6 Implications for educational practice

This study has implications for teachers across the curriculum and their Continuing Professional Development in the use of drama-as-toolkit. As with the teachers in this research, a teacher's experience of drama is sometimes confined to one-off workshops or single observations of another teacher, followed by their own experimentation in the classroom. If drama tasks continue to be promoted through scholarly literature, project evaluations and government initiatives, it would seem prudent to explore further opportunities for teachers of any curriculum subject to be trained in the use of drama as a pedagogical toolkit.

This study has highlighted the tendency for emphasis on recall of factual curriculum content and the authority of teacher knowledge. Not only are such values seemingly inherent in pupil perspectives on learning, these perspectives are also not automatically changed when undertaking drama tasks

that supposedly encourage multiple perspectives and new understandings. The implication for educational practice is not only to consider how such tasks might be structured and reflected upon differently to challenge these perceptions, but also how attitudes to knowledge might be more generally reconsidered in the classroom culture.

Finally, the findings suggest that in order to release the potential impact of drama tasks across the curriculum, pupils should be given opportunities to increase their own skills and understanding of drama-as-toolkit. Through familiarity with the nature of such tasks, and a more developed sense of the impact of a range of communicative tools, they may be more willing and skilled to achieve a greater investment in spontaneous action, leading to an appreciation of many different perspectives on the world.

9.7 Final reflections: drama as a pedagogical toolkit – past, present and future

What perspectives does this research offer to the field, given the cultural historical development of drama in classrooms?

Drama as a pedagogical toolkit seems to have repeatedly attempted to respond to calls for changes in teaching and learning in classrooms. These changes relate to not only academic performance, but also teacher-pupil relationships and the developing creativity and cultural awareness of the young people that schools are concerned with.

A main challenge in ensuring this transformation seems to be the continued placing of teacher as knowledge authority, reinforced by a child's experience of other similar classrooms as well as the current teacher's own positioning, all fuelled by the demands of curriculum content and assessment. A second challenge is the commonly held perception of drama as a performance-oriented act that, like the perception of the subject content, is final and not destined for change.

How can these varying classroom conflicts be transformed into creative knowledge? By embracing and exploring differences in both opinion and interpretation – and by this I include physical interpretation – teachers and pupils can potentially achieve empathetic understanding and embodiment of other perspectives, the one informing the other. The chief difficulty with classroom systems is the sheer complexity of social relations between many individuals, each with their own personal wider experience. In drama tasks, these social forces are seen to be given extra weight.

In order to create classrooms as forums that actively practise respect for diversity and democracy, participants need to reflect on the shared communicative tools that mediate action and form ways of making meaning together. Through this they engage with alternative interpretations. The participants also need to embrace an element of risk by facilitating more spontaneous action that can give rise to such diversity rather than conform to preordained perspectives.

Can schools sustain such a transformation? The development of teaching approaches may be afforded through teacher training and through the institution's awareness and support of drama as pedagogical toolkit. Pupil familiarity with the toolkit also depends upon gradual acquisition of skills from primary through to secondary level, rather than either/or. Much also depends upon the social relations of the pupils concerned and the topic of study. The novelty of drama as a unique experience might also restrain its appearance across the curriculum and what seems to be required is a smoother transition between pedagogical approaches.

This research has explored the historical development of drama as a pedagogical toolkit and its appropriation in contemporary secondary classrooms. In the context of 21st-Century classroom cultures, this research suggests that teachers and pupils, as collaborative participants in drama tasks, should have a determination to continually and confidently play on the boundaries of risk, reflection and equality in the learning process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Paperwork for Participant's Informed Consent:

- Information Leaflet for Parents/Guardians
- Pupil Consent Form
- Parent Consent Form
- Teacher Consent Form
- Headteacher Consent Form

APPENDIX B

Interviews:

- Timetable for interviewing teachers and pupils
- Early schedule to guide preliminary interviews with teachers
- Example of interview schedule with topics and video clip references
- Pupil written questionnaire (blank) tailored for History case study

APPENDIX C

Examples of transcription styles:

- *First style – play script*
- *Second style – narrative prose*
- *Third style – film script*

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RESEARCHING SECONDARY EDUCATION

LEARNING FROM TEACHERS AND PUPILS

Information for Parents/Guardians

Dear Parent/Guardian –

The school is working in partnership with the University of Oxford to carry out research into different aspects of the teaching and learning. In this kind of study, the research looks at the sorts of things pupils are doing in lessons and ask a few pupils questions about their experiences at school and their opinions.

This term the **[Subject] Department** is taking part in a study to find out more about **using role-play** as part of their studies and are one of a number of schools involved in the study across the country. I will be observing your child's lessons with [Teacher] for 2-3 weeks, even though only a part of these lessons will involve role-play. [Teacher] is happy that the research will be a positive contribution to the school and will not have any negative effect on your child's progress.

Nothing about the way the lessons are carried out or the way the work is done or assessed is in any different way to what the teacher would normally with this age group. The research study always aims to maintain the normal classroom environment as a positive exploration of classroom teaching. The research will also not make any evaluation of the general competence of teacher or pupils.

Please take time to read the details of the study then fill in the form so that the pupil can bring it to their next [subject] lesson. If you wish, you can choose to opt out if you do not want your child to be involved in a particular part of the research by not ticking the boxes. You also need to give consent to the video component (further information provided below).

To find out more about the research study itself, please feel free to email me or telephone me at the Department of Education or contact the member of staff involved.

Thank you very much.

Hannah Grainger Clemson

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How will information be gathered?

For this research, the topic lessons will be **observed**, including the lesson(s) where role-play is incorporated to see how the teacher and the pupils interact.

The research will also incorporate the views and experiences of the teacher and pupils through a short **questionnaire** and an **interview**. Only 4-6 pupils will be interviewed and will be pre-selected at random or approached later in the study. The researcher will always explain to the pupil what they are researching and why and the child is always free to decide whether or not they want to take part in any particular study. All observation and interview notes will be kept in a secure place for a maximum of 3 years before being destroyed.

In order to make sure that the researcher can pay full attention to the classroom activities and make accurate notes, some tasks will be **audio and video recorded**. This is purely for the researcher's use in reviewing the events of a lesson and will not be published or used in any other way but it is a vital part of **ensuring the research is carried out to very high standards**. The camera will be very discreet but according to ethical guidelines, the parent of any child videoed needs to agree to this beforehand. If the parent does not agree, the researcher will still observe the whole class, but will simply not video that particular child.

What will happen to the research?

The observations from this school will be put together with findings from several other schools and will be published as doctoral research (a 'DPhil' thesis – also known as PhD) in 2010. The school and parents may request to see a copy of the report at this time.

Will my child be mentioned specifically in the study?

No, not by name. Pupils may be mentioned if they do or say anything as part of a group or individually that is significant for the study BUT all names, including that of the teacher and school, will be changed to protect pupil identities.

What does this mean?

It may sometimes be called 'drama' but teachers of a range of subjects often use these kinds of role-play activities in the classroom as part of topic work. Here are two examples:

Using 'in-role' strategies in teaching and learning at secondary level

HISTORY/RELIGIOUS STUDIES: Pupils taking on the character of villagers in the 16th Century discussing what action to take with a member of the community suspected of witchcraft

MATHS/GEOGRAPHY: Pupils operating as leisure entrepreneurs, councillors and environmentalists investigating, through mapping and mathematical calculations, a case for making claims on local land.

Thank you for reading



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The impact of 'in-role' strategies
in secondary classrooms

Pupil's Consent to Participate in the Study

Please tick each of the 4 boxes below to show that you agree with each statement:

- I have been told about the study by the researcher and I understand its purpose
- I know I have the opportunity to ask the researcher questions about the study
- I understand that the researcher will keep the information from the study in a safe place; that it will be used for a PhD ('doctoral degree') project and will not be released in any other way unless I give permission. I understand that keeping information confidential is a legal requirement.
- I understand that I can choose not to answer questions in an interview or a questionnaire and that I can tell the researcher this at any time.

I also understand that it is necessary for the researcher to video parts of lessons for their record but that it will only be used for analysis by the researcher and...

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

- I am happy to be videoed
- I am not happy to be videoed

I agree to participate in this study.

PUPIL Name (in capital letters): _____

PUPIL Signature: _____ **Date:** / / 2008

RESEARCHER Name : HANNAH GRAINGER CLEMSON

RESEARCHER Signature: _____ **Date:** / / 2008

These requirements match those of the University Ethics Committee Review Form 2, Q21.

You can write any comments or questions you have here or overleaf:

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The impact of 'in-role' strategies
in secondary classrooms

Please return this form with the pupil to their next History lesson

Name of pupil: _____

➤ I am happy for this pupil to take part in:
(please tick as appropriate)

A Questionnaire

An Interview

➤ I **am / am not** happy for this pupil to be videoed (the video being purely for the researcher's own records) (please delete as appropriate)

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

These requirements match those of the University Ethics Committee Review Form 2, Q21

You can write any comments or questions you have here or overleaf:

*The impact of 'in-role' strategies
in secondary classrooms*

Teacher's Consent to Participate in the Study

Please tick the boxes below to show that you agree with each statement:

- I have been told about the study by the researcher and I understand its purpose
- I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher questions about the study
- I understand that the researcher will keep the information from the study in a secure place; that it will be used for a PhD project and will not be released in any other way unless I give permission. I understand that the maintenance of confidentiality of information is subject to normal legal requirements
- I understand that I can withdraw the class and myself from the study at any time.

I agree to participate in this study.

TEACHER Name (in capital letters): _____

TEACHER Signature: _____ **Date:** / / 2008

RESEARCHER Name (in capital letters): _____

RESEARCHER Signature: _____ **Date:** / / 2008

These requirements match those of the University Ethics Committee Review Form 2, Q21.

You can write any comments or questions you have here or overleaf:

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*The impact of 'in-role' strategies
in secondary classrooms*

Headteacher's Consent to Participate in the Study

Please tick the boxes below to show that you agree with each statement:

- I have been told about the study by the researcher and I understand its purpose
- I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher questions about the study
- I understand that the researcher will keep the information from the study in a secure place; that it will be used for a PhD project and will not be released in any other way unless I give permission. I understand that the maintenance of confidentiality of information is subject to normal legal requirements
- I understand that I can withdraw the teacher and the class from the study at any time.

I agree to the teacher and class in question participating in this study.

HEADTEACHER Name (in capital letters): _____

HEADTEACHER Signature: _____

Date: / / 2008

RESEARCHER Name (in capital letters): _____

RESEARCHER Signature: _____

Date: / / 2008

These requirements match those of the University Ethics Committee Review Form 2, Q21.

You can write any comments or questions you have here or overleaf:

APPENDIX B

Interviews:

- Timetable for interviewing teachers and pupils
- Schedule to guide preliminary interviews with teachers
- Example of interview schedule with topics and video clip references
- Pupil written questionnaire (blank) tailored for History case study

Timetable for interviewing teachers and pupils

CASE	SCHOOL	TEACHER	SUBJECT	TEACHER INTERVIEW	PUPIL Focus Group Interview
A	Community College	1. Female HoD	Religious Studies	A - Preliminary visit – 11/07/08 B - Informal discussion – 15/09/08 C - Post-final lesson – 01/12/08	4 x Y10 pupils – 01/12/08
B	Comprehensive	2. Male HoD	History	A – Preliminary visit – 03/10/08	5 x Y9 pupils – 17/10/08
C				B – Informal discussion – 03/12/08 C – Post-final lesson – 17/12/08	4 x Y7 pupils – 17/12/08
D	Boys' Day Independent	3. Female NQT (2 nd yr)	Geography	A – Preliminary visit – 25/06/08 B – Pre-first lesson – 03/11/08 C – Post-final lesson with Male HoD 20/11/08	4 x Y7 pupils – 12/11/08
E		4. Male HoD		A – Pre-first lesson – 04/11/08 B - (see 'C' above)	4 x Y9 pupils – 11/11/08
F	Comprehensive	5. Female HoD	X-Curricular Studies	A – Preliminary visit – 16/07/08 B – Informal discussion – 13/11/08 C – Informal discussion – 19/11/08 D – Informal discussion – 21/11/08	3 x Y7 pupils – 21/11/08

Schedule to guide preliminary interviews with teachers

TEACHER: PRE-TOPIC INTERVIEW

This is recorded for the accuracy and depth of my own notes and will not be used in any report until you have checked the transcript and have been given the chance to comment and give permission. For your own peace of mind and protection of confidential information, all names and references to specific people will be made anonymous unless you specify otherwise. Are you happy with this? Thank you.

Q #	Question
	Unit Aims
1	To start off I'd like you to think about the topic of work you are about to start. Can you broadly describe what the aims are and some of the activities you will be undertaking with the pupils?
2	Why have you chosen to use in-role work in this unit?
	Experience
3	When did you first use in-role work in your subject teaching and What influenced you to use it? (e.g. training, interest, perceived benefits)?
4	In your experience, what have been the pupils' attitudes?
5	What particular skills &/or personal attributes do you think a teacher needs to possess?
6	What particular skills &/or personal attributes do you think a pupil needs to possess?
	Physical Space
7	Is this arrangement typical of the classrooms in the school? How would you prefer it to be different?
8	In a lesson, during which activities do you sit down, stand up or walk around?
9	In a lesson, during which activities do the pupils stand, sit or move around?
10	Are you considering changing the classroom arrangement for the in-role work? Are there any particular challenges or positive outcomes you anticipate will be caused by a change of space?
	Interaction
11	In lessons generally, what influences your decisions to address the pupils as a whole class, in groups or individually?
12	Compared to the way you normally engage with the pupils, do you think your approach differs when using in-role work? How?
13	Compared to the way the pupils normally interact in lessons, is it different when they are working in-role? <i>Probe: level of engagement; conviction; questioning? NB difficult to remember/notice?</i>
	Relationship with Specific Class
14	Do you feel this class needs specific leading, encouraging, or any particular classroom management?
15	How do you find the pupils? <i>Independent, engaged, inquisitive, apathetic?</i>

Any further comments or questions? Thank you.

Example of interview schedule with topics and video clip references

Teacher and Pupil Interview Outline – History Year 7 interviews

TEACHER

Areas for Discussion + specific points

Video Refs

PUPILS IN-ROLE

Was there a purposeful choice of pupils?

Pupil A: 3/
14:30

Why not allow Pupil A to participate?

What Preparatory information / timing of tasks was required?

B&C 3/ 46:00

Talk about Rehearsal (Pupil B & Pupil C)

TEACHER IN ROLE

In-role:

Talk about Variety of vocal expression / & gestures

2/ 36:00 to
37:50

‘Mini roles’

Explain more about modelling questions for pupils

Modelling:

3/ 09:15

RELATIONSHIPS & REGULATION

Chatty nature of interaction with pupils?

1/ 04:00

Expectations for pupil speaking (Pupil D?)

ENGAGEMENT

Grizzly history (lice biting, blood everywhere)

Difference between classes – challenges for Teacher? for Pupil?

SPACE

Talk about movement around room

Sitting on desk

RESEARCH

Any comment on the process? Use? Distraction?

PUPILS

KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING

When answering, phrased as a question. Why?

Feel like answer may be wrong? Alternative? Aware of others?

THE PLAY

How did you find it? What was challenging?

How did you decide on how to speak & move?

Any significance of having Teacher as first narrator?

1st = 1/ 09:00
& 15:10

2nd = 1/ 21:40
& 25:30

TRIAL

How find?

Challenges? What would have made it easier?

How to have ideas for what to say? How to deliver it?

Possible without preparation? What need to know?

Was it atmospheric?

Was it believable? What would have added? Is this important at all?

FEUDAL SYSTEM - Talk about?

2/ 19:00

ACROSS CURRICULUM

Done in other lessons?

Compare to drama lessons? Is it [good] drama?

RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHER

How find Teacher?

Aware of Control? Influence?

Strict?

Is it important how teacher is?

CLASSROOM SPACE

How find arrangement?

What about moving around? Allowed? Important?

RESEARCHING
 LEARNING EXPERIENCES
 Pupil Questionnaire

*You do not need to write your name - your responses will remain anonymous.
 Your teacher will put them in an envelope so that the researcher will be the only person to read them.*

1. How did you find all the lessons you have recently done in History lessons on the Murder of Becket?

Tick one option for each statement:

	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
a. I enjoyed the topic			
b. I found the work difficult			
c. I understood some of the work, but not all of it			
d. I found the topic boring			
e. I found the work easy to understand			

Complete the following sentences about the whole series of lessons on the Murder of Becket:

2. The most enjoyable activity we did was: _____

This is because: _____

3. The hardest activity was: _____

This is because: _____

Complete the following sentences:

4. The main challenge of working with other people is _____

5. If people have different opinions, what normally happens is _____

6. What was it like acting out the Play (the story of the murder)? Tick all that you agree with:

It was fun		It was a waste of time	
I was embarrassed		I could decide for myself how to speak and move around	
It helped me learn the story		It would be easier to read it in a book	

Any other comments? _____

7. What word best describes your teacher during the lessons? (Circle one)

Leading

Listening

Helping

Organising

Arguing

another word: _____

Instructing

Questioning

Showing

Agreeing

8. You did activities that meant working in a space that was different to the way you are normally sat in lessons – the Play, the Feudal System and the Trial. What was it like?

a. It was enjoyable working in a different space because: _____

b. It was not enjoyable because: _____

9. At school, how do you think you can best show what you know and understand?

a. Choose 2 options that allow you to show your knowledge and understanding

Write '1' for your 1st choice and '2' for your 2nd choice

	A class or group discussion or presentation
	Coursework essay
	Written test
	Teacher asking questions to individual pupils
	Creative writing
	Timed exam

b. Do you think working in-role (as an imagined character) allows you to show your knowledge and understanding?

(circle one) YES NO DON'T KNOW

c. Why?

10. During 'The Trial', what was your experience of becoming a different character or imagining a role for yourself?

a. What role or character did you become? _____

b. Were you given it or did you choose it for yourself? *(circle one)* GIVEN ROLE CHOSE IT MYSELF

c. I got my ideas for what to say from _____

d. I got my ideas for facial expression and physical movement from _____

e. Did you ever feel as if you were thinking as that person? *(circle one)* YES NO DON'T KNOW

f. Did you forget you were in the classroom and imagine you were in a courtroom? *(circle one)*

NEVER SOMETIMES YES, A LOT DON'T KNOW

g. What made the 'Trial' task easy? *Tick just one statement that applies to you*

<input type="checkbox"/>	I am always good at that kind of thing
<input type="checkbox"/>	I had information and knowledge I could use
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other people helped me
<input type="checkbox"/>	The teacher helped me
<input type="checkbox"/>	A different reason <i>(please write)</i>

h. What made being part of the 'Trial' difficult? *Tick just one statement that applies to you*

<input type="checkbox"/>	I am not very good at that kind of thing
<input type="checkbox"/>	I didn't know enough about the situation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other people made it hard
<input type="checkbox"/>	The teacher did not help enough
<input type="checkbox"/>	A different reason <i>(please write)</i>

i. When you are acting as another character, is it possible to feel the same emotions as that of the character you are pretending to be?

(circle one) ALWAYS SOMETIMES NEVER DON'T KNOW

Why? _____

11. Did acting as another character in the 'Trial' make you realise something that you hadn't thought of before?

(circle one) YES NO
DON'T KNOW

If YES, what is the new thing you have learned? _____

12. For a) and b) underline the statement that is most true for you:

a) When doing the Play and Trial activities, I felt the teacher had control over what we chose to do:

MORE THAN THEY USUALLY DO ABOUT THE SAME LESS THAN USUAL

b) When doing the Play and Trial activities, I felt my teacher talked to me:

MORE THAN THEY USUALLY DO ABOUT THE SAME LESS THAN USUAL

13. Have you ever done activities similar to the Play and Trial activities in any other subject lessons?

Circle one: YES NO DON'T KNOW

If YES, which subject(s)? _____

14. What do you think are the main reasons for using activities like these in subject lessons?

Choose THREE by ticking 3 boxes:

Doing something practical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improving speaking and listening skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using your imagination	<input type="checkbox"/>	Making you more confident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having fun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linking knowledge to other experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeing things from other people's perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	Making you better at drama	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another reason: <i>(please write)</i>			

END OF QUESTIONS!

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE and TAKING PART IN
RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD!**

APPENDIX C

Examples of transcription styles:

- First style – play script
- Second style – narrative prose
- Third style – film script

First style – play script

Elliot Looks at his sheet and shifts his weight side to side.

He looks up again at Fred and rests his hands on the desks either side

(slightly louder) So does he get angry very often as well?

Fred (Looking back almost blankly and unmoved) Yes

Elliot (looking down at his sheet and quieter) So...(looking up and louder)
Does he always mean what he says when he's angry cos...

Elliot has picked up the sword that was on the desk and slams it back down again on 'mean', leaning forward, and then slaps his palms down on the desks on 'says'.

(continuing, his voice now quieter and faltering ever so slightly)
...there's been some thing in the past isn't there...?

Elliot taps the sword down again on 'been' and taps the desk with his hand a few more times, almost absent-mindedly.

Second style – narrative prose

Suddenly, Sam shouted “Get down” and he crouched low. It was time for Ludo’s carefully drawn image to come to life. Ludo also crouched, looking to his left then stepping sideways down the ramp looking back at Sam. Ludo surveyed Dominic coming round from the Geography platform to the top of the ramp, followed by Rory driving the police car from the picturee. Even though he had to stand up and walk, by turning an imaginary steering wheel and making “reor” car noises he could at least be partly satisfied.

At the bottom of the Geography steps Ludo hunched over his mobile phone, Sam bent double at his side. They both crept up the steps, Ludo first, as Dominic and Rory started down the ramp. Ludo had stopped at the top of the steps, still looking at his mobile with Sam bent over a few steps behind him, when Christopher came up the steps grinning. And then...

Third style – film script

JUDAISM – Episode 2: Jewish Prayer

Scene 2 – The Recap

[06min45]

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM (THE SAME) – Morning (2 min later) / c.9.00am

PUPILS are sat on chairs in a horseshoe surrounding an island of material and objects on the floor – boxes, material, sticks, a model boat, a plastic water feature and twinkling fairy lights. Some are leant back cross-legged, one or two lean forward, their head resting on their hands.

Posters, laminated sheets and decorations hang from the walls.

TEACHER stands at the end of the horseshoe next to a box draped with a bright cloth. She is dressed in a smart black top and long black skirt and her long hair is dyed dark red.

Our POV is behind the top end of the horseshoe, facing Teacher on a set of steps so that some of the pupils are not visible and the white handrails cut across the screen.

TEACHER

Now what did he arrange that they could buy really cheaply...

She is gesturing with her hands up and starts to wiggle her fingers.

TEACHER (CONT.)

So that he could give them all this propaganda?

BOY 1

He is immediately to her right. He is not moving and speaks in a low voice

Radios