

Creativity and Literacy: many routes to meaning

Children's language and literacy learning In creative arts projects

A research report from the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
(www.clpe.co.uk)

by

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and CfBT Action Zone - Brixton & North Lambeth

Over the period of a school year (Autumn 2003 to Summer 2004) a group of nursery and primary school teachers and children worked with creative 'arts partners' in drama, storytelling, visual arts, filmmaking, multimedia, dance and performing arts. Supported by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, the teachers looked at how children's work in these creative arts positively impacted on their language and literacy learning. Teachers described their classroom projects in *Animating Literacy: inspiring children's learning through teacher and artist partnerships* (Ellis & Safford 2005).

Parallel to and building upon the teachers' action research a CLPE research team examined children's work in these and other 'creative partnership' classrooms for an additional term (to the end of 2004). CLPE widened the study to include additional schools, teachers, arts partners and children.

This wider study, *Creativity and literacy: many routes to meaning*, analyses and compares processes, practices and roles across a range of creative projects and how all of these influence children's language and literacy learning. The findings presented here are based on CLPE's classroom observations, field notes, transcripts of children's talk, children's individual and collaborative multimodal texts, interviews with children, teachers, headteachers and artists, and teachers' notes and records.

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Children's language and literacy learning in creative arts work

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Part One

Creative arts partnerships in schools

Chapter 1

Introduction

*'We're looking for creativity now.'
(Ofsted inspector's comment)*

Two strands of research

This research looks at children's work in schools which took part in a project entitled *Animating Literacy*, commissioned by Creative Partnerships London South and CfBT Action Zone - Brixton & North Lambeth. The schools' aim was to generate creative teaching in literacy through engagement in arts activities, in collaboration with arts partners. *Animating Literacy* began with a hypothesis that literacy and work in the creative arts are connected, and that work in the creative arts can stimulate literacy. Teachers' classroom-based projects, published as individual accounts (Ellis & Safford 2005), formed the first strand of research.

Creativity and literacy: many routes to meaning forms the second strand of research and seeks to explore that hypothesis more fully, through a cross-site study of *Animating Literacy* schools and of additional schools involved in creative partnerships. This research draws on the teachers' classroom-based research and on evidence collected by an independent research team.

The *Animating Literacy* project was one of many national and local programmes to promote creative approaches to learning through collaborative projects undertaken with arts partners, and other partners with creative skills. Creative Partnerships is funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and administered by Arts Council England. But why do such projects arise at this point in history, and what is the background to the new emphasis on creativity in education?

Creativity - why now?

In the late 1990s there was a resurgence of interest in the topic of creativity in education. Although the New Labour government (which came to power in 1997) continued many of the educational policies and programmes of its Conservative predecessor, there was an interest at the highest level of government in the idea of educating for an economy of the future, which would be very different from that of the past.

Soon after coming to power, the government was approached by a small group of people who were seriously concerned at the lack of a focus on creativity in the education system and who proposed an investigation into the opportunities for promoting creativity in education. This group became the nucleus of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, which was established early in 1998. The NACCCE was set up jointly by the DfES and the DCMS with a brief to make recommendations to the Secretaries of State on promoting the creative and cultural development of young people through formal and informal education. Its report, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* appeared in 1999.

During the same period, considerable discussion was going on about the cultural changes that would be needed in the UK in the light of increasingly

rapid economic and technological change. Seltzer and Bentley's influential book, *The Creative Age: Knowledge and Skills for the New Economy* (Demos 1999) was a key text. These authors viewed education as a means of changing the culture in ways which would help the transition to a 'weightless economy', in which service industries and e-commerce would be as important as traditional manufacturing had been. The central challenge they saw for the education system was to:

'find ways of embedding learning in a range of meaningful contexts, where students can use their knowledge and skills creatively to make an impact on the world around them.'

An interest in the idea of creativity was not particular to the UK. A number of other countries were also realising the importance of developing creativity in the curriculum. This new emphasis arose from the perception that creativity would be integral to future economic progress. Japan introduced creativity as a major curriculum component in 1995; the move came about in recognition of the need for the country to respond to social and economic change.

Creativity in business

In 1999 Alan Greenspan, chairman of the US Federal Reserve Board, said in an address at Harvard:

'Viewing a great painting or listening to a profoundly moving piano concerto produces a sense of intellectual joy that is satisfying in and of itself. But arguably it also enhances and reinforces the conceptual processes so essential to innovation.... The broader the context that an inquiring mind brings to a problem, the greater will be the potential for creative insights that, in the end, contribute to a more productive economy.'

Greenspan's words echo a persistent theme in the creativity literature, or at least that part of it which has focused on the importance of creativity for the economy. Business creativity, or 'corporate creativity' is now a flourishing area, and there is a small industry in training for creativity, with workshops and courses all over the world inducting business people into using their brains more imaginatively.

Creativity in this sphere is viewed primarily as innovation. One adman-turned creativity-expert who specialises in creativity training on a global scale explains the essential thinking behind business creativity:

'There's a huge misconception about creativity. In any endeavour there are tremendously talented people who aren't creative - people who can sing someone else's songs really well or do a totally beautiful painting

but who don't necessarily bring in new ideas. Creativity is bringing new ideas...A spreadsheet can do linear thought and come up with a conclusion but it can't use its imagination. Ironically the Information Age is devaluing information, because everybody has it...it's really not knowledge that's powerful, it's imagination. Seventy years ago Einstein told us that imagination is more important than knowledge, and it's especially true today.' (Monahan 1999)

Teresa Amabile, the Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School, has spent all her professional life in the study of creativity. She sees creativity as one of the driving forces of human progress and considers that 'pushing the frontiers forward' always involves significant human creativity. Amabile's core hypothesis (1988) is that creativity is the product of intrinsic motivation, and she has studied the conditions under which people work most creatively.

'The fact is, almost all of the research in this field shows that anyone with normal intelligence is capable of doing some degree of creative work....Over the past five years, organizations have paid more attention to creativity and innovation than at any other time in my career. But I believe most people aren't anywhere near to realizing their creative potential, in part because they're laboring in environments that impede intrinsic motivation.'

These ideas have strongly influenced thinking about how to develop a modern workforce and have helped to bring about the beginnings of a change in the government's educational policy. Ken Robinson, the chair of the NACCCE, recognised this when he observed

The interest in creativity stems partly from the fact that all governments are concerned with the need to develop more flexible workforces. They want people who can innovate and adapt to changing circumstances. They know creativity is important but, on the whole, few of them really know what it is or how to promote it. (All Our Futures)

All Our Futures

When the NACCCE report appeared, it argued that a national strategy for creative and cultural education was essential to unlock the potential of every young person in order for them to have the opportunity to contribute to the country's economic prosperity and social cohesion. All young people, it suggested, could be creative to a lesser or greater degree if given the opportunity; it proposed a democratic view of creativity rather than a view of creativity as the possession of an elite. It called for 'teaching for creativity' - 'forms of teaching that are intended to develop young people's own creative thinking and behaviour.'

Among the report's recommendations were:

- that there should be a better balance between subjects in the National Curriculum, with less emphasis on core subjects at the expense of foundation subjects;
- that the content of the curriculum should be reduced in order to make way for more creative approaches to teaching and learning;
- that there should be a broader debate on the structure of the curriculum. Arguing that the NC had its origins in a subject-based model of the curriculum which had not evolved greatly since the 19th century, the report called for a readiness to look again at the basic assumptions behind the curriculum.

All our Futures was positively received in many quarters, but the government did not send out copies of the report, or even a summary, to schools nationally. The DfEE and the DCMS issued a joint response to the report more than six months after its publication, in January 2000. This response did not take up many of the points in the report, but did indicate that the QCA would be asked to do further work on the role of creativity and the arts in the curriculum. It also announced that 'creative development' would be a curriculum area in the foundation stage curriculum.

Mathilda Marie Joubert, who was the research officer to the NACCCE, suggests that one reason for this low-key response was the very term 'creativity', which perhaps carried too many associations with old-style 'progressive education' for a government still tightly focused on raising achievement. Creativity is notoriously difficult to define. The NACCCE's official definition ('imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes which are both original and of value') lacks communicative spark; a better definition might be another formulation that is also to be found in the report: 'applied imagination' (Joubert 2001).

Another obstacle to the report being immediately taken up might have been its long-term agenda and visionary character. The report's recommendations were a long way from the prevailing education climate, where short-term goals and measurable targets had become the norm. And, perhaps most importantly of all, the report appeared at a time when the top-down National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies still exemplified the government's main approach to promoting change in education. These strategies, with their standardised and scripted approaches to pedagogy were very different from the approach taken in the report, which stressed that teaching for creativity cannot be achieved without creative teaching.

Policy developments since the NACCCE report

In 2000, the review of the National Curriculum emphasised creativity as an important aim. The Secretary of State for Education and Skills asked QCA to follow up this review by investigating how schools can promote pupils' creativity through the national curriculum. During the first year of this investigation, QCA looked at how other countries were promoting creativity. The review they commissioned examined the policies and curriculum requirements of nineteen countries, and analysed a wide range of literature and research findings. It found a general recognition among these countries that creativity was important and that the development of creativity needed to be more generally encouraged. The arts were seen as providing a particularly important contribution to creativity and cultural development. Recognition of the importance of creativity was growing under pressure of the global economic situation and the perceived need for innovation and change in a climate of increasing competitiveness.

Following this review, QCA commissioned other reviews of creativity across the curriculum, and went on to develop creative approaches to teaching and learning with 120 teachers in England. This project set out:

'to investigate how they could develop pupils' creativity through their existing schemes of work and lesson plans.'

Several of the outcomes from this project are to be found on the QCA website, *National Curriculum in Action*, in the section called *Creativity, Find it, Promote it (2003)*. This publication from QCA is part of a three-year curriculum project designed to advise schools on how to develop pupils' creativity.

The QCA creativity framework that informs this work defines creativity as involving pupils in:

- Questioning and challenging
- Making connections, seeing relationships
- Envisaging what might be
- Exploring ideas, keeping options open
- Reflecting critically on ideas, actions, outcomes.

This is a framework which is more closely aligned with work on teaching thinking and problem-solving than on work in the creative arts. There is a constant tension in discussions of creativity between a desire to broaden out creativity so that it includes the whole curriculum, and a recognition that creativity and the arts are closely allied.

Other moves from QCA included a research review of Creativity in Education carried out by Anna Craft in 2001, and *Creativity across the curriculum*, a report prepared for QCA by Marilyn Fryer (2003). This report was focused on the 'teaching thinking' aspect of creativity and was based on a small-scale

investigation into some programmes designed to develop creativity in the USA, Japan and other countries.

'Culture and Creativity' and 'Excellence and Enjoyment'

In the meantime, in 2001 the Department of Culture and Media and Sport published a green paper entitled *Culture and Creativity: the next ten years*. This paper announced the setting up of the Creative Partnerships scheme. The DCMS paper puts a central emphasis on education, and on the need to ensure that children in deprived areas are given the opportunity to develop creativity in learning and participate in cultural activities. Creative Partnerships, an organisation based at Arts Council England, set out to develop long-term partnerships between schools and cultural and creative organisations, including theatre companies, museums, orchestras, website designers and many others.

In May 2003 the DfES set out a vision for the future of primary education in a landmark document entitled *Excellence and Enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools*. This vision, according to the DfES's own summary, is '*for the achievement of high standards through a rich, varied and exciting curriculum that develops children in a range of ways*'. The new 'Primary Strategy' marked a departure from the top-down approach of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and was described as '*moving on to offer teachers more control and flexibility*'. This document encouraged schools and teachers to '*take ownership of the curriculum...be creative and innovative*'.

On the heels of this report, Ofsted published '*Expecting the Unexpected: developing creativity in primary and secondary schools*' (2003), the outcome of a small-scale HMI survey to identify good practice in the promotion of creativity in schools. This helpful publication both identified some features of successful practice and noted some common barriers to the promotion of creativity in schools.

Other contributions to the constant stream of documents which have appeared in the wake of the NACCCE report have included the Arts Council England drama curriculum (*Drama in Schools 2003*), and the RSA Competencies Curriculum (1999, 2003) which envisages a move away from separate academic subjects in favour of integrated areas of learning. There have also been studies into the effects of creativity such as an NFER research review on *Developing Young Children's Creativity through the Arts* (Sharp 2001) and an IPPR discussion paper on the *Arts and Educational Inclusion* (Lidstone 2003).

Mixed Messages

However, these explicit messages about the desirability of creative approaches to teaching and learning have been somewhat clouded by the fact that they are read by teachers against a background in which flexibility and risk-taking have been discouraged. Schools are subject to a heavy assessment regime that has only recently begun to change (with the option of teacher assessment at Key

Stage One), and the education system is still obsessed with targets and league tables. The DfES, in announcing the policy move represented by *Excellence and Enjoyment*, insisted on the 'achievement of high standards' as the main driving force behind the encouragement of more exciting approaches to teaching and learning. In much the same way, the QCA Creativity website, while urging teachers to:

'Capitalise on unexpected learning opportunities!'

glossed this as '*actively pursuing pupils' ideas (where these are likely to be productive), without losing sight of your original teaching objective*' (our emphasis).

The difficulty QCA is labouring under is that creative approaches have to be promoted without essentially altering the structures that schools are working in and, most particularly, without letting up the pressure on schools to perform ever better in statutory assessments. This kind of ambiguity is described by Robin Alexander as '*a desire to be seen to be offering freedom while in reality maintaining control*' (Alexander 2003). It is an ambiguity that could create tensions and difficulties in schools without a strong commitment to creative ways of working, or a leadership which is prepared to take risks and allow innovation and experiment.

Professor Teresa Amabile's work on creativity in business settings suggests that many managerial practices kill creativity by crushing 'intrinsic motivation' and pursuing 'productivity, efficiency and control'. These observations have clear implications for the stop/go approach to creativity in education. In *Expecting the Unexpected*, HMI noted that flexibility in timetabling and the opportunity to work at length and in some depth were important elements in successful creative projects. Overly constraining curricular organisation was seen as a barrier to progress. In some schools, the constraints of the original approach adopted by the literacy and numeracy strategies have left a legacy of rigidity and an unwillingness to let go of formulaic styles of teaching.

It is not yet completely clear whether UK educational policy has really undergone a fundamental change of direction, or whether creativity is simply the latest tactic in a continuing search for ways of pushing up pupils' test scores. The perception that a 'creativity steer' is expected to contribute to improved academic achievement is evidenced by QCA's website, which explicitly asserts that:

'Creativity improves pupils' self-esteem, motivation and achievement.'

It is interesting that the QCA feels free to make this assertion, for which so little hard research evidence exists. But it is true that there is a mass of *informal* evidence for this kind of association between pupils' involvement in creative learning, their increased confidence and self-esteem, and

developments in their learning and achievement. Schools do not embrace creative approaches to teaching and learning solely for these reasons, but their perception that creative approaches have an impact on pupils' engagement with learning contributes to their commitment to creativity.

In general it is clear that most primary schools do welcome the new 'permission' to work more creatively (although some have never stopped doing so) and are taking enthusiastic advantage of the extra funding available from Creative Partnerships to further these ends. HMI/Ofsted found that:

'the vast majority of creative work in the 42 schools visited was at least good, with around 20% exceptionally good. This generally high quality is likely to be sustained because teachers are committed to the promotion of creativity (and) have the active support of senior management in this promotion...' (Expecting the Unexpected, 2003)

Research into creativity and learning

HMI's report takes a determinedly cross-curricular stance to their task of surveying good practice in promoting creativity in schools. Their report takes in work in history, art and design, performing, arts, English, dance, geography, design and technology, modern foreign languages, science and mathematics. This broad picture of creativity in learning echoes the approach taken by the NACCCE report, which is at pains to stress that creativity should not be seen as the sole preserve of the arts. The view of creativity taken in the NACCCE report is also a democratic view, the report speaks of 'democratic creativity'. In adopting this term the committee were striving to detach ideas of creativity from its traditional associations with unusual artistry.

Research about creativity, until relatively recently, tended to be concerned with 'high creativity'. Creativity has been associated with innate creative talent, with paradigm-breaking and with exceptional originality of mind. Howard Gardner's study of 'high creativity', for instance (Gardner 1993) focuses entirely on the attributes of seven geniuses as revealed in their life histories. But more recently, creativity studies have taken more interest in creativity as an aspect of ordinary learning, and as being 'situated' in supportive communities.

Anna Craft (2001) has written about what she terms 'little c creativity' (LCC), as opposed to high creativity, and has argued that problem-solving and questioning are part of a creative and innovative approach to ordinary life challenges and to learning in any domain. She stresses the importance of openness to possibility, or 'possibility thinking' in LCC, and outlines some of the features of possibility thinking as being self-determination, innovation, questioning, risk, imagination and play. Craft has been explicitly critical of the government's educational policy as expressed in the national strategies for

literacy and numeracy. She views these strategies as being top-down approaches which have limited teachers' ability to work creatively:

'To take an example from within primary education in England in 1999, the current political context can be seen as one in which the artistry of teaching is being undermined by a technicist view of pedagogy.'

The government's move away from the literacy and numeracy strategies, and towards a national primary strategy with an emphasis on 'excellence and enjoyment' may reflect a realisation that its earlier approach was becoming counter-productive.

Discussions of creativity in education are increasingly concerned with 'creative communities', and with the kinds of organisational approaches that foster creativity. Jenny Leach (2001), through her work in the Centre for Research and Development in Teacher Education at the Open University, suggests that:

'in settings where creativity is an aspect of the knowledge valued, and where creative processes become the subject of learning, teachers and learners collectively share and develop goals, purposes and activities that other commentators commonly ascribe to 'creative' individuals.'

She and her colleagues at the Open University are interested in communities that share creative goals and purposes, encourage joint participation in creative projects, and jointly and individually create high quality products.

The psychologist Vera John-Steiner (2000), in *Creative Collaboration*, suggests that it is a myth to suppose that creative people create on their own; all creative people need support and encouragement. Through her study of complex collaborations in the fields of science and the arts, John-Steiner illustrates that the mind - rather than thriving on solitude - is dependent upon human relationships. Guy Claxton (2004), of the University of Bristol, also stresses that encouragement and 'critical support' are features of some of the most successful science laboratories.

Research into the creative arts and learning

As previously noted, current discussions of creativity in education do not give a special place to the creative arts but draw on examples of creative thinking in any sphere. The avowed policy of Creative Partnerships is to put schools in touch with creative practitioners from a wide range of organisations, not only in the arts. In practice, however, schools involved in the scheme have tended to seek partnerships with arts organisations, and to see the scheme as a way of giving children access to high quality experiences in art, design, drama, dance, and music.

The *Animating Literacy* project in the Creative Partnerships London South region arose from an expressed desire, among the schools represented on the steering committee, to develop a more creative approach to literacy teaching and learning, which they believed could come from a stronger emphasis on, and association with, the arts. A central question that this research therefore set out to answer was whether children's involvement in creative arts activities actually did have an impact on their school work in literacy.

There is already abundant anecdotal evidence of the positive effects of work in drama or in art on children's literacy development. Lynda Graham's accounts of the work done by Croydon teacher researchers on literacy development, as part of the *Croydon Reading and Writing Projects*, have suggested that creative and imaginative work can have a powerfully positive effect on children's progress. For instance, Croydon Reading Project teachers found that 'performance reading' assumed particular importance for reluctant boy readers, who began to enjoy books when they were involved in group reading of texts aloud for an audience. In the Croydon Writing Project, one cohort of teachers (Graham 2002) decided to integrate writing with such creative activities as imaginative play, storytelling, drama, drawing and visualisation; these 'world-making' activities kindled enthusiasm and interest in previously uninvolved pupils, who made significant progress in writing. Graham concludes:

'In the second year of the Writing Project, teachers themselves began to make and enter imagined worlds with their children. This then made it possible for children themselves to begin to create their own imagined worlds, through writing.'

Other publications which have documented successful outcomes of children's work in creative arts, with evidence of enhanced language and literacy performance related to this work, include Southwark Arts Council's *Leave Your Mark Before You Go* (Deveson 2003) and the Tate Modern's *Visual Paths to Literacy* (Tate Publications 2000).

Larger scale studies in this field have included the work of the Creative Arts Education Partnership in the USA, which has issued an important report on the impact of the creative arts on learning (Fiske 1999). The report includes accounts of seven major studies that together provided evidence of enhanced learning and achievement when students are involved in a variety of creative arts experience. The conclusions from these studies are that the creative arts change the learning environment and the learning experience for students, providing opportunities for 'creation' rather than 'recreation'. One of these projects, Shirley Brice Heath's research on after-school programmes, concluded that the creative arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached.

Similarly, in the UK, work by Harland et al. (2000) on the effects and effectiveness of secondary school creative arts education in England and Wales

found a wide range of benefits to individuals. These ranged from the development of creativity and thinking skills to enhanced knowledge of social and cultural issues.

Shirley Brice Heath's more recent work for Creative Partnerships in Hythe Community School in Kent (2004), has found marked linguistic gains in infant school children taking part in a Creative Partnership project in visual learning. Working with artist Roy Smith, these KS1 children gained experience of drawing from close observation rather than from memory. Brice-Heath comments that:

'His (Roy Smith's) talk is marked by visual vocabulary, which calls the children to see comparable shapes.'

She gives an example of Roy Smith's commentary on children as they draw:

'Look at your shading, that's fantastic! Art is all about looking. About looking very closely. If you can see it, then you can draw it.'

Through collecting audio recordings of children and the artist at work, and analysis of patterns of language, Brice Heath and her research associate studied the effect of this attention to detail in drawing on children's talk. They found that working with the visual artist was involving children in the kind of extended discourse associated with linguistic and conceptual development. At a more technical linguistic level, Brice Heath found examples of an increase in embedded clauses and conditional tenses in the children's language, suggestive of more complex and tentative thinking.

Can the arts contribute to academic achievement?

Despite a widespread conviction that skills and attitudes learned through the arts can help children in academic learning, there have been few large-scale studies that have identified positive effects on school achievement (in literacy or other curriculum areas) as a consequence of students' involvement in the creative arts. An exhaustive research review carried out in a special issue of the *Journal of Aesthetic Education* (Winner and Hetland 2000) found no conclusive evidence for effect of arts work on students' test scores, except in one or two areas. The Journal editors, while reporting that a positive relationship between studying the arts and academic achievement does exist, stress that this positive correlation does not imply a causal relationship between arts study and academic achievement.

The contributors to the special issue of the *Journal* arrive at their findings through the detailed analysis of existing research in the fields of visual arts, music, drama and dance and their relationship to academic learning. Drawing on both correlational studies and experimental studies, they seek to establish whether there is hard evidence for claims that exposure to the arts leads to cognitive growth or enhanced academic achievement. In only one area do they

find strong evidence of a link between the arts and enhanced achievement, and this is in drama, where the review of available research finds that:

'drama is an effective tool for increasing achievement in story understanding, reading achievement, reading readiness and writing.'

This study of drama finds that drama teaching is particularly effective for children of lower achieving and economically disadvantaged children. It also notes that, in some areas (eg story understanding) a stronger effect on children's achievement is visible when the drama teaching involves teachers working in role.

The intrinsic difficulties of looking at the benefits of the arts through the lens of this kind of research are apparent throughout this issue of the *Journal*. Many research studies showing positive outcomes in children's learning are found to be inconclusive in the light of the strict criteria applied by the *Journal's* reviewers. Several of the chapters point to positive correlations between arts programmes and academic achievement, but these are not regarded as significant since *'correlational studies allow no conclusions about causality'* (p.174). For instance, the chapter on visual art and reading finds that the teaching of reading in association with a visual arts programme can lead to improvements in reading. But the discussion of these findings argues that, while children may be *motivated* through such programmes, this in itself is not evidence of a link between arts education and reading progress.

Another problem with the criteria employed is that the *Journal's* reviewers tend to dismiss as unreliable any studies that could be influenced by 'teacher expectancy effects'. To be completely reliable, in their terms, research should be strictly experimental. That is, there should be matching control groups, and teachers should be unaware of the hypotheses being assessed. The difficulties of achieving these kinds of experimental conditions in a human setting are apparent. Given the inflexible and narrow nature of the criteria, it is actually quite surprising to find that the majority of chapters in this landmark issue of the *Journal* find some evidence of a positive relationship between the study of the arts and academic achievement, even though in most cases this relationship is correlational rather than causal.

Ethnographic research is given no place in this strictly experiment-led quantitative approach to research. Yet, in noting that many schools claim that students learn better when the arts have a central role in their curriculum, the *Journal's* editors comment that these claims should not be discounted. Instead they think it would be important to *'look closely and ethnographically'* at what happens in these situations. It suggests that this kind of enquiry that could reveal more about how the creative arts interact with and transfer to other kinds of learning. The editors also note that most of the research reviewed in this special issue of the *Journal* is concerned with 'products', usually in the

shape of test scores, and not with 'process'. They call for more studies of what happens in schools and classrooms where the arts are given a central role, and for evidence of the positive affective outcomes that this kind of emphasis may have for students and teachers, to the consequent benefit of teaching and learning.

Analysing *Animating Literacy*

Our research aimed to work in this way across ten classrooms involved in creative arts partnership projects. Through a careful study of the outcomes of teachers' own action research projects, and through independent observation, we hoped to identify the success factors in those classrooms where work in the arts had clearly led to positive developments in children's language and literacy learning.

We drew extensively on teachers' and artist partners' own accounts of the work that they engaged in. The outcomes of some, though not all, of these individual classroom-based research projects provided convincing evidence of developments in children's progress as a consequence of their involvement in creative arts projects. Teachers observed:

'In terms of writing, the whole experience of storytelling gave children an inner voice to express and motivation to express it. Even in the final weeks of the summer term, one or two children made sudden bursts of progress as the elements of listening, thinking and speaking blossomed into writing.' (Year 2 teacher)

'I used three [different assessment] frameworks to assess the children's progress at the end of the project. Over 70% of the children moved on more than 2 or 3 National Curriculum levels. Over 90% of the children now had a consistently positive attitude to writing.... The children were more confident writers, they were asking questions about each other's work as well as giving their own opinions.' (Year 6 teacher)

It was clear that for the most part the teachers involved in this project saw a positive value for children's academic learning in these arts projects, as well as considering them to be important and stimulating educational experiences for children in their own right. They also emphasised affective outcomes: enjoyment and involvement in learning, enhanced confidence, increased mutual respect and greater commitment to school work.

Working closely with these teacher researchers, we interrogated their observations and their documentation of children's learning, and interviewed them about their experience of the projects. We interviewed arts partners to gain their perspective on the collaborative processes that form the basis of creative partnerships. We observed in classrooms and collected examples of children's talk and writing. We interviewed children to gain their impressions

of the new learning experiences that they were being introduced to, and gathered their own evaluations of their progress.

Our approach throughout is narrative and descriptive, drawing on observations, field notes, interviews, transcripts and analyses of children's talk, writing, and multimodal texts. Through these windows, we have tried to look at the interactions that go on when teachers, arts partners and children come together in classrooms to engage in creative projects, and how the creativity of each of these partners is involved in the process of learning.

Chapter 2

Research overview

It's a new way of looking at learning... It's about freeing up children's ideas of what is 'good'. Drawing, like other work with arts partners, is one of those things in the curriculum that isn't right or wrong.
(Teacher RM)

Starting points: teacher action research

Animating Literacy initially involved 12 teachers from six primary schools and one nursery school where children worked with 'arts partners': dancers, filmmakers, storytellers, actors, visual artists and other creative arts professionals. Teachers and arts partners described their projects in *Animating Literacy: inspiring children's learning through teacher and artist partnerships* (Ellis & Safford 2005).

Animating Literacy teachers had no common frameworks for looking at children's learning experiences and outcomes in these projects. Teachers' data collection varied widely; they used both formal and informal methods. For example, nursery teachers tracked children's progress using the *Foundation Stage Early Learning Goals*. As a result of their creative project, the Nursery teachers also developed a school policy on how artists could work most effectively with young children (Appendix 1). Five teachers kept informal notes and observations, and in one school these were part of normal school routines for record-keeping. Two teachers tracked children's progress using non-statutory frameworks developed by CLPE (Appendices 2 and 2a). Two teachers tracked children's progress using statutory assessment frameworks and attainment targets for writing (Appendix 3). One group of teachers evaluated their working relationship with arts partners rather than tracking children's learning.

Widening the study

This cross-school research, *The Imagined World*, examines common themes and outcomes of children's language and literacy development in creative arts projects on a wider scale. Paralleling and building on the *Animating Literacy* teachers' action research, this cross-site study added an additional three primary schools and six teachers involved in creative arts projects, to make a study involving ten schools and 18 teachers. The research continued for a fourth school term and included an additional 60 observations and in-depth interviews with 15 teachers, 3 head teachers, 10 creative arts practitioners and 36 children from Nursery to Year Six (Appendix 4).

The backgrounds of authors of this report are in primary English, literacy pedagogy and practice, and classroom research. Whilst primarily examining the impact of work in creative projects on children's language and literacy learning, we have also, inevitably, examined the teacher perspective on 'creative partnerships'. We have, however, tried also to ensure that we fairly reflected issues of concern to creative arts practitioners working in schools.

Research aims

This research aimed to investigate how children's work in creative arts influenced their work in literacy through observation of creative arts projects in action and analysis of children's responses and outcomes. By looking closely

at aims, activities and outcomes of creative arts projects, we looked for common themes, patterns and practices that could be generalisable for literacy teaching and learning. Our research questions included:

- How does children's work in the creative arts influence their language and literacy development? Are there underlying patterns across creative arts forms?
- What are favourable contexts and effective processes for children's language and literacy development in creative arts projects in schools?
- What is appropriate assessment of children's work in the creative arts?

Ten schools

The ten school-based creative arts projects were diverse in nature. Most of the projects were funded for three terms. Two creative projects were part of whole-school development plans; two projects existed in isolation from the school curriculum. Six projects were guided by aims (eg *to help children tell their stories through the medium of film*), four were guided by questions or inquiries (eg *can dance improve children's writing skills?*). Three projects were supported by an experienced arts education team from the local education authority.

Children from Nursery to Year 6 were involved. Teachers ranged from the newly-qualified to classroom veterans with over 20 years' experience. Arts partners ranged from lone individuals, to small organisations and major national cultural centres. There were no ethnic minority teachers and three ethnic minority arts partners. Project schools were all in inner London. Ethnic minority and bilingual children were the majorities in project classrooms. One school's intake included one hundred and eleven asylum seeker children. In seven of the project schools over half of the children were entitled to free school meals. In all the schools there were substantial numbers of children identified as having special educational needs.

Data collection

To discover how creative arts projects influenced children's language and literacy learning, we took an 'ethnographic', holistic approach which was narrative and descriptive. We adopted a 'quadrangular' perspective to take into account the viewpoints of child, teacher, arts partner and researcher. Participants often had multiple roles: teachers were researchers, artists were teachers, children were apprentice-artists and researchers were participant-observers.

We drew our conclusions from a careful study of the outcomes of teachers' action research and from our independent inquiry into their projects and others. Working closely with teachers, we interrogated their observations and their documentation of children's learning. We interviewed arts partners to gain their perspective on the collaborative processes of school-based 'creative

partnerships'. Teachers and arts partners also had extensive, informal discussions with the research officer throughout and after the projects. We interviewed children to gain their impressions of the new learning experiences to which they were being introduced by these creative arts projects, and to gather their own evaluations of their progress. (appendix 4). Children were interviewed towards or at the end of their projects. In one school, children were interviewed nearly a year after working with the arts partner (yet their recall was as vivid as if they had done the work yesterday).

A CLPE research officer visited classrooms weekly for observations, interviews and recording or collecting children's work. Class work was observed once a week, or whenever the arts partner was in the class (Appendix 5). Observations examined how work in creative arts projects was organised and carried out, how children worked in these activities and responded to their experiences in talk and in writing.

We examined how projects shaped patterns and processes of teaching and learning. We examined outcomes in children's creative arts work and in literacy, and noted where and how these outcomes were connected. The research portfolio included:

- classroom activities and interaction in observational notes, photographs and video recordings
- resources and materials used in activities
- analysis of a range of children's writing and multimodal texts (Appendix 6)
- transcripts and analyses of children's talk
- teachers' notes and observations
- general field notes, particular contextual observations and comments
- audio and video Interviews with children, teachers and arts partners
- children's project outcomes and other work produced across activities

Themes that strongly emerged in the data are analysed in subsequent chapters: how work in the creative arts influenced individual children, the whole class and the teacher; different models and patterns of working; issues in professional practice and assessment; children's responses as they worked and in reflection; the roles of talk, story and literature in children's creative arts work, and what types of assessment are appropriate for work of this nature.

Over four school terms this research examined and compared how creative arts projects operated in individual classrooms. Observations, recorded interviews with children, teachers and arts partners, children's individual and collaborative texts, children's creative products and teachers' notes during their action research all contributed to a 360-degree view of children's work in creative arts projects and how this work contributed to their language and

literacy development. We drew conclusions from this wide-angle view and also from teachers' case studies of individual children. This methodology helped us

to compare work and experiences across classrooms, how creative projects influenced groups as well as individuals.

The following chapters look closely at these classrooms and children's language and literacy development in the context of their work in creative arts projects.

School Number on roll	Class or year groups, teachers and arts partners	Project and length of time	Aim or inquiry
Primary School A 591	Year 5 class Teacher KR Filmmaker NB	3-terms of drama, film study and filmmaking culminating in the making of five short films	To help children tell their stories through the medium of film
Primary School B 359	Three mixed 1-2 classes Teachers CM, SP & AR Dancer GA	3 terms of weekly dance lessons linked to National Literacy Strategy objectives	Can dance improve Key Stage 1 children's writing skills?
Nursery School C	Whole school (Foundation Stage) Teachers AB & BL Visual artists ED, DA and LV	3 terms of drawing, painting and 3D modelling in a studio space near the Nursery school	Does exposure to different art forms influence children's oral language development?
Primary School D 189	Year 6 class Teacher AH Theatre Company Y Opera Company O Storyteller AJ, visual artist NA	3-terms of learning about theatre arts: watching, listening, performing 1 term storytelling and linked visual art installation	How does exposure to theatre arts help to develop children's critical thinking skills? For children to learn to become storytellers
Primary School E 208	Year 2 class Mixed Year 5-6 class Teacher AO Storyteller JB, Visual artist ML	3-terms of storytelling 1 term storytelling and art work	Can oral storytelling improve children's writing? To use knowledge of stories to create 3-D models illustrating traditional tales
Primary School F 445	Year 5 class Teacher MK Visual artist TM	1 ½ terms multimedia explorations	To inspire the reluctant writer through multi-sensory and computer workshops
Junior School G 300	Year 4 class Teacher JH Theatre P	2-terms of interactive script-writing	For children to learn to use an interactive computer programme; to use this to find out about another city and then to write and perform a short script using knowledge about that city
Primary school H 344	Year 5 class Teacher GD Drama specialist SS	1-term of drama explorations of the themes of a novel	How does a culturally relevant text engage learners with English as an additional language?
Primary School I 472	Whole school Visual artist GT, dance company L, theatre company G, arts college C, storyteller PP	3 terms of storytelling, drawing and sculpture in KS1; dance, drama and performance in KS2	To develop a whole-school, cross-curricular approach to learning in the creative arts
Primary School J 391	Whole school Sculptor RB, visual artist RK	3 terms of sketching, drawing and sculpture	To develop a whole-school art project that involves progression of skills and understanding across age phases

Chapter 3

Models of working, professional roles and practice

Arts partner dancer GA: I've seen some remarkable work, people sharing ideas, having great ideas, practicing thoroughly - that's what we call REHEARSING.

Luke, Year 1: Like you do in sport

GA: Yes, thank you, when you practice and practice you remember when you perform it. Ideas were pouring out, very imaginative, good timing, good team work, loads of BIG travelling, leaping, winding, travelling, looking at each other, well thought-out, beautiful timing.

In classroom observations, arts partners had a different kind of teaching relationship with children from that of teachers. It was a relationship that involved showing and demonstrating rather than telling and explaining; working alongside children rather than monitoring their work. It was teaching that created what Connie Rosen (1973) called the 'triangle' where children and adults focused and worked together on a shared enterprise.

Creative projects generated a 'workshop' atmosphere in classrooms. There was an emphasis on activity, doing and making. There was little transmission teaching and more of an 'atelier' approach in which every child was working. Children did not do differentiated work according to their abilities. Observers were unable to distinguish children with Special Educational Needs from the rest of the class.

Children's work in creative projects was not target-driven. Yet it often involved extensive rehearsal and practice. Some projects had a clear goal: a performance, an exhibition or a product finished to a high standard. Where children worked towards a performance or an exhibition - particularly in a community space - they saw the purpose of practice, rehearsal and demanding standards.

Donald Schön (1987:16) argues that learning forms of professional artistry depends in part on creating conditions similar to those in studios and conservatories, where children have 'freedom to learn by doing in a setting relatively low in risk'. They learn with the help of professionals who 'initiate' them into the traditions and working standards of a particular art form or profession. According to Schön, 'everything is practicum' in creative arts learning. Therefore children should be able to learn about sculpture, painting, drawing, dance, drama or storytelling by making sculptures, paintings, drawings, dances, plays or stories. However this way of working was not always a straightforward proposition in classrooms. Teachers experienced difficulty in achieving and maintaining 'practicum', even where they had flexibility and policy support to do so (eg *Excellence and Enjoyment; Creativity Find It Promote It*).

What constitutes 'work' in the classroom?

Children enjoyed the creative arts projects we observed in schools. Arts projects were a vacation from routine. '*It's different from what we do normally*' and '*it's not boring*' were often-heard comments from children. Creative arts projects highlighted the role of pleasure in learning; at the same time, they demanded attention and involvement from children.

Animating Literacy teachers observed that for many children enjoyment in creative arts work generated confidence, confidence led to engagement in

learning, and this heightened engagement resulted in improvements in children's reading, writing, speaking and listening. These improvements were sometimes, but not always, measurable as higher numbers in literacy test scores (see Chapter 9 on Issues in Assessment). Nevertheless teachers were convinced that these gains were real and permanent.

Through the arts projects, they're engaged in a really important aspect of school life, and we know that engagement has a knock on effect but not necessarily as a number or a level in a test score... We know the skills the children have got as writers and readers will stand them in good stead in their future education. It may not be acknowledged in the statutory tests, but it is there, and it is real achievement.
(Headteacher PB)

However, creative arts projects also raised questions about the nature of what constitutes 'work' in the classroom. For artists 'work' was an exploration or a process, often without a pre-defined outcome. In other classrooms 'work' was towards a specific performance or exhibition. But children and teachers often had narrower ideas of 'work'.

Out of the ten projects, only one teacher organised the arts partner to come to class on Mondays, in order to start the week with the creative project and develop this work throughout the week. In six classrooms, teachers organised arts partners to come on Thursdays, with some small amount of follow-up and finishing-off on Fridays. In these classrooms, creative projects came after 'real' work had been done. They were, in effect, a reward (or a kind of playtime) after getting curriculum work out of the way. In three classrooms, arts partners came into classes on a flexible timetable, arranged in agreement with the teacher.

In School B, sessions with the arts partner replaced one Literacy Hour each week. Teachers at this school strongly believed that unless the arts partner's dance lessons were explicitly linked to weekly National Literacy Strategy objectives, they would be '*no different than a Saturday dance club*' which was not a valid school learning experience. Because dance took the place of one Literacy Hour in the weekly timetable, the missed literacy 'work' had to be made up at other times in the week. Dance in itself was not seen as legitimate 'work'.

In interviews, children believed that 'work' involved writing in books which were then marked. Children leaving School A after a day of drama and watching films commented, "*We didn't do any work today*". In school E, an arts partner working with a group of Year 5/6 children had this exchange with three boys:

Boy 1: We're special kids. Everyone else is doing work in class.

Boy 2: Are we staying here 'til lunchtime?

Arts partner JB: What, you want to go back to class?

Boy 2: Yeah.

Artist: What, you want to go do literacy?

Boy 3: Horrible literacy and numeracy with the horrible teacher who shouts at you?

[All laugh]

Boy 2 runs out of the classroom angrily. His teacher goes to talk to him.

Boy 2 had just returned to school after a period of exclusion. He was anxious to be seen to be doing 'work'. For him, the creative project (storytelling and artwork illustrating traditional tales) did not constitute proper work. He wanted to do 'literacy', and storytelling and artwork were not 'literacy'. Boy 1 describes the group as 'special' because they are not doing 'work in class'. He also knows that the group is 'special' because they constitute a 'low-ability' set of mainly Portuguese-speaking children who are in streamed 'booster' classes for literacy. The storytelling and artwork project existed outside of 'class' and therefore did not count as 'work'.

Some creative arts projects began to challenge these attitudes. Arts partner SS, a drama specialist in School H, made explicit to Year 5 children that 'work' was a process in which children would experiment and gradually acquire knowledge, understanding and skills. These children had been writing eloquently in the voice of a character, 'Aysha', from the class novel *Lost for Words* by Elizabeth Lutzeier. Before writing, they had been exploring the story-world through drama and role play, and this exploration was also the children's 'work':

[Your writing gets better] when you kept remembering back to the work. When you remember back to the work, THAT'S where your ideas will come from, because the ideas aren't 'up there' [waving her hands in the air above her head], the ideas are in what we did this week and last week and the week before, the things you saw and the things we talked about. Those ideas, remember, those are the things we're working with: [quoting children's writing] "lost for words", "speechless sometimes" "sitting under the mango tree", those long hot nights, people reading to you. All those things that came from the work that we've done, it's really beginning to shine through [in your writing].
(Arts partner SS)

This arts partner described the work children did in drama and role play as a lived experience: "*The things you saw...sitting under the mango tree, those long hot nights...*". She made explicit to children the nature of their work and the process of internalising and learning. Writing in role, drama and artwork constellated around the novel, but there was no 'end' to the project in that it did not culminate either in a long piece of writing or in a performance.

Arts partners blurred the distinction between child and adult learners. Arts partners used ideas and frameworks with children that they also used with adults. For example, at school E arts partner JB showed Year 2 children how to work with a 'story quest' structure to help them tell and write their own stories. JB shares this very same concept in workshops for corporate clients who want to overcome adversity in their work lives (see Chapter 7 on Story and Literature). Teachers themselves were gaining confidence and learning new skills in art, filmmaking and ICT projects.

Models of working

Griffeths and Woolf (2003) in their research in Nottingham schools have proposed an 'apprenticeship model' to describe creative arts partnership projects in classrooms. However the teacher appears increasingly sidelined in this model, as children progress from 'observer' and 'participant' to 'novice' and 'expert' in a creative arts practice. In the novice phase the teacher is seen to

Help artist and pupils to frame the activity, negotiate practical issues, support pupils and artists during the activity

And finally, in the 'expert' phase only to

Supervise activities and provide support and advice when requested

This is in contrast to the 'apprenticeship model's' view of the role of the artist, who in the novice phase

Collaborates with pupils...conveys knowledge of the community of practice of which his/her work is located

And in the expert phase

Acts as a fellow-expert and offers critical evaluation...may gain new ideas and insights from learners for future work.

In project classrooms we were able to identify other, different models and approaches in creative projects. Each model had advantages and disadvantages. Teachers sometimes preferred one way of working over others; this often depended on school and classroom pressures and the extent to which individual teachers wanted to manage projects themselves. We describe these approaches here, but not as hard and fast categories. In creative arts projects these approaches can and do interact and overlap. The role of the teacher was often to negotiate these models and find a way of working that acknowledged and drew on their own expertise as 'fellow experts' in learning.

The flying saucer approach

Cultural organisations working in schools may offer an education agenda, lesson plans, delivery schedule and pace. They may decide on aims or objectives linked to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. There may be infrequent or perhaps only one-off contact between the organisation and children. The teacher may not know what will happen until the day of the session in school or when the class goes to a performance or workshop. Research field notes reflected this, when members of an opera company gave a workshop at School D before children went to hear the opera outside of school:

There was no preparation for this workshop visit. Teacher AH said he 'had no idea what they were going to do'. Afterwards AH said it was 'tricky to complain when it was offered free of charge!' The children worked really well and enjoyed the workshop, considering they had no preparation for it. Later, AH says, some worksheets arrived but 'it would have been nice to have these beforehand'.

The 'flying saucer' model of working in fact suited Teacher AH. Even when he was not exactly sure what was on offer, he exerted a strong direction and influence on the children's learning from these theatre arts experiences. He didn't have to negotiate class time, resources or focus. He felt there were advantages to working with large institutions rather than an individual artist.

There was [a lot of] learning going on with the outside organisations...[When we went to the theatre] because they told me what was going to happen in the on-stage workshop, I got to observe and partake in the workshop myself and look at what the children were doing. They were engaged because they were learning, finding things out, and it was all facilitated by someone else. (Teacher AH)

In this way of working, the onus is on the teacher to prepare children, extend the experience, make it meaningful and link it to other areas of learning. Where the teacher does not take this role, children's understanding may be very low-level.

The long-term outreach approach

Cultural organisations second individual artists to work closely and over time across a school or a Key Stage. In these projects there is a strong element of 'delivery', but the creative practitioners may be experienced in working with schools and groups of children. They liaise and plan with teachers, and have at least weekly contact with children. They may organise INSET for teachers as part of the package. Children visit the cultural centres, meet professional practitioners and learn about their roles. Work in school culminates in a performance or exhibition at the cultural centre itself.

It gives a public arena for their success and their skills, sometimes for the first time. There were children involved who I had not particularly noticed before, they were not very high-profile. Now they stood out. One boy had never been so animated. The performances were the most moving things I have ever seen. They were stunning. The commitment they showed to their dance and their performance, I know absolutely has had a knock-on effect on how they perceive themselves as learners. They were confident, they were part of the group, they were achievers. (Headteacher PB)

Schools benefit from working with an individual who can access the resources of a large organisation. Children become aware of - and become a part of - communities of cultural and artistic practice.

Unique negotiated approach

An individual 'freelance' artist may liaise directly with a school to organise a project. These artists may negotiate and plan directly with a teacher what will happen and when. They tend to have regular, often weekly contact with the class. They may take an interest in individual children and spend time reflecting with a teacher after lessons. These partnerships are often characterised by close teacher-arts partner contact via email and telephone throughout the project.

We emailed and phoned each other all the time. We still email each other now! We'd talk about how we felt the sessions went, whether we had tried to put too much into it, what we would do in the next session, what the children didn't understand. He would talk to me about what I might do when he wasn't there, to follow up, so I did a lot of work when he wasn't there. We talked about where the project was going, how we felt about working with each other, did we both have a voice in the project? I went to his studio. I got to see the work that he has done, and see him as an artist. (Teacher MK)

This type of relationship can have a positive impact on individual teachers. Where they work with more than one teacher across a school or Key Stage, the arts partner may alter their approach to meet individual teacher's needs and ways of classroom organisation. They may give their lesson plans to teachers or give INSET as a way of furthering teacher professional development. However when this type of work does not extend beyond one classroom there may be issues of equity where other classes do not have similar opportunities.

Process, product or both?

There were two types of creative project observed in schools: those which were guided by a process and those which were guided by a product.

A 'process' partnership offered open-ended questions, themes, experimentation and thinking time. Teachers and children explored unexpected paths as ideas emerge and develop. Relationships, knowledge and skills were built-up over time as children engaged in the 'work' of exploration.

It's not linear...a thought, a memory, watching some one else. Interacting with anybody...It's like a huge network going on. It's whole learning. It connects. It's an investment. It's like those computer games where you go around and collect all these things and sooner or later they all become useful even if you're not even sure what you have. It's choosing, it's an aesthetic thing, and it's pleasing as well. There are lots of affirming things going on. (Arts partner GA)

A 'product' partnership worked towards a specific performance or exhibition, often in a public space outside of school. It was galvanising, requiring hard work and commitment to meet high, professional standards. There was an urgent timeline and the exhilaration of performing or exhibiting in a professional space to a real audience.

It was nerve-wracking! It was sold out! There were your family and friends, and total strangers you had never seen before. We were there from 4:30 to 8-o'clock at night. The older children, they were from secondary schools, they cheered us! It felt good...It was special. I had never acted in a big space. We took a bow. When we went through the dressing-room they [the theatre staff] were patting us on the backs. (Sorcha, Year 6)

Some successful creative projects were a *mixture* of process and product where the work of exploration culminated in a 'performance of understanding'. In School A, Teacher KR and arts partner NB were successful in communicating to children the over-arching purpose of their work in film study, drama and writing.

The whole project is building towards something. In literacy, sometimes there is nothing they're working towards at all. They're just doing a task for the sake of a task. But all the watching of films, all the writing they're doing, all the drama - it's all leading towards a particular goal. ... On the day of the filming, I hope it all comes together for them: why we looked at those [bullying and violence] issues, why we did those dramas, why we did those storyboards, why we need to know about those particular shots and that particular vocabulary, why we did that writing. It is all focused towards an end product. (Teacher KR)

Through reflective conversations with the CLPE research officer, teachers in *Animating Literacy* projects gained a clearer understanding of how creative

projects may be guided by process or by product. Teachers felt they could ask more knowledgeable questions about the nature of future projects on offer.

Now I would make a list of questions for an arts partner, friendly questions, to see what they think is going to happen, how they plan to stage the activities so the children understand each step. I would be more aware now whether a creative arts project is more process- or product-focused and therefore what I would expect the children to achieve from it. (Teacher AO)

Models of literacy

The models of work in creative arts projects were often very different from how children worked in 'literacy'. Where teachers followed National Literacy Strategy objectives, children's literacy products were often driven by a rapid coverage of writing genres and their features. Children's literacy products sometimes lacked meaningful contexts. Children were not always able to bring their knowledge and their narratives to the lesson (see Chapter 5 on Talk). As Teacher KR noted, *'In literacy, sometimes there is nothing they're working towards at all. They're just doing a task for the sake of a task'*. Likewise, exterior forces - curriculum, scheme of work, statutory tests, attainment targets - tended to drive the processes of literacy learning.

Teachers and children were inexperienced in the development of a long-term learning process in the creative arts and in literacy, and school structures did not always support this way of working.

Teacher KR: At the moment we're doing report writing. Prior to that we did narrative poetry. We work from the [National Literacy Strategy] objectives.

CLPE: How is the creative project different from literacy work?

Teacher KR: Because it's starting from where the children are at, it is different. With Literacy, you're doing your report writing or you're doing your narrative writing. This [creative project] is different because you can be flexible, what is the best way to follow up what they have learned or to show what they have learned? Rather than - now we have to do a story. What is the best way to get the ideas out and get them thinking? It looks at children more on an individual level. Some children will do drama and be filmed, other children will be involved other important roles in the filming [camera, sound] and still be successful. They won't have to do something they are uncomfortable with, but they will all be involved in some way.

Effective creative arts projects developed a 'big picture' of literacy, life and learning. In very effective projects, teachers and schools were working well outside the National Literacy Strategy framework and adapted the National Curriculum to the needs of children. They were willing to drop other subjects temporarily in order to develop a creative arts topic or project fully.

Planning issues in classrooms

Arts partners and teachers sometimes had different concepts of planning. Arts partners were primarily concerned with the progression of activities within the project. They wanted children to have fun and learn about their specific area of expertise. They wanted to help children express themselves. Although there was a variable range in their experience of working with children, arts partners felt secure in offering their skills and had a strong sense of what they could and couldn't do. Arts partners typically admitted '*I don't know much about the education side of it*' and '*I'm not a teacher*'.

I've never done this with a class before. I'm an artist. I can talk to people about seeing, ways of looking. I'm not a teacher. I'm not used to working with primary children. I'll use words like 'juxtaposition'. (Arts partner NA)

Teachers were concerned with stages of children's understanding, in making activities comprehensible to children and ensuring a successful, and ideally a measurable, outcome. Teachers hoped to see the creative project positively influence other areas of children's learning, such as writing, speaking and listening, or behaviour and motivation. They needed to see learning and progression in the 'practicum' experience.

The arts partner came and started. It was too abstract. We would have prepared the children beforehand if we knew what she was planning. What she expected was sometimes too difficult...She went too fast. We had to write out lists of her instructions on large paper and post them around the room so the children could recall the sequence. They couldn't hold all of her instructions in their heads. Our role really was to support groups and individuals who could not keep up. (Year 3 Teachers SD and JB)

Most arts partners had a clear idea of what they would do in the classroom. They had a vision of the work that would take place. However, teachers sometimes felt that arts partners had not thought sufficiently about the stages of children's learning and how to structure activities so that children understood them fully, and did not communicate their vision.

With one project, it was actually very hard for us teachers to understand what the artists were describing. It was firmly in their heads, but it wasn't firmly in our heads. They had to talk us through

every stage, and they weren't all used to communicating with non-artists. They would be talking and we would say, 'What are you actually planning to do with the children?' (Headteacher PB)

Teachers often had a great deal to contribute in terms of planning children's learning and this was not always shared or maximised. In this observation, artist NA and storyteller AJ consider a range of possibilities in continuing their work with Year 6 children. They are planning for the children, but they are also planning professionally for themselves:

AJ: It would be nice to build on what you did, what they noticed already. The main thing is going to be how it [the public exhibition] looks. The story [that I told] could continue.

NA: We could tell the story along a washing line. We discover a story from you, and retell it in sections, like walking down the street, each person could write a section in as much detail as they can.

AJ: So whatever story I choose needs to be in 19 segments!

NA: You could read the story as a comic strip.

AJ: Each one could choose a bit, and go from the bit with their own detail.

NA: Are they capable of doing their own text?

AJ: There seems to be different levels from what I've seen.

NA: Some of them are really on the ball.

AJ: Think about bits of today's story. They'll just get the bit they're supposed to do. Is that OK with you? I'll write 19 bare bones, or 'ribs'.

NA: They'll do the embellishment.

AJ: Each part will be quite small. They'll have to bring it alive, all the detail and describing. They don't have to worry about plot. Each bit has to be very detailed, seeing the picture in their heads. They could even start by drawing a picture and writing from the picture.

NA: That's enough for them to do. You give them their bit, they elaborate on it. I'm working with them on how to make a visually interesting piece of paper.

AJ: Groups could act out the story, they hear it and physicalise it.

NA: On each table they could help each other. Each piece of 'clothing' [in the exhibition] will have part of the story. It has to be interesting to look at, so people want to come and read it. It has to have people, detail. Exploring different ideas. We'll do the plastering in Week 3.

Unfortunately, this discussion took place without the class teacher's involvement. The question whether children were capable of writing their own texts could certainly have been answered by the missing person in this planning session.

We observed teachers' mediation and scaffolding of artists' ideas and plans to ensure children's learning in the activities. In a Year 6 class, the arts partner envisaged children writing stories *and* using a range of media for graphic representation in their writing at the same time. The teacher explained that these were two very different and challenging tasks. In this observation, the teacher advised the artist how the children would learn most effectively. Yet the issues they discussed, in a rush during children's play-time, should have been worked out in planning long before. Un-articulated concerns about children's understanding and progression are highlighted:

Teacher AH: What would be helpful, when you ask a question, is if you ask them to talk in pairs for a minute, give them time to do this, you would get more out of them...How do you want the tables? What will you want them to do?

Artist NA: They'll take a piece of the story and do individual writing, graphic writing, like I said.

Teacher AH: It would be better in pairs, definitely. You can give them two parts of the story. [What you're asking them to do] I've not done that with them. They need to talk about it. They won't know what to do otherwise.

Artist NA: Are they familiar with chalk, pastels charcoal? I'm introducing some new materials. Africa is dry and dusty, art materials can show that.

Teacher AH: They need to have a play [with the materials], to try out words and materials that aren't part of the story. Give them time to practice the techniques before going into the task... I'd like them to learn something about - have a go at - being storytellers themselves.

Some teachers realised that they did not devote enough time to planning for a partnership, because they believed the artist would automatically know how to create a learning context. As one teacher put it, "I thought it would just

happen, by magic." Teachers may expect an arts partner to take a lead role in the class but then be disappointed at the arts partner's lack of teaching skill.

I thought having an arts partner coming into class would be different to the work we did with the outside organisations [a theatre and an opera company], but it is no different. I still have to plan and manage the learning... When you go to somewhere outside, they are the specialist, it's their environment. When you work with the outside organisation you think you might have less control. But actually when the artist comes into your class, control may be lost more. (Year 6 teacher AH)

Teachers were sometimes frustrated at what they saw as lost opportunities or lack of commitment from some arts partners. Most frustrating for teachers was not knowing what the arts partners' plans were.

I asked them to email me their planning but they didn't. I didn't know what was going to happen. I thought the children would be learning to tell stories. The arts partner told stories, but she wasn't teaching the children how to become storytellers themselves. It was nice. It was OK. But it should have been so much more. (Year 6 teacher AH)

We were very aware that the artists were not teachers. I did do some training of arts partners really, things like - you need to have everything ready! You need to be here at half-past-eight!...It is about understanding the culture of the school. Some artists thought it would be acceptable to pass unfinished work to the teacher and say, 'Can you finish this?' I said, 'No, you can't do that - if you initiate a task, you must finish it.' It could be stressful due to time management and work not being completed in the blocks as we had planned. Teachers understand that you have to finish within a certain time. (Nursery teacher and school creative projects coordinator RM)

Artists may not understand how awful it is for teachers to see their room, its order and structure, disrupted. (Year 6 teacher and literacy coordinator CJ)

Because arts partners were focused on activities, they could sometimes overlook opportunities for children's learning. Teachers however were experienced in recognising and seizing these moments. For example, in School C, artists helped children design and make a life-sized ship in a studio space. Children immediately used the ship for imaginary play.

The role-play came from the children. The arts partners only thought about making a ship. The children weren't having any of that! They were mermaids and pirates. They were building a narrative. We developed it

into books and stories about mermaids and pirates and more role-play and artwork. (Nursery teacher BL)

Teacher knowledge of children's literature, stories and poetry extended the learning possibilities in creative projects (see Chapter Seven). Teacher BL knows that children learn and develop language through imaginary play. They use what they have made (a ship) to become 'mermaids and pirates', they step into and enact other roles. What they have made is not only an aesthetic object, it has the power to transform their classroom into another setting (the sea) and turn children into adventurers and creatures. Teacher BL observes the children building narratives, and she uses this opportunity to bring in books, stories and reading.

Gift horses?

In interviews when teachers were asked who was leading their projects, two teachers admitted "I'm not sure." An alarming finding in interviews was that teachers who were unhappy or dissatisfied with a partnership were unwilling to halt the project or change it. Even though teachers' knowledge and practice were crucial in mediating creative projects, months would pass before teachers would reluctantly express dissatisfaction to arts partners over ways of working, resources or activities. They were more likely to say nothing and, as one teacher put it, "make the best of a bad situation". Typical comments, even from experienced teachers, were: "It was planned. I had agreed to it. The sessions were all booked."

[The arts partner] was trialling her QCA unit and I wasn't happy with it. I had misread it. I thought it was going to be something else. It was way too fast. The two different concepts, design and making, together were too much for the children. But I didn't feel as though I could change it. It had been planned and agreed to. (Year 5 teacher JA in School J)

In school C, teachers were unhappy with one of the arts partners. They felt he was unable to relate sympathetically to very young children. Ultimately the school's head teacher intervened to remove him.

The reasons for this reluctance to confront problems varied. Teachers viewed creative projects as 'gifts' that they would appear churlish to criticise or reject. Creative projects were expensive resources, sometimes presented as privileges, and not every teacher got one. Creative projects were yet another educational initiative for teachers to interpret, accommodate and manage. Official directives on 'creativity' (ie QCA *Creativity: Find It Promote It*) appeared to them to conflict with other government messages about attainment and standards.

Conflicting demands

Anna Craft (2004) suggests that creativity is *'distinct from the roles and processes of school'*. This was a problematic issue in creative projects observed for this research. For example in School B, teachers felt that the dance lessons were *'totally different to anything on offer in our school'* and this was one of the less effective projects. Where creative arts projects were too distinct from school routines and experiences, teachers felt pressure and conflict.

We observed projects where teachers and arts partners had very good relationships and where children's learning and engagement were evident. Nevertheless teachers experienced what Robin Alexander (2004) described as the tension between *"the ostensible offer of autonomy"* of creative projects and the *"increasing hegemonisation of the curriculum through the [national] strategies, the three part [literacy hour] lesson and plenary becoming the template for everything"*. Teachers often had to work hard to accommodate creative projects and the interventions of arts partners. The extent to which teachers had to adapt or change their own teaching patterns was a factor in the success of creative projects.

Interviews and observations revealed different and sometimes conflicting roles, expectations, desires and anxieties of teachers and arts partners. Different views of learning and of children as learners emerged in classroom partnerships. Teachers and arts partners sometimes had different expectations of children and different, often implicit models of progression and of learning. They had to negotiate their understandings of how children learn, what children would do and what the learning 'outcome' would be. Teachers in particular had to create conditions for learning in professional relationships that could feel unequal.

In art and craft work, and in something like dance, I think there are quite a lot of teachers who are anxious that their own lack of skills in these areas might be exposed when an arts partner is coming in. When the arts partner comes in, although you know the children will enjoy it, it can be very unsettling for the teacher. It might be difficult to begin work with the arts partner at first. You need to build up the relationship with the arts partner very carefully so teachers can gain confidence, so they can spread the message to other, less confident teachers. Otherwise, it could be very negative.
(Headteacher PB)

Teachers and arts partners saw themselves differently as professionals in relation to children's learning. Teachers were driven by curriculum and assessment criteria at both school and national levels; they were trained and ultimately required to be concerned with children's attainment targets. In this sense, 'Creativity' was another form of government intervention in teaching.

In *Animating Literacy* action research (Ellis & Safford 2005), teachers overwhelmingly interpreted creative arts projects in terms of the government's standards agenda, for example by linking dance, story-telling or theatre arts to children's attainment targets in writing. Teachers often felt personally responsible for children reaching their set targets. They felt they could not squander curriculum time, and there was no perceived space for a project to drift, flounder or fail.

We are responsible for meeting their [children's] targets. We set their targets last week. At the end of the day, they have to meet their targets. We have to show how we moved them on. The only assessment that counts is the SATS. Because time is so tight, at the end of the year we have to justify how we have moved them on. It [the creative arts project] feels like a massive risk... To lose a day, an hour, is too much. This is their education and we can't waste one minute. (Year 2 teacher SP)

It's all very well to put arts and arts partners in schools, But how you actually carry it out in practice is very, very difficult. It throws up all kinds of issues. (Year 2 teacher AR)

Arts partners were unaffected by these constraints and concerns and could in fact choose not to engage with them even as they worked in school contexts.

My heart is in being able to work in a different way. I would be very bored and stressed having to work to a set curriculum. (Arts partner NB)

It would be impossible for me to 'deliver' something that I didn't 'own'. So much has to be delivered, it's impossible to own it. (Arts partner GA)

Turf

Arts partners had a very clear vision of what defined them and what their role was in the class. This was often in direct opposition to what they saw as the teacher's role.

My objectives are different [from teachers']. I've got a different perspective. They've got targets. My targets are based purely on what the children give me. My intention is to go there and create as much pleasure and joy as possible, to make something fun and memorable. (Arts partner GA)

Arts partners felt they brought out the best in children and showed teachers aspects of children of which teachers were unaware. Arts partners believed their way of working supported children's learning.

[Teachers] have said to us - oh, that is a side of that child that I've never seen before, [children] show you this, or that. What we do shows up aspects of their personalities that cannot be shown in the medium of the classroom: the expressive, free self, the spontaneous self. It's very hard to be spontaneous in the classroom, where you have to answer specific questions. Our questions are open. How you choose to answer it, what you draw on, comes from you personally. So it's affirming. It validates them as individuals and therefore builds confidence. (Arts partner GA)

Arts partners were willing for projects to be explorations without pre-set outcomes. Artist NB said of the filmmaking project in School A, 'We're on a journey, we don't know what the outcome might be'. Arts partners often reflected on their own practice as they worked with children.

It doesn't matter what we come up with today. It's an experiment. (Arts partner NA to Year 6 children)

It's about experimenting and experiencing. Trying out ideas. ...[your] brains are going - oooh, that feels nice, oooh, I like that! Let me keep that, let me practice that again, here is something else, I'll connect that. It's a constant dialogue, fitting things together, new ideas popping out. (Arts partner GA to Year 1 and Year 2 children)

We were exploring drawing as a process, less a finished product. Children love talking about the process, what they are going in their drawing. There are parallels with my own practice. Young children give so much. It's a two-way street. (Arts partner ED)

Arts partners often did not know where a session might lead and they communicated this to children. Unlike most teachers, arts partners never told children at the beginning of a session what their 'Learning Intention' was. They took a positive approach to uncertainty and were open to different possible outcomes.

Because arts partners so clearly staked-out their territory in creative projects, teachers tended to take on supporting and 'fixing' roles. They tended to follow the Griffeths and Woolf (op.cit) 'apprenticeship' model. They described their work mainly in terms of mediation and facilitation, but also saw themselves as responsible for extending children's learning in creative projects through:

- *Being the bridge between the artists and the children*
- *'Becoming small' in order to observe and listen to children*
- *Taking part and joining in*
- *Explaining activities in different ways to make them comprehensible*
- *Modelling to the arts partner how to talk to children*
- *Playing 'devil's advocate' to clarify arts partner's meaning*
- *Helping individuals and groups*
- *Ensuring fairness, calming squabbles*
- *Thinking about the 'lead up' and preparation children may need*
- *Making it easier for the project to succeed*
- *Differentiating work*
- *Using knowledge of individual children to deploy additional resources or support*
- *Extending the work and children's learning from the experience*

Our role is often to model language. Sometimes the children don't understand what the arts partner is saying. We also tell the arts partner what will work and what won't work with children, or really how to stage the activities in the best way for the children so they understand. (Nursery teachers BL and AB)

Where teachers did assert their territory, it was in relation to their knowledge of children's abilities and needs.

Since [the arts partner] didn't know the children, she didn't know what they were or weren't capable of. The arts partner was not aware of where to move the children on to. We know where they can be moved on to. (Year 3 teachers SD and JB)

Arts partners come in with their expertise, but I also think what is important is that the artist knows that their expertise is the art side, and the teacher will be more or less confident with that aspect. But the knowledge and understanding of the children must still lie with the teacher... It's about understanding where children are in their intellectual development. It's about the interaction between the artist and the teacher. That is key... The two things together, the arts specialist and the teacher, make a very powerful partnership because they are both bringing something that they are definitely experts in, and together each can learn more about the other side of the partnership. (Year 6 teacher and literacy coordinator CJ)

Some children also expressed the view that the arts partner may not understand them as well as the class teacher.

[Arts partners] TM, he doesn't really know much about my work. He's not always working with me. He says it's good anyway, but he can't say if it's better or not because he ain't seen it. (Jordan, Year 5)

Attitudes to children

Arts partners saw pleasure as a key ingredient to learning. They were generally more relaxed than teachers and often had a laugh with children.

I like spending time with kids. They're so cheeky! (Arts partner NA)

Boys this age [Year 6] remind me of chestnuts bursting out of their casings! All shiny! (Arts partner AJ)

Humour is so important. They always see us laughing in class. It simulates them to do more. (Arts partner GA)

Brian, Year 5 to arts partner JB: Can you help me?

JB: Sorry, you have to wait, I'm working with Calvin.

[Brian. sulks]

JB: That's life man, one big queue! [everyone laughs]

Arts partners were also aware of the demands their specialisms put on children. Arts partners always praised children after lessons and noted children's efforts. They linked effort and enjoyment, and after sessions would comment appreciatively on the work that children had done.

- *I hope you enjoyed that.*
- *I hope you had fun, I saw that you were working really hard.*
- *Thank you for your hard work*
- *Did you enjoy that? I enjoyed that. I could see you really concentrating.*
- *You have worked so hard today.*

They're working really, really hard. They work hard in that lesson. Their brains have been going. They're exhausted at by the end of it. In their class work, they work on something for 20-minutes maximum. In dance they work much longer. It's quite personal, it's yours, not on a piece of paper, it's in your body. You've used those muscles, those brain cells. And it's not 'marked'. (Arts partner GA)

Teachers rarely spoke to children in this way. After sessions with arts partners, teachers were more likely to ask children 'What did you learn?' It was startling in observations that teachers sharing the same experiences as arts partners and children rarely described learning as fun, enjoyable *and* hard work.¹

¹ In observations, Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) often used the same language as arts partners when talking to children, e.g.

Arts partners were generally not bothered by children's inattention or poor behaviour. They saw this as children taking a 'brain break'. Teachers however were particularly sensitive on these issues when handing over their class to the arts partner. What an arts partner viewed as temporary 'wandering off' or personal thinking time, teachers viewed as lack of concentration and/or respect.

The arts partner sees a boy spinning around on his bottom, not paying any attention and says, 'Oh he's being creative.' I say he's taking the piss. (Year 2 teacher SP)

I was really annoyed with the children, they really weren't focussed. I wanted them to be more focused and appreciate the opportunity [of working with arts partner NB]. (Year 5 teacher KR)

Teachers often took on the unsatisfying role of behaviour manager in sessions with arts partners: Teacher K excluded five boys from an activity on eight occasions during one session and later admitted, "Once I start looking at behaviour, it's all over for me." This same year 5 teacher summed-up the difference in how she and her arts partner view the children:

[Arts partner] NB sees them as little children, I tend not to see them that way. N sees them as younger than I do. She tends to say, well, they are only young, what they come up with is fine and good. She was always happy with what they gave her... She does have a positive view of the children. She sees them as individuals... It's an extra perspective. She gets quite enthused about any of the work they do and their ideas and doesn't expect too much whereas I expect them to do quite a lot. (Year 5 teacher KR)

Expectations of children's behaviour and learning were key issues in partnerships. Teachers rarely thought arts partners got it right. They tended to think that arts partners expected too much (working at too fast a pace and not explaining sufficiently) or expecting too little of children. However creative projects sometimes implicitly forced teachers to examine on their own expectations of children and of the curriculum.

LSA at School EW: I've been working with you all along on this, and you have been so enthusiastic and you worked so hard, to see it all put together like this is just fantastic.

LSA at School SPS: You were lovely [dancing], turning around, pleasure on your faces...it was a beautiful lesson and you will remember it.

LSA at School MF: Well done, I saw you were working hard. I really enjoyed watching you.

It has been nice to work with a professional who is not a teacher. She [arts partner NB] has different ideas about things, and she sees things differently... She sees them more as little children than I do. My expectations are higher, so she is balancing that. She said, 'No, these were the things that came out of the session, don't worry, we'll be fine, we will do things differently'. She has a fresher approach. It's been good to throw ideas back and forwards, she is very much part of the process. (Year 5 teacher KR)

It's a new way of looking at learning. Children may have quite a stylised idea of what is 'good' in drawing, or in dance. It's about freeing up children's ideas of what is 'good'. Drawing, like other work with arts partners, is one of those things in the curriculum that isn't right or wrong. You do it your way, it can't be wrong. That's how the artist makes it. (Nursery teacher and school creative projects coordinator RM)

Teachers reported that they were able to observe their classes, often for the first time, in creative arts projects. With opportunities to observe, teachers noticed changes in children's confidence, attitudes to learning, language and cognitive activity (See Chapter Four, Class Studies). Teachers also reported improvements to their own practice as a result of partnerships, not only in skills but also in awareness of and attitudes to the children themselves.

I try now, every day, to see the children in a positive light, to see something good about them, every day. To not get dragged down. To see them the way my arts partner saw them. JB noticed things I don't notice. In objective-led teaching I wasn't noticing a lot of things. (Year 2 teacher AO)

[Arts partner] NB does pick out things about individual children. She has fresh eyes for things they do because she sees them once a week. She notices things about their writing but also about their speaking and listening. She'll say: 'Did you see I.? She spoke so loudly, I've never seen her speak like that, she is so much more confident now.' It helps me to notice the positives as well. (Year 5 teacher KR)

The artist sees things differently to the way I would see them. An artist would say, 'This is wonderful, look at the freedom in that drawing'. It made me look at their work differently. (Nursery teacher and school creative projects coordinator RM)

Absolutely. I would be looking, and I would always see one or two children who would really surprise me. When you're teaching yourself, there may be children that you don't focus on. With this you could, because some one else was teaching. (Year 6 teacher and literacy coordinator CJ)

Role models and messages

In observations, professional arts practitioners conveyed messages to children that were different from school and teacher messages. Arts practitioners spoke of their personal satisfaction in hard work and becoming proficient. In these separate observations, Year 6 children question an opera singer and an opera composer:

(1)

Sam: Do you ever lose your voice on stage, does it hurt your throat?

Singer SR: No, no, I've had years of practice. This is what I do for my job, singing in opera. I had seven years of music college, a long time.

Sam: When you walk on the street do opera fans recognise you? When you get to that high pitch, how do you do it?

Singer SR: Years and years of practice.

(2)

Janice: What is the nicest thing about being a composer?

Composer OD: You're always learning. You never know what it's going to sound like, and it gets better, it improves. Some things you're pleased with, others you're not. You carry on learning...I'm really happy even though I don't earn a lot of money. The nice thing about my job is I don't do the same thing every day. I write, I travel, visit schools work at the opera house. If I won the lottery I wouldn't change much...In the opera there are hundreds of jobs, painting sets, designing, singing, wardrobe. There are jobs for all of you out there.

Teacher AH observed these messages and children's interest in them. He began to emulate creative practitioner language that linked experience, expertise and enjoyment.

AH: I hope that [workshop with the composer] has been useful for you. I found it really useful. That is somebody's job when they leave school, to earn money. Do you think he enjoys his job?

Children: Yes!

AH: Do you think everybody in the world enjoys their jobs?

Children: No!

AH: He's followed his dream to do something he enjoyed. If you've got a talent, it could be anything, music, writing, sports, you could wake up in the morning and think: I can't wait to go to work today.

Teacher AH said later

I really noticed how they [theatre and opera staff] talked to the children. So I started, consciously, trying to talk like that too. I did a Maths lesson where we were swinging a big pendulum and counting-up in sevens. And afterwards I said to M. 'Did you enjoy that?' and he smiled and said 'Yeah I did enjoy that.' It was like I was putting the idea into their heads that they enjoyed it, and they began to enjoy it! (Year 6 teacher AH)

Several arts partners had had very negative school experiences and had empathy for disaffected pupils. They were aware that they had a positive impact on children routinely labelled 'behaviour problems'.

Here I am in school again. I can't believe it! It has left a legacy actually. It took a long time to come to terms and overcome the feelings it left me with. I found a way of dealing with it. Now I want to find ways of working that I feel comfortable and confident about and not how that experience left me. That's what I'm doing now. (Arts partner NB)

When we ask [the teacher] for one more group - after everyone has had a go - and the teacher says we can choose whoever has worked well with us earlier, we choose and the teacher can be amazed! These are often the children with 'behaviour' issues in class. (Arts partner JC)

Some arts practitioners were frank about not doing well in school themselves but discovering their talents in other areas. They signalled to children that struggling in school is normal.

[As a child] I really liked music and I wasn't good at anything else. I was terrible at maths and PE. If you're not so good at some things, that's fine. It's fine to struggle with some things, that's life. (Arts partner OD to Year 6 children)

The impact of ethnic minority and bilingual arts partners in schools where ethnic minority children are majorities cannot be underestimated. In School B, Year 1 and 2 ethnic minority children were astonished and mesmerised to see

Black dancers when the class visited a professional dance studio. Their teacher SP observed: *'They identified with the Black dancer, they were impressed by how well he danced, how strong he was and they were keen to be picked to work in his group.'* Black actors and theatre technicians had a similar impact on Year 6 children at School D, where teacher AH noted: *'It's as if they see themselves, it's like their future in front of them.'*

In School E, Portuguese artist ML was able to speak with Year 5 and 6 children in their first language; they used Portuguese for learning, making and crafting. In the same school, a Year 2 girl wrote to JB, an African Caribbean storyteller: *'I miss you. You are like a teacher.'* Where ethnic minority and bilingual arts partners work in schools, they offer more than celebrations of diversity. They offer children powerful models of and purposes for education and literacy.

Interactive, reflective partnerships

In effective creative arts projects teachers and arts partners made time to lay the groundwork for close professional relationships. Where teachers and artists observed each other teaching the class before starting their projects, each partner got a feeling for the teaching style of the other. From this initial 'getting to know you' activity more meaningful planning and discussion would follow.

In these partnerships teachers and arts partners were in constant communication throughout projects, through email, telephone calls and meetings. They reviewed the situation at the end of every session to decide where to next direct the children's learning. Each area of teacher and artist expertise was maximised and shared in a friendly and professional manner, as this exchange of emails (between a teacher and an artist following a studio session for children) indicates:

The children really enjoyed the workshop and I feel they work best when it is in an informal atmosphere (which it was). So it would probably be best to continue with what we did last week, perhaps starting off with looking at the work they have already done and then carrying on with more drawing. (Nursery teacher AB)

I really enjoyed the workshop and felt it went really well. The children seemed to enjoy sewing with the wool and created some really interesting images and shapes. I have exposed their stitched pieces in the darkroom and they've created some really interesting and beautiful images. I'll bring them along to the next workshop. So we should have similarly exciting results with the light sensitive paper. (Arts partner ED)

Arts partners in these relationships were sympathetic about the pressures on teachers. They appreciated teachers' efforts to ensure projects were successful and to disseminate the project in the school.

I have to fight so hard for INSET, teachers have only a finite amount of INSET time. The last time, I had half an hour. It comes back to how the schools accommodate the partnership, the spirit of it. By Monday teachers are ground back down again. Teachers' needs must be built into the planning and how you work. (Arts partner TM)

For me this project was a real joy, because however open I might be to this process, a teacher might not necessarily be that open to it or empowered to do that. [Teacher KR] is completely open and prepared to learn and contribute. She has the head-space to do that. She is totally engaged with the children's learning processes and is not rigid about how that might happen. (Arts partner NB)

Successful partnerships existed in individual classrooms in very different kinds of schools. In two cases, in fact, the successful partnership classrooms existed as islands in indifferent and sometimes unsupportive school curricula and cultures. In two other schools where children are streamed by ability for literacy and numeracy, partnerships were less effective simply because teachers and children saw less of each other and therefore had less contact and time to develop and sustain the work.

Shared professional development

In effective partnerships, teachers valued the unique contributions of arts partners for their own professional development in addition to children's learning. Every teacher interviewed was on a personal learning continuum.

*I think you want your arts partner to show you something that you can't imagine, to completely open your eyes to something you've never seen or thought of before. I don't want my arts partner to think the same way as me, because I can do that for myself.
(Reception teacher JC)*

It was a revelation in my practice to learn that storytelling had to do with writing. (Year 2 teacher AO)

I see teaching now as making links, connections with everything all around us, whether this is working with an outside organisation or with an artist in the classroom. It all has to be connected to make sense to the children. (Year 6 teacher AH)

[Arts partner] SS taught me how to pause in the narrative and explore a moment or a scene in it, how to expand a moment and not always be pushing the narrative forward. It's really changed the way I teach drama now. (Year 5 teacher GD)

I have learned a lot, how to reach out to children who don't learn in traditional ways. (Year 2 teacher SP)

Following an art project at School I, the entire teaching staff decided to take life drawing classes after school at a local arts college.

Every teacher will be getting something from it either because they are very passionate, or because they're not quite so passionate or not so confident but there will be something about that project which will inspire them and will increase their practice and their confidence. It's not just about how we are when the experience is going on, it's how we are after the experience is over and what we are going forward with... It has changed the way everyone works. It has permanently changed what we do. (Nursery teacher RM and Year 6 teacher CJ)

Arts partners also gained professionally from their experiences in schools. They viewed projects as opportunities to offer their knowledge and expertise and to improve the quality of school life and children's education. They were always fascinated by children's development.

The most unexpected outcome has been how much the children's work has informed my own practice as an artist. The way they view their work has allowed me to look at my own work in a new way. I notice also the enjoyment and interest the children have in the process of a workshop as opposed to the finished drawing or image... You never know what to expect. Children are extremely creative. Their language has changed noticeably. They now use much longer sentences to describe their work or observations. They also seem less inhibited in expressing their imaginative interpretations of image or process. (Arts partner ED)

The more we demystify how arts work, how arts help children learn, the better. Artists have to work within the curriculum, to justify being in schools. And we have to help teachers understand what we do. (Arts partner GA)

Effective creative projects promoted reflective practice. Conversations 'surfaced' the tacit professional knowledge of teachers and artists as they exchanged perspectives and tested out new materials and approaches.

When I make an observation, [arts partner] SS can put a name to it. It becomes concrete knowledge for me. I said that the children referred to each other as the characters of the novel, calling each other 'Aysha' or 'Dadi'. SS said that they had 'reached the point of sustained role'. (Year 5 teacher GD)

I am also learning a lot from [teacher] KR because the class is very challenging. She is really positive and supportive but can also tell me honestly where things don't work so well. Once I did something with drama and she was really clear about why that didn't work and it was really helpful. She knows those young people inside out. She knows their stories, really knows what makes them tick. She is very generous making sure that I am in on that. (Arts partner NB)

A significant factor in the success of creative arts projects was the relationship between the arts partner and the teacher. Their effective negotiations as professionals created the 'magic' teachers hoped for. In effective projects teachers and arts partners developed a shared view of children's learning and would air their views regularly in conversations, e.g.:

There was an equality of thinking [in children's talk and writing] that reminds me that children are not half-human, they are fully human. Working in drama is a constant reminder... We had one eye on the material and one eye on the children's responses. (Arts partner SS)

We were really observing the children. (Teacher GD)

We used what children know. It was very child centred, and I don't like to use that word because it has such bad connotations. (Arts partner SS)

This 'magic' was best sustained and disseminated when the school vision and ethos supported the work in classrooms. Where artists worked beyond individual classrooms, across Key Stages or year groups over time, teachers and schools were able to evaluate projects on a wider scale. They could then consider changes to teacher and school practices and how to build progression into long-term creative projects across age phases.

'Enabling' and 'constraining' factors (as noted by Doherty & Harland in 2001 for NFER) did occur simultaneously even in very effective creative arts projects. Most constraining was a narrow interpretation of the curriculum (ie linking dance to Literacy Hour objectives) and school context (ie streaming; where schools streamed children by ability, partnerships were less effective because teachers had less contact with children and less time to embed and extend project work). Strict timetables where each subject had its 'slot', frequent target-setting and testing likewise constrained creative arts development.

Most enabling was the personal and professional commitment of the teacher. Teacher beliefs and practice were crucial to the success and effectiveness of creative arts projects, which involved considerable work for teachers outside of curriculum and assessment parameters. No matter how skilled the creative artist, it was the teacher who made a project work for children's learning in the school environment. As we will show in the next chapter, arts partners

could not develop projects in the face of teacher resistance. In other cases, extensive teacher input beyond weekly (or less frequent) arts partner sessions ensured the embedding and the effectiveness of creative arts projects.

Chapter 4

Class studies in creative arts projects

*I want to be a footballer. But if I'm not a footballer
I would go to the theatre and be a stage manager.
(Kieron, Year 6)*

This wider research began with the evidence of *Animating Literacy* teachers' action research that creative practices were already operating in classrooms. Our aim was to pinpoint factors in creative arts projects that made a difference to children's learning (particularly in literacy) and, through these factors, illustrate the creative classroom in action.

The following chapter presents studies of children's work in four creative arts projects: drama, performing arts, multimedia and filmmaking. In Chapter Six we shall go on to analyse children's exemplar texts from these projects.

In the most effective projects, three creativities were continually present: the teacher, the arts partner and the children were all equally engaged and committed in the learning process of the project. But this three-way creativity was not always in evidence in project classrooms. We also present here a project in dance that was less effective and we consider the underlying reasons for this. We present this class study not as a critique of an individual project but to illustrate factors that may hinder the positive impact of creative arts projects in schools.

This chapter draws on data collected in classrooms over four terms: observations, field notes, interviews with children, teachers and arts partners, children's individual and collaborative texts, children's recorded talk and their creative products. Teachers also contributed from their own notes and records. We examine each project in these particular areas:

- School and classroom context for the project
- The aims or questions underpinning the project
- What kind of work the children did in the project
- The range and quality of children's talk in the project
- The range and quality of children's writing in the project
- Developments for individual children or the class
- Outcomes

Class Study One: Finding yourself in a book

Year 5 in School H
Teacher GD, Arts partner SS
A one-term drama project

Context

School H is an oasis in a deprived inner city estate. It is an open-plan school, with large shared areas and small classrooms. It is a two-form school with an experienced staff and headteacher. Children, teachers, headteacher and support staff are all on a first-name basis.

Teacher GD had worked for over 20 years in inner city schools. She was also a painter and visual artist in her own right. In her classroom, she taught children explicitly how to paint, draw and present their work aesthetically. Children would develop writing and artwork simultaneously around their reading of a text, often presenting their writing with, or even as part of, their artwork.

Teacher GD worked with a drama specialist, arts partner SS for one term. Although GD had often used drama in her teaching, she said she '*experienced a real conceptual leap*' when working with SS by realising the difference between drama as exploration and theatre skills as performance '*and I'll never confuse the two again*'. GD and SS had a shared view of the curriculum and they believed that drama could create powerful contexts for learning and for writing.

I knew you could make it [drama] slightly more abstract, deeper into character, emotion, not always concerned with the narrative so much. You could end up with even stronger understanding, and you could take it in different ways. (Teacher GD)

Teacher GD and arts partner SS planned the project in consultation with school colleagues. In weekly discussions they reflected on a wide range of practical and pedagogic issues.

Aims

This was the only *Animating Literacy* project to work extensively around a whole text, a novel (*Lost for Words* by Elizabeth Lutzer) about a girl who emigrates from Bangladesh to London. The project's enquiry was whether a culturally relevant text would engage a group of girls (Tasneen, Rahela and Lara). They were learners with English as an Additional Language who rarely participated in class discussions. Teacher GD was concerned about these girls who always seemed to be on the margins of the class.

Tasneen was a classic EAL child, standing back, not joining in, using only words she knew. She would say 'I don't know' when she really didn't know the words to use. (Teacher GD)

The project's wider enquiry was how drama could enhance children's understanding of the novel and create a safe place to discuss issues such as migration, racism and Islam sensitively in the school learning context. Teacher GD had intuited that the novel would engage many children in her class who may have had similar experiences to the fictional 'Aysha' of the novel. Although the enquiry was about the girls with EAL, the drama work was not 'aimed' at them and the girls were observed in the context of whole class work. The project became a deep exploration of identity that engaged the whole class and led to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction writing.

Project work: developing drama skills for exploration

Because of the short time frame, Teacher GD and arts partner SS decided that there would be no 'end' product in a dramatic performance but that children's work would be a series of explorations of the world of the novel. Through role play and drama, the class examined familiar and unfamiliar themes raised by the novel: separation, leaving home, arriving in a new country, coping with change, racism and bullying, acts of kindness and hopes for the future.

These explorations were underpinned by explicit teaching in how to 'work' in drama. Specific drama skills taught to children included freeze framing, thought-tracking, 'alley of consciousness' and working 'in role'. Arts partner SS quickly (and, in Teacher GD's notes, 'very strictly') taught the children skills and vocabulary that enabled them to improvise effectively, as this observation of the class in action illustrates:

Arts partner SS: *"Can you get to your starting point from last week without talking?"*

The children remember their positions very well. As soon as SS claps her hands, the children are in a playground with [the character in the novel] 'Aysha' in her new school. The children freeze in a position, playing, looking and talking, and when SS claps a second time they change to another 'freeze frame'.

SS: *"Make sure you do not go out of your working space. Think about the quality of the noise in the dream sequence itself. You need to have a CLEAR FINISHING POINT, you can decide that in your group"*

SS observes children practising. The focus girls are taking the lead in their groups. Tasneen leads her group by explicitly suggesting to them what to say and what to do. Lara participates by volunteering to do different tasks. Rahela is silent but leads the drama work in a more implicit manner by acting herself the different sequences front of her group and serving as a model for them. Moreover, as a boy takes on the role of 'Aysha' in her group, she tells him how to say "go away" in Bengali. Tasneen also takes great care to teach another boy how to say

"Leave me alone" in Bengali. They want to 'get it right' and make the scenes as authentic as possible.

SS and GD move between groups and help them with constructive questions both to the children and to each other, e.g.: " Do you think that...?" They make their collaboration visible. Rahela and Lara commented on watching the other groups:

"When we watch the groups acting we could understand what we had to do. It helped to understand what other people were thinking about... We could feel how Aysha coped in her life. It helped us understand how other people treated Aysha and what she went through."

Next the children sit on the floor around SS who sits on a chair (taking the role of the class teacher).

Arts partner SS: How many of you have had dreams at night about things that happened to you in the day? What do you think could be in Aysha's memory, what would be in her dreams?

Tasneen: How people treat her. What she misses from Bangladesh.

V: What will happen to her at school.

Arts partner SS: What would be the worst moment in the playground?

Rahela: When people pushed you away

Tasneen: When they shouted go away

C: I would be upset because the situation was making friends argue between themselves.

E: I said it because she was in the way

A: Gossiping about her

B: I felt good [in the improvisation] when the two girls said do you want to play and the girls stuck up for her against the boys.

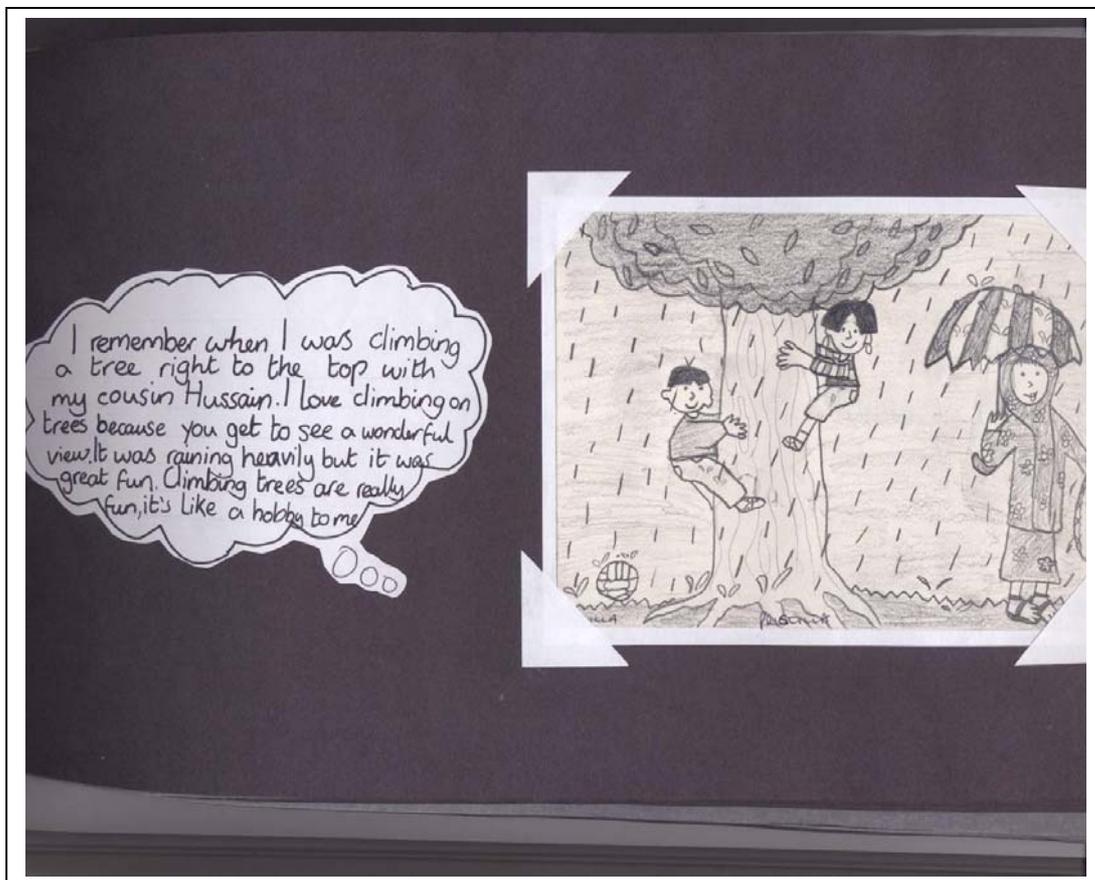
M: I decided [in the improvisation] to be nice to Aysha because I wouldn't want to be in that position.

Arts partner SS: Now we are going to make Aysha's dreams. You are going to work in groups to create good and bad aspects of Aysha's dreams. And we are going to make it look like a dream... You have to find a way to show a dream.

This project starts with explicit teaching and naming of skills and techniques ('starting point, working space') followed by giving children responsibility to use these to create something new ('You have to find a way'). Children's improvisations stimulate their thinking skills and their language. They develop their knowledge and opinions by listening to peers express their views and responding.

Creating a world for writing

In a single term, in her literacy sessions, Teacher GD developed a complex, multi-layered teaching sequence building on arts partner SS's weekly drama sessions. Children worked on a variety of writing and artwork: letters, poems, essays, drawings, family trees and paintings of Bangladesh villages. They walked through their South London estate to try to see it through the eyes of a new arrival. They wrote information texts: bilingual support materials, and school policies on bullying and on induction of new arrivals. They created an artefact from the imagined world of the novel: a 'photo album' of drawings showing the fictional family in Bangladesh with accompanying speech bubbles describing these memories:



Children looked at Bengali maps and children's textbooks, and they found out about Bangladesh on the internet. They were encouraged to work 'between the lines' of the novel rather than re-create its writing. They were encouraged to use what they knew about the world of the novel *in the context of their own*

lives to create their own writing. Work in the classroom was a series of open possibilities.

I can hear all the drama work coming through. I can hear that you really know Aysha, you know who she is, what her experiences have been, and that you're able to put yourself in her shoes. You could write about yourself, you know. Instead of talking about Aysha, you could put yourself in your own shoes. Yes, you could stand in your own shoes and you could write something that helps you to think. You could write a poem about yourself, thinking of all the things that you like, what you love, what you feel, places you miss or where you come from. (Arts partner SS)

Quality of talk

Extensive talk was a feature of this project, particularly in the form of dialogues. Children would improvise conversations between characters in the novel, perform these to the class and then reflect on what they had observed in discussions. Dialogue was used to generate ideas and create visual enactments of ideas. In this observation, children in pairs develop a conversation that does not occur anywhere in the novel: Aysha talks with her grandfather on hearing the news that her father plans to take the family to London:

Abdi (as Aysha): I'm worried about going to England in case people say horrid things because I'm a foreigner.

Anthony (as Grandfather): You should go. It is the first time you have seen your father in six years. You must go...

Hinga: It is difficult to leave because all my friends are here.

Babah: Education is more important than friends...

Ertan: I'm nervous about going to this new modern city but I'm going to go to school to learn a new language...

Okieriete: It is time for you to join your father.

Ertan: People will be teasing me.

Okieriete: Then you must tell your teacher...

In these improvised conversations, children used their knowledge of how to work in drama, their knowledge of the world of the novel and they call on their own cultural and background knowledge.

This was bringing something from them, an emotion within themselves or learned within their families or friendships, not just from the story. For example, we had Anthony going straight into his own grandfather, very strict Nigerian grandfather, somebody wise and respected. We saw all the different types of grandfathers. I saw we tapped a deeper level. (Teacher GD)

Children were asked to imagine how Aysha would feel on hearing the news that she was leaving Bangladesh. They reflected on what had been said in their improvisations and how the story might continue from that point.

Priscilla was first with her hand up: She would feel unhappy.

Second hand up, Rahela: She'd be heartbroken.

Next hand up, Lara: She would be angry.

Tasneen: She would feel depressed.

Anthony offers a different point of view: She might feel happy because of going to school.

Okieriete: She might be worrying about not being able to speak English.

Hinga: She might be worried whether she would make new friends.

Okieriete: I feel like that at the moment because of going on School Journey.

Kym: I felt like that when I first came to this school.

Tazneen: I felt like that when I first met my cousin in Bangladesh, because she might be bad.

Children talk here in an exploratory way: *She might feel...she would feel...* They weave their own feelings and experiences into the discussion: *I felt like that...* Children layer their own experiences onto the novel to interpret its themes. Raney & Hollands (2000) characterise this kind of collaborative talk as being able to '*bring us up against the gap between the self and various kinds of 'otherness'...it compels us to see ourselves through others*'. Teacher GD noted that '*The most reflective talk came after the drama. We underestimate children's sophistication and their response.*'

A range of writing

Children wrote poems in the voice of Aysha, using their knowledge of the characters and the setting of the novel and adding Bengali words for Mum, Dad, and Grandparents. The poems by the focus girls are particularly powerful and include specific language, religious and cultural references. They are heartfelt. Tasneen's poem shows that she is no longer on the margins. She expresses herself forcefully.

*I am
Aysha, Muhammad's favourite wife
That's why I mean a lot to Dada.*

*I am
I don't want to go to England...although it means I am
Komla's cousin, Ama's daughter, Hussain's cousin
Of course, Dada, Dadi's favourite granddaughter.*

*I am
Helpful, when I peel the onions with my eyes watering. Ama tells me
They will bring out the flavour of the delicious curry.*

*Kind, when I wash and sieve and sort the fresh, white rice and bring it to
The table in a hurry when people come.*

*I love it
When I climb the beautiful luscious mango trees
Or go to the wonderful festivals called Melas.*

*I feel like
My heart is sinking for Jamdher
I don't want to go to England but it might be fun.*

*I hate
The thought of going to England
And wearing grey suits like my dad.
I am happy with my family but not with my Aba
Because he made me sad when he left me behind.*

*I come from
Bangladesh
It means my life to me
Where I actually live*

I want to stay in Bangladesh.

As one of many in-role activities involving drama on paper, children became Aysha's father. They wrote to Aysha when she was four years old, explaining why he left the family to go to England. *The letter was not to be opened until Aysha was ten years old.* Children called on their drama skills to assume the father's voice and to move forwards and backwards in time in their writing, using expressions such as *"By the time you read this...."* *"You might be asking yourself why I left...."* *"It is your birthday but this is not a birthday card...it is to tell you why I left..."* Rahela included the Bengali ABC in her letter reminding Aysha that it was he, her father, who taught her to read. Tasneen's letter is the letter of a Muslim father to his daughter.

I'm very sorry Aysha. My heart is beating for you. Before I went I kissed you, I touched you and I prayed for you, and I prayed that I would come very soon. Allah bless you with love. I cried my soul out for you my darling Aysha. It's not bad in England, but I want to come back. I could not take you and your Mother because the plane

tickets were very, very expensive. There are better jobs in England and they pay more. I left you a gift, that you can be very educated.

Tasneen said to her teacher that when she wrote this letter *"I could hear my dad speaking"*. This was very sophisticated writing that referred backwards and forwards in time in language structure as well as in its content. The writing recalls a past and imagines an unknown future. It is writing that takes place entirely within the world of the novel - yet it was an event that did not take place in the novel. Children were reading, imagining and writing beyond the text and the narrative.

Children used the internet to search for images of Bangladesh, looking at the flag of Bangladesh and listening to its national anthem. They wrote essays in pairs describing their understanding of the poem which is the national anthem of Bangladesh. Children adopted a very different voice and stance from their dramatic writing in-role.

We understand the bit 'My Bengal of Gold' It means my Bengali precious girl. We love the sentence 'Your skies and your air set my heart in tune as if I was a flute'. We think that is a wonderful sentence. We think that Dr. Ali Ashan writes some beautiful Bangladeshi poems. This poem sounds joyful and strong, powerful. It sounds like he is writing to his mum or wife. (Rahela and Lara)

By the end of the term, children had written in sixteen different modes around the themes of the novel. Arts partner SS and Teacher GD observed that drama was more than a 'rehearsal' for children's writing. SS noted that drama *'enabled children to inhabit a world where writing would normally take place'*. They discussed this in a taped reflective conversation towards the end of the project:

In fact, none of their writing was replicated from the drama. Every letter, every piece of writing, was individual. That writing was never 'rehearsed'. Drama created a world out of which writing can arise...Drama allowed them to be more fully themselves, in their thoughts. This drama is not about pretending to be someone else. (Arts partner SS)

They did constantly use references to the book... They knew 'Aysha', they knew who she was. Though her, they could discover all these common experiences they had. (Teacher GD)

They had common reference points, and that was important for the class in order for them to move forward. Those common reference points can be very elusive in classes where children come from such different backgrounds. (Arts partner SS)

Changes for children

Teacher GD closely involved the class Learning Support Assistant (LSA) in observation and data collection. During class discussions and drama work, the LSA would note (by ticking a list of class names) whenever a child raised his or her hand, volunteered to speak, and asked or answered a question. In this way, over time, Teacher GD and arts partner SS could see that the focus group of girls with EAL was indeed contributing more frequently. The LSA also noticed that the girls had started to voluntarily sit at the front of the class rather than at the edges. These separate observations by Teacher GD over one term showed their growing involvement:

As SS unfolded the map of Bangladesh a buzz of excitement grew, and as if drawn by an invisible thread, I watched Tasneen and Rahela move across the floor, closing the gap, to be completely on top of the map where they excitedly showed the class their own family villages.

Rahela came from home with words describing Aysha's [the novel's] character written in Bengali as well as English and her brother had made an A3 banner with 'Bangladesh' written in Bengali for the class.

Before school began SS and I were in the classroom showing each other the Bengali artefacts we had collected. Tasneen and Rahela slipped into the classroom early and were handling everything as it appeared from the bag, telling us the proper names and offering to demonstrate how to wear a sari. Lara was with them grinning and joining in. They were boisterous and confident, behaving in a delightfully cheeky way that gave evidence to their emerging self-assurance.

As arts partner SS picked up the Bengali Alphabet book Rahela called out "I can read that". "So can I" added Tasneen. They sat in the storyteller's chair and read the book to us in Bengali and English, receiving a huge clap.

Outcomes: exploring identity

Teacher GD and arts partner SS observed how work in drama around the novel generated a very deep response from many children by calling on their experiences as ethnic minorities in England. But they also noted that white British children in the class who had never been away from the inner city estate of the school also wrote compellingly as and about Aysha and Bangladesh. The explorations of the novel created a context where all children felt comfortable bringing their heritage to school.

We were collecting names for granddad, grandma, mum and dad, cousin and uncle, in Mandarin, Spanish, Yoruba, Arabic, Twi and many other

languages. We had a fascinating discussion about the role of "Big Aunty" in Nigerian society. (Teacher GD)

Children used drama to move in and out of the fictional world of the book, enacting and then responding as readers and writers who had their own unique experiences.

The children's feelings of identity are subtle and complex. This was demonstrated during the football world cup where we had great times in front of the TV cheering and singing for England, Nigeria, Turkey or any of the other countries to which the children feel a relationship. Our children happily move between identities with similar loyalty, but their knowledge and experience of the hurtful aspects of this is profound. (Teacher GD)

Teacher GD and arts partner SS observed how work in drama allowed children to slow down the narrative drive of the novel. Drama enabled children to develop pauses in the narrative, where interior life and thinking flourish.

I was aiming to enable them to bring to the imaginary world of the novel things they had experienced that were similar, things they understood from their real world... The class brings a whole set of background knowledge to what they're doing. In all the sessions, we never did anything to do with the narrative. We went somewhere else: the world around 'Aysha', not the past tense of narrative. Narrative is about the 'there and then' Drama is about the 'here and now'. It was a lived experience. (Arts partner SS)

The effect on the focus group of girls was profound.

I learned that Aysha's life is very horrible and I don't want my life to be like that. That's how well I know how Aysha feels when she came to England. It is the first time I have included my life in Aysha's. I would compare my life with somebody else's to understand what Aysha's life is like. (Tasneen)

Tasneen told me, 'When I'm acting, I'm not shy anymore.' It gave her a 'cover'... [the focus girls] had misplaced their words. Those cultural references were like smelling the madeleine, they found their words... Nothing was aimed at those particular EAL children. We created a context... We saw a big change in those girls. Their relationships with the class grew, they were much more jokey and confident. Before they were much more on the sidelines. They felt so free to make cultural references in their writing and in class discussions. They felt more comfortable. (Teacher GD)

They're 'out' about being Bengali or Bangladeshi. They could include their culture. They know things. We may be holding the reins of the classroom but it also puts us in a learning situation. (Arts partner SS)

The teacher and arts partner were firmly in control of the classroom. They knew what the learning intention was. But the project also enabled them to learn more about the children. Arts partner SS and Teacher GD characterised the project as '*using what the children know*', and '*children bringing their experiences to the curriculum*'. This was made possible in a process-orientated creative arts project where the teacher and the arts partner had a shared view of children and their learning.

Class Study Two: Questioning and reflecting

Year 6 in School D

Teacher AH

Arts Organisations Y and O

A 3-term theatre/performing arts project

Context

School D is a one-form entry school in a purpose-built building behind a major rail station. The experienced senior management team encourage teachers to take children out of the school to museums, theatres, cinemas and other cultural centres all within walking distance of the school.

Teacher AH was in his second year of teaching and had previously trained and worked as an actor. Like Teacher GD, although much less experienced, Teacher AH brought his own background, skills and interests to his teaching. Teacher AH and his class had a relationship with cultural and performing arts institutions rather than an individual arts partner who came into the class each week. Their main, ongoing relationship was with Theatre Y.

The arts institutions offered a number of experiences: repeated access to performances, visit from directors, singers and composers, in-school and on-stage workshops. In a session at Theatre Y, children produced the opening scenes of the play *Skellig* (based on the novel by David Almond), taking on all the on-stage and back-stage roles (in sound, lighting and cueing) with adult supervision. Children created props for the play *Skellig* which were used in the professional performances. Children also performed a short play as part of a schools performance series and made a documentary film about Theatre Y based on their own research.

Teacher AH's planning was flexible and he was able to integrate the experiences offered by the institutions, although he was not always sure what would happen in the sessions. The institutions did not engage with what was going on inside Teacher AH's classroom. As Theatre Y's education director SE put it: '*What we brought to the table was our expertise.*' She did however believe that the theatre gained from opening its doors and backstage to the class over three terms, and that the children '*gave us a meaningful and memorable experience of this theatre*' by reflecting the institution back to its practitioners and staff.

Aims

Teacher AH was interested in children's questions. He observed that his class rarely asked any questions and the few questions they did ask were closed, requiring simple 'yes' or 'no' answers. He wanted to find out whether exposure to and reflection on theatre arts experiences could develop children's enquiry and critical thinking skills.

Teacher AH used the opportunities of the performing arts workshops and visits to encourage children to ask questions. Through developing their questioning, Teacher AH hoped that children would become more willing to write because they would have gained information and insights. He hoped that they would

feel more confident about writing because the theatre arts experiences would give them something to write about.

Teacher AH tracked the progress of a boy and a girl, Kieron and Nadeen. He observed that these young people were writing as little as possible, just enough to satisfy teacher requirements for class work. Teacher AH was concerned about Kieron in particular who would weep in frustration and anxiety whenever Teacher AH asked him to write anything. Teacher AH wanted to help children like Nadeen and Kieron prepare for their new secondary schools. He wanted them to develop independence, enthusiasms and interests, to be motivated to find things out and express themselves more freely.

Project work: Becoming knowledgeable

Teacher AH observed that in performing arts workshops the adult professionals treated children as if they too were adult learners. He commented after the workshop at Theatre Y, in which children produced the opening scene of *Skellig*, that the children *“were the real people in the real theatre doing the real jobs. They had some real-life experiences.”* One boy, Mohammed, commented to Teacher AH that *‘I might be a sound man one day.’*

They treat us like adults. In the technical work they treated us like we’ve already done the job, like we know what to do. (Nadeen)

They treat us like we are all like them. (Kieron)

Teacher AH observed that children were intrigued by the ways in which the performing arts practitioners described their lives. After watching a performance at Theatre Y, children had a question and answer session with actors who used a vocabulary of excitement, hard work and intrinsic rewards:

- *If you work really hard, you get a good play like this one*
- *It’s hard work but it’s a rewarding job*
- *If you have ‘nerves’ it makes for good work*
- *It can be scary and tiring*
- *It’s like being paid to play*
- *It’s amazing, changing all the time*

Theatre Y’s workshops provided some of the explicit teaching in skills and language that individual arts partners provided in other project classrooms. Later in the school year when children visited an opera house, they already knew the types of work and roles they might find there:

Teacher AH: What jobs can you think of that you won’t see on stage?

Children: Conductor, director, lights, cue person, prompter, sound people.

Teacher AH: What would you like to find out?

Paulina: How long do you rehearse it, how long did you practise for your voice to become like that?

Teacher AH explicitly modelled questioning and responding in the context of the theatre arts experiences. After children had seen and heard a short opera, Teacher AH asked them questions about the plot, the characters and what they thought about it as a production. He also tried to help children see connections between their different theatre arts experiences.

Teacher AH: There are two types of questions, listen for the differences:

(1) Where did the Chef [in the opera] hide the ring?

(2) How did you think the mirror was effective?

How are they different?

Sharon: The first one you can say: 'the cake'. The second one you give more information.

Sorcha: The first one you need to find out, to remember and think back. The second one is about how did you think, not finding out.

Teacher AH: Which one could be right or wrong? Which one makes you think more?

Alejandro: The second one, because you have to think what you thought. You have to give your opinion.

Teacher AH: What did you find out about the character of the Chef in the opera?

Paulina: He looked clumsy

Kieron: He was sweating a lot.

Teacher AH: Why do you think that was?

Sharon: He was the mad one

Teacher AH: Yes, he was hectic.

Jake: He was on the stage more, the lights were in his face

Nadeen: And because of his hat.

Teacher AH: You have experienced that yourselves at the theatre when you performed there and also in the workshop when some of you went up into the lights.

Teacher AH made explicit to children what constitutes good questions (*Which one makes you think more?*) and children began to understand what constitute adequate answers (*To remember and think back...you have to give your opinion*). He drew their attention to the ways in which his questioning elicited

different types of information or responses. Teacher AH encouraged children to reflect on their experiences through their questioning.

Quality of talk: creating conditions for writing

Teacher AH linked children's questions and discussions to writing tasks. Within a broad topic, Teacher A often gave children choices about how and what to write, calling on their background knowledge of books, television or other experiences, as in this observation following a science visit of animals to school:

Teacher AH: You can write a story about animals as characters, using the information that we learned today, or you can write an information page. Lots of different writing you could do. Can you think of books or stories where animals talk?

[The children quickly come up with: Anthony Browne, Wind in the Willows, Hodgheg, Brian Jacks, Dick King-Smith.]

Carl: What film has a talking animal? The pig one, 'Babe'.

Danny: I'm thinking of one, its not a book, it's on the telly after school. [The cartoon] 'Arthur'.

Before Emmanuel and Glory begin to write, they take on the role of Teacher AH, asking each other questions and discussing what might be in their stories.

(E) OK, so what is our first headline, this is how it starts - what's the title?

(G) The three wise birds, and their enemies

(E) That's too much like a comic - shall we think of it when we finish?

Shall we give them names? How many boys, one girl? Nicknames?

(G) One day in the Andes mountain, a chinchilla...

(E) Yeah! Come on, let's start then!

(G) A mouse, a hedgehog, lived in a family, a mouse called

(E) Forget Sonic, for now.

(they each start to write)

(E) Build up the suspense - today, tragically.

It was notable that this class actively enjoyed writing in the 'adult education' model of the writing workshop: they had many opportunities to write about things that interested them personally, and they could talk and collaborate as well as write independently. Their work was in 'writing journals' (a personal writing book) rather than 'literacy books' (a school writing book). The journals were decorated with pictures of rappers, Indian film stars and children's own artwork. Children often chose to write about their lives outside of school, but they increasingly wrote about their performing arts experiences in factual and imaginative modes.

What [seeing the play] Skellig Made Me Feel

It was a sunny day and I woke up in a lovely Barbados day. I gazed into the golden sun laced with crystals reflecting into the water. I felt warm inside my heart. It was the most gorgeous day of my life. Later on that day I ran across a smooth but I thick hot sand. I felt like I was in heaven. Then it happened. I saw him, Skellig. When I saw him I felt weird, something I've never felt before. It was the weirdest thing in my life.
(Emmanuel)

What I did at the Theatre

When I went to the theatre we did a workshop, we acted and did the sound and others did the acting. Ben and I were doing the lighting. You had to be tall to control the light. It was really fun when I had the headset on. I had to wait for Paula to say 'Follow spot two, standby!' Then I had to say 'Standing-by!', then Pauline would go and I would turn on my follow light. I would like to do that when I'm older. At first it was hard then it got easier. My arm started to hurt when I was holding the light.
(Sorcha)

Through their experiences and their collaborative talk, children developed enthusiasm for writing. They began to write at length and for longer periods of time (up to an hour and a half in one observation). This type of writing development has been observed in other classroom contexts (Safford, O'Sullivan and Barrs, 2004): where children write daily about something that interests them, they also increase their stamina for writing and their transcription improves.

Writing in role: a chorus of voices

Following their visit to an opera house to see a live performance of a short opera (*Bake for One Hour*), Teacher AH directed children to write in role as one of the opera's three characters: the Chef, the Maid or the Hostess. Before writing, children recalled and discussed the plot, in which the three singers vie for a magical ring. They reviewed the scenarios, music and characters. They recalled the in-school workshop where they learned the story of the opera, enacted it themselves, and sang the chorus. Children talked about how the experience of enactment told them what to expect when they saw and heard the real opera. They were able to internalise the opera story and make it meaningful to themselves. They were also able to step momentarily into the shoes of the singers.

Glory: I liked it when we done the singing, we got to have a go instead of just listening.

Sorcha: I liked making the still images [creating freeze frames], it tells us when we go to see the opera, we know what it's about.

Jack: Me & Billy liked the part when we did [made the shape of] the mirror. You work together to make one big structure, and we got to speak... it told me what to expect.

Children's individual writing takes on the voice of each character. The writing reflects the pace and urgency of the short opera in which the three characters compete for the magical ring. Words and sentences repeat musically as children recall the tunes, rhythms and libretto of the opera. Read together, children's individual writing becomes a musical trio, the staccato voice of the Chef contrasting with the fluid voices of the Maid and Hostess.

*I have fallen madly in love with the Chef, but unfortunately he does not love me back. I need the ring, the gold shining ring that the hostess has... I am going to steal it, steal the ring from the hostess.
(Nadeen as the Maid)*

*Now the ring is within my grasp. I feel its shiny surface. Guilt and fear are running in my veins... I run down the stairs with the ring clutched in my hand. I am sweating.
(Sorcha as the Hostess)*

*Oh no! This is not going as planned. Oh! I don't know how I'll get the ring. I'll put it in the cake, it's marvellous... My lady don't take a slice!
(Kieron as the Chef)*

In this writing children call on their experiences as an *audience*, seeing and hearing the opera itself, the live singers and musicians. Their writing shows that they have been an attentive audience; their listening skills are evident. They see and hear the opera in their heads as they write.

In their writing they have also become performers, calling on their participatory workshop experiences. They have taken on the voices of characters musically in words, tempo and cadence. Their imaginative engagement in the plot, the language and the music is strong, as is their grasp of the thoughts and voices of the characters.

Changes for children

Over three terms Teacher AH found that children's questioning did become more frequent and more open, and that the very act of going outside school to cultural institutions was a significant factor in this change. These out-of-school, in-the-world experiences made children curious. The experiences also engaged children in the real-life uses of literacy and gave voice to some of their aspirations. The experiences also influenced their attitudes to writing.

I want to be a footballer. But if I'm not a footballer I would go to the theatre and be a stage manager, not an actor. I would be managing the lights or the sound, be a technician. There's a computer, you press an arrow and the lights go on, on a spot on the stage... Sometimes you might want to write something but you can't because you don't know what to write. If you've been somewhere like the opera, even if it was two months ago, you can still write about it. You may never go to the opera again, but at least you can write about it. (Kieron)

It changed my writing because I used to write what came into my head. When I went to the opera and the theatre, now, I can think about that and write about that. (Nadeen)

Nadeen's last piece of writing before she left primary school was a five-page story written in sustained role, in the voice of a girl evacuated from London during the Blitz. Drawing on her history learning, Nadeen gets right inside the situation, imagining in great detail how it would have been to be an evacuee.

I kissed my family and said goodbye. Then father took me to the train station, and I saw millions of children being evacuated like me. When I got on the train, I kissed father and said goodbye once more, then the train started to move. Father walked away and waved at me and I waved back. Then as the train got faster I wouldn't see father anymore.

I sat back on my seat and I saw a boy colouring in a book. Then I got my book out that Geoff gave me. When I started to read it, I felt sad but I didn't cry. I don't know how to cry. When I looked out the window, I felt sick. Then I went to sleep.

Nadeen is beginning to take her writing seriously. Through repeated access to a 'writing workshop' in school, she has developed stamina for writing at length. She uses her previous experiences in performing arts workshops and enactment to step into the world of the evacuee. She creates a sombre setting, mood and voice in her story. She creates a pause in the narrative action (and changes tense to indicate this) to think and reflect (*I don't know how to cry*).

Outcomes: reasons to be literate

At the end of the three-term project, children made a short documentary film about the history of Theatre Y. The film was the culmination of the class's year-long relationship with the theatre and its staff. It was also a testament to the quality of children's questions.

The film was a research project, a local history project, and a portrait of the theatre itself. It was a multimodal, collaborative information text. The children decided what questions they wanted to ask and to whom. They began with a

long list of questions which they pruned and refined. They interviewed actors, technicians, directors and local residents.

In the film children demonstrate their skills of inquiry. They demonstrate their skills in collaboration and knowledge of the theatre. They understand that the film is intended to help an audience find out about the theatre.

Children did not learn filmmaking to make this film. It was shot and edited by professionals. There was a distinct separation between the skills of filmmaking and the skills of research and inquiry. Children's work was communicated through the mode of film, and high professional standards lifted their work to a new level. The film was presented in the theatre and also on a national television channel. It is used by Theatre Y for fundraising. The children's work is doing a real job in the real world. It exists and has value outside of school.

At a public screening of the film, children responded to questions from an audience. Their own answers echo the messages they had heard from performing arts professionals. The children had become experts. They could see themselves in professional roles and they had worked effectively in groups to make a documentary film. They saw the theatre as a permanent part of their lives.

(Do any of you want to work in theatre, become directors, actors, now?)

Sorcha: I'd like to be a director

Emmanuel: I'd like to be an actor, but in the cinema.

(What is your favourite place in the theatre?)

Emmanuel: The auditorium. It's big, it always changes.

(When you've grown up will you bring your kids here?)

Danny: Yes, for sure

(How many times did you do your speaking parts?)

Danny: In our groups we agreed what was relevant.

Emmanuel: We did only one 'take'.

(What have you learned about the theatre?)

Sorcha: If you want to do a play, you can't just do it in one day. You need a year, more than a year. Hard work. The hardest thing is coming up with the ideas and how it's going to work... You can have a hundred people and less than half of them will be actors.

The energy of the performing arts experiences was profound. Teacher AH said that *'it affected everything.'* Children became aware of artistic communities on the school's doorstep. They learned about practice and rehearsal, and the

long process of becoming an expert. As they shadowed and learned about roles in cultural institutions they became aware of lives and opportunities beyond school. They became active participants *in* theatre arts and learned how to be an active audience *of* theatre arts.

Through their teacher's focus on questioning and reflective talk in the context of these experiences, children became more experienced and able to respond both orally and in writing. Children's scores in statutory writing tests (SATs) rose, in some cases dramatically (appendix 3). Teacher AH's only preparation for these tests was to discuss with children the kinds of questions they might encounter: *'In SATs you get more points when you answer the and why part of the question...you get more points when you say why'*. He attributed the improved attainment scores to the children feeling prepared to write: *'They weren't nervous about it. They were confident as writers and felt they had something to say'*.

Class Study Three: Multimedia experiences

Year 4 in School F
Teacher MK, arts partner TM
A two-term multi-media project

Context

School F is a two-form entry school in a large Victorian-era building, in a mixed neighbourhood of private housing and estates that includes a large middle-class contingent. The experienced headteacher supports community and creative arts projects throughout the school.

Teacher MK was in her seventh year of teaching. Arts partner TM had previously worked in School EW and with this particular class. TM was sensitive to the pressures on teachers and tried to work in ways that supported their individual classroom practice.

I try to suit the teaching style and practice of each teacher I work with. A partnership has to work for the teacher. The benefits may be one to two years later. Little seeds planted. (Arts partner TM)

Teacher MK and arts partner TM began by observing one another teach the class. This gave them a 'feeling' for each other and allowed children to see the arts partner TM in the role of their teacher. Teacher MK also visited arts partner TM's studio. Like Teacher GD and arts partner SS in Class Study One (and Teacher KR and arts partner NB in Class Study Four) this was a partnership of close and constant communication.

Aims

The aim of this project was broad: to inspire reluctant writers to write through a multi-sensory approach. Children had a series of workshops where they explored their five senses and made different kinds of art in response to touching, tasting, smelling, listening and seeing. They used the Photoshop computer programme to visually manipulate their artwork and created a series of images on-screen. They wrote stories to accompany these images. Teacher MK admitted in retrospect that the project was too ambitious.

We had a big picture of what was going to happen, and each week it got smaller and smaller! And it really taught us that you can't go on with too many ideas. (Teacher MK)

Teacher MK tracked the progress of Amina in the context of whole class work. Amina had recently arrived from Somalia and struggled with written work although she was becoming more confident in speaking.

Project work: multi-sensory workshops

In five separate sessions children responded to a sensory experience (sound, taste, smell, sight and touch) by quickly making a piece of artwork (drawing, collage, clay, pastel, chalk). The sessions were intended to be spontaneous and free.

Children are so responsive. They can 'be' the colour. It is about linking and engaging with the world around them, raising their physical awareness of the world and their ability to articulate that and express it visually with as few blocks and filters as possible. (Arts partner TM)

Children enjoyed these spontaneous art-making activities. They kept sketchbooks of some of their initial responses and drawings which they were able to explain to the research team. Looking at the sketchbooks, children recalled vividly the sensory workshops and their thoughts in those moments:

We closed our eyes...you make up in your mind what you can see. I can hear, I can smell, use all your senses. We did a drawing of what we thought it would look like. When I touched the feathers, I imagined an ostrich, and I was running in the Amazon desert trying to frighten these snakes that were strangling me and suddenly this ostrich came and started chasing me. I slipped down a hole and fell into a temple and the ostrich killed all the snakes and killed me. That's just one of the things I made up when I was doing the 'feeling'. (Tashi)

After these sensory workshops, Teacher MK sometimes asked children for a brief written response. Amina wrote about the landscape she imagined during a workshop exploring the sense of sound:

The sun beamed on the bright green grass. I saw the wind push the wavy grass out the way and I could see a peaceful tree resting on the grass. There was a calm slow sound. The wind was blowing really hard. Then it started to go creepier by the minute, there was a crazy beat under the ground. A buzzing sound was coming from somewhere. The music was echoing through the land. The land was getting dark. The only tree was drifting away. There was a big river it looked colossal and warm. But something separated the mountains from the sun, it was the clouds. It was windy and I could feel the breeze (unfinished by Amina)

This response-writing was intended as preparation for children's final stories, which were called *Sense Stories*. However, children did not appear to know where the project was going and where and how their writing fit into the art-making. Teacher MK and arts partner TM realised they had 'overloaded' children with ideas and concepts.

We found we didn't really have a clear structure, so at times we were over-saturating the children, which created confusion. (Teacher MK)

The result of this 'over-loading' was that the ultimate focus of the project was the computer programme, where artwork seemed to dominate writing.

Multimodal texts

Arts partner TM photographed the children's artwork and put the images into the Photoshop computer programme. Children were then taught how to manipulate images of their artwork in Photoshop to create a series of imaginary landscapes on-screen. Photographs of the children themselves in a drama session exploring their imaginary landscapes were added to the computer images. An imaginary character drawn by each child was also introduced into their digital landscapes.

Using Photoshop, children created a series of images that brought together their artwork, photographs of themselves and their imaginary character. They created storyboards consisting of four or five different frames. From these storyboards children wrote short narratives of their adventures in the imaginary landscapes. The stories and images were put into the Powerpoint programme to create multimedia presentations that included electronic music. Children presented their *Sense Stories* to the school and to parents, reading their stories aloud with a microphone to the series of image-and-text slides with sound.

Children owned these stories completely: every word and image was made by them. Children were in their *Sense Stories* not only as the first person narrator but as images of themselves. They could literally see themselves in their stories. They manipulated the text as well as the images, making words float, fade or zoom in and out of powerpoint slides.

I started with me. I thought, why not do something adventurous? It could be me wandering off in the jungle... Because it was me, I was in it. I thought if I was in it, it would be much more better. I liked the pictures I did. I never knew it was going to turn out like this. It's like a mystery story. It makes you want to read it. (Amina)

The stories all follow a similar structure: children are in a fantasy landscape and they meet a strange character. They are simple narratives without character development or inner psychological action. The stories are written in the first person, referring to the photographs of the children themselves and to their artwork.



I was lost in a unknown world. It was baking hot and I was digging up the earth searching for hidden treasure. I found a fossil of a fish and a gigantic whale.



The giant tried to come after me but the rocks closed up and pressed against him. I felt sad with fear but I kept running. I spun round and I saw he was trapped, now I felt safe.

Quality of talk: confidence and recall

Children in this project were able to recall the physical explorations in workshops and how these helped get ideas for writing. They were able to explain their work to adults confidently.

CLPE: Where did you get your ideas for your story?

Tom: From all the pictures that we done and all the music we listened to. It really helped using all your senses, because all your senses could explore it and it was easier. You could imagine in your eyes, imagine in your smell and your hearing and your touch.

Children used their sketchbooks to recall the sensory workshops in detail.

When you put your hand in the box, you had to describe what you thought it was, and draw it. I could feel like slimy stuff, and [arts partner] T said you had to draw it as you felt it. As you felt it, draw it down. [Points] This is when the tastes was coming on, and the taste was nasty and so I put myself in angry.... I tasted angry stuff and I saw dinosaurs. (Jordan, looking at his sketchbook)

Children demonstrated a sophisticated visual sense and a strong sense of on-screen composition as they played with the Photoshop programme. But the computerised artwork seemed to dominate the storytelling. Children were more enthusiastic talking about their images than their writing.

Tom: It was the feeling I had to inspire what I felt. I drew the Smellman.

CLPE: What were you feeling?

Tom: It was kind of like a weight thing. Then I drew the Ten Chin thing. Then I done the background. Then I done the clay aliens around. They want to talk to me. [Points] That [round shape] was in the [feely] box and I felt it.

CLPE: What was your story?

Tom: I can't really remember. I wrote it down and it's in my literacy book. I done the background people blue the same as me, because it links to me.

Writing the stories - in children's minds - continued to be associated with 'literacy', a domain the artwork seemed to bypass. Tom has a story in his artwork, but his writing has disappeared into a literacy folder. Children's ideas for artwork were in their sketchbooks, which they could readily access and discuss. Their writing was in their 'literacy books' and, once there, it seemed to be forgotten. Children expressed more personal investment and satisfaction in their images than in their writing.

Form trumps content?

The *Sense Stories* look and sound impressive. The presentational aspect is strong. Children were proud of their productions. They asked teacher MK to keep the stories saved on the school computers so they could re-view them whenever they were in the computer suite.

But the *Sense Stories* have a potential that is not quite fully realised. Teacher MK noted that children enjoyed manipulating their artwork, and their images are stronger than their writing. The artwork is individual, quirky, playful and varied. Yet the writing is all very similar: a landscape is introduced, the narrator meets a character. The stories all have the same title. Children were constrained in their writing to the four or five powerpoint frames and confined to the small space of text boxes. They had to complete their narratives within a narrow structure. There are no pauses in the quick-fire narratives, no inner action or sense of the characters. Some children said they would have written more.

I would have added more pictures and more writing to go with it, so it wouldn't be just him trapped in the rocks - he would get out and come after me again. He comes from inside the sea...I was thinking if I ever got in a situation like that when I was older, I would go home and think about it and write a story again... If we done a lot more, I would have stuck with this, got him out of the way and then started making it like Lara Croft. (Jordan)

Teacher MK acknowledged that '*Their Playstation experiences were in this*' but these experiences were not explicitly called-upon in making the *Sense Stories*. Children had a series of stimuli rather than fully-explored experiences and Teacher MK admitted that children's writing, which came last on the end of all the sensory and computer workshops, was not adequately developed.

The writing was lovely, but we didn't have time to re-draft it, think about our thoughts clearly, where it was going. I would have got more writing. The writing was the hardest part because they didn't know where we were going with it. To put words to a picture, they really didn't understand that. (Teacher MK)

Teacher MK said the children would have benefited from more time to develop the kinds of work they had begun, in art-making, in computer technology and in writing.

Changes for children

Teacher MK felt that a multi-sensory approach did inspire reluctant writers to write. She observed children like Amina improve their writing in quantity and sometimes in quality sparked by the sensory workshops, making artwork and

working with computer programme. Teacher MK also observed that the project inspired children to share and present and share their writing.

They all felt like they had succeeded. I have children now who want to read out and share their writing who never wanted to before....I've looked at their work [writing] since then, they've brought it to show me, and it's been really impressive... The ownership was quite big. It's still on the computers in the suite. (Teacher MK)

Children were universally enthusiastic about this project. They attributed a wide range of learning to their work with arts partner TM.

The impact that it's given me is quite big. All the ideas that [arts partner] T gave I used in what I did. If we do the project again, my stories will be really good, my typing will be really good, my computer skills will be really good. And all my artwork will be much better. (Tashi)

Children enjoyed the spontaneity of the project.

I had permission to be weird. (Issaka)

The school's headteacher agreed:

It was anarchic - good! It was an exploration. You didn't know where it was going - good, that was good! We need more of that. (Headteacher GJ)

Teacher MK observed (somewhat ruefully) that children enjoyed the project because it was "different to normal school work" but that she was trying to ensure that there wasn't such a difference to her classroom teaching.

Doing this project has taught me that there doesn't have to be a gap...I'm open to new ideas. It's opened me up a lot more, thinking creatively about children, children as learners. We can't just expect children to learn in one style. They need to be practical and hands-on. (Teacher MK)

Outcomes: space to respond and play

In this project children worked spontaneously and played with media and materials. The work crossed subject boundaries by merging art, ICT and literacy. Digital work dominated the project, and it also motivated the children.

*It comes alive for the kids when they're on the computer...and its good for them to be computer literate, that's the way the world is going...They liked that the most: getting on the computers and being able to fiddle with it and manipulate it. It was the artwork they were playing with, making it more creative and special...It was a nice way to work, rather than making them sit down and write something. ...They were allowed to be free. That was important. If we can take risks, children see that they can take risks as well... They were making all the decisions. It wasn't us saying, 'you have to have this in it'. It was all their stuff...I quite liked the idea of risk-taking, going with what the children gave us.
(Teacher MK)*

This project was seen as 'weird', 'risk-taking' and even 'anarchic' in the context of the primary school curriculum, where learning outcomes may often be established and made explicit before lessons begin. The extent to which the project was perceived as beyond curriculum parameters is evidence of the lack of free space to play and experiment in the primary school - space which may be reclaimed in creative arts projects.

Class Study Four: The stories you want to tell

**Year 5 in School A
Teacher KR, arts partner NB
A 3-term filmmaking project**

Context

School A is a multiethnic 3-form entry school in a large, Victorian-era building. At the time of the research it was in the lowest band of attainment in its education authority. The number on roll dropped sharply when local authority housing was sold and families were re-housed elsewhere. The number of children in teacher KR's class declined to 18 by the end of the school year.

The filmmaking project existed in isolation from the rest of the school, which streamed and set children by ability in the core subjects (literacy, numeracy and science). Teacher KR was not able to develop and extend children's work simply because she lacked contact with them. They were taught literacy by other teachers in ability sets. Teacher KR worked with them as a whole class in the non-core, foundation subjects and got permission from the headteacher to carry out the filmmaking project in lieu of other curriculum work.

As this partnership finished, the headteacher resigned and all creative programmes were abandoned in favour of a push for academic attainment. Teacher KR, who was in her 5th year of teaching, left the school at the end of the partnership year. There was no continuation of this creative arts project and no continuity for the children who participated in it. However it did demonstrate that creative arts projects can and do flourish - at least temporarily - in adverse circumstances.

Despite the challenging school context, teacher and arts partner achieved a close working relationship which was crucial to the success of the project. Teacher KR and arts partner NB were in constant contact via email and telephone. After each session in school they would discuss children's work, reflect on individual children's progress and where to take the next session.

Aims

The point of the partnership's enquiry was to see how working in film might improve children's communication. The aim was to help children tell their stories through the medium of film, and this involved each partner - teacher, filmmaker and children - in discovering and articulating those stories. Eliciting children's ideas for films through drama and role-play was a significant aspect of the project. In the beginning, arts partner NB observed that children's ability to articulate their ideas was limited:

They are not limited as people, they are clearly not. They have a lot to say when they start to find the way to say it. But it's trying to enable them to say something that maybe hasn't been said before or that means something to them. I don't see my job as teaching them how to make films. It's exploring how they might tell their stories through a medium they might use, such as film. (Arts partner NB)

The partnership work had three strands: technical skills and knowledge about filmmaking, drama and role play, and writing. Children learned camera techniques, visual shots and the meanings they may convey, sound and storyboarding; they worked collaboratively in drama workshops to develop themes for film stories; and they wrote in different formats (diaries, in-role, script dialogues, storyboards, poems) as a preparation for writing film scripts and for acting in the films themselves. Children also watched professional short films to deepen their understanding of both film technique, drama and film story. Each strand of work reinforced the others and came together in four short films which were shown at a local cinema for the school, families and the community.

Teacher KR observed that over three terms children enthusiastically took on not only technical knowledge, skills and vocabulary of professional filmmaking, they took on professional roles as well: camera, sound, writer, director, actor. Teacher KR also noticed that through the film project children began to communicate and negotiate more effectively, that their language in paired and group discussions had changed. This was a significant improvement because Teacher KR observed children's relationships to be very poor at the start of the school year. Her own notes during a drama session revealed her concerns:

L, K, B and D missed the first part of the session due to a bullying incident at playtime. When the children were able to create a series of stills/freeze frames nearly all chose a violent stance involving guns, knives or punching. Talked about this at the end of the session. Many children said they were quite used to seeing violence on television, however a large number have also witnessed or experienced violence first hand...R. opted out of the whole session, claimed 'tiredness' but seemed more likely to be intimidation or fear of embarrassment. (Teacher KR observational notes)

Project work: learning film language

In sessions with filmmakers, children learned the vocabulary of film (wide shot, tilt, close-up, cut-away, 'cheat') and what certain camera angles can imply (for example a close up often indicates a charged emotional state or thinking). They watched professional films whilst following storyboards of those films, and in groups they created their own simple storyboard narratives using polaroid photographs of the class.

The pace of these sessions was brisk. Children took on many ideas and tasks and the teaching was explicit. A visiting filmmaker created a storyboard using photographs of the children in their classroom and he spontaneously created a simple narrative to go with it. In this observation, he highlights the many components of filmmaking:

Filmmaker S: The boy is supposed to look angry, how does he look? Happy. You have to choose the right shots, you have to act well, you have to prepare the actions: 'Action!' I could put the pictures in a different order. If you change the order, you change the story. This is called editing. Editors are special people who put together bits of film.

He retells the story in a different order, two times. He asks the children to see the differences and creates a surprise ending in one version: "We call that suspense".

The children notice discrepancies: 'The teacher is marking a closed book!' Filmmaker S: On the internet there are sites of continuity problems from movies.

He shuffles the photographs again and asks children to create a simple narration for the series of pictures: 'there was a class'... 'the teacher was working'.

Filmmaker S: This one has a series of close ups and a reaction shot.

The children next watch a professional short film along with its storyboard, and they see differences between storyboard and the film sequence:

- *They swapped pictures around*
- *They didn't show when the soldier was going to the light. It was more interesting to show the soldier*
- *It was a torch not a lantern.*
- *There were more details in the film than the storyboard.*
- *There was no shot of a plane or the sky at all, only boats.*
- *In the storyboard explosion he still has the torch, in the film he drops it.*
- *How did they do the bomb? (Filmmaker S: they make sound effects, they jiggle camera about)*

In these sessions, in addition to learning the nuts and bolts of filmmaking, children gained a growing understanding that storyboards were a kind of 'draft' text that could be played-with, changed and improved. They also learned that they could control these elements and change the story. This was a different kind of drafting. There was no beginning, middle and end but a series of infinite possibilities.

Drama and discussion

Technical skills and knowledge were not ends in themselves but were to enable children to tell their stories. Yet children's ideas proved challenging for their teacher and arts partner.

To develop themes for the film stories, arts partner NB led children through a series of in-role exercises exploring different emotions (fear, anger, confidence) and these sessions were initially difficult. In this observation, arts partner NB tries to create a scenario where children go into role as teachers in the school staff room.

Children ask whether they are allowed to swear in these roles and NB says that would not be appropriate in school. The children sit in chairs around a circle and pose as they think teachers would sit the staffroom: some pretend to drink tea, others chat. NB pretends to knock on the door of the staffroom. She enters the circle space and chaos breaks out. Children press around NB aggressively, shouting at her, shoving and pointing. She stops the activity and they explain why they reacted so violently:

- We wanted you to get out*
- You had to go to the headteacher*
- It had nothing to do with us*
- Some of us changed, said 'sit down, have a cup of tea'*
- Some of us really wanted to know what you had to say, others said 'we're just teachers, we don't want to know*
- Maybe we were exhausted*
- You needed to go to the teacher of the class*
- I thought you were a child that's why I tried to push you out, you can't be in the staffroom*
(NB: Why did you think I was a child?)
- You knocked on the door, you were quiet*
- You were quite shy*
(NB: Do only adults talk in loud voices?)
- YES!*
- You were scared*
(NB: Did any of you want to know what I wanted? I'm an adult, a mother. I need to talk about something serious. You never got to find out what I wanted, what was going on.)

NB decides to 'hot seat' herself and children ask her questions in role. Children become intensely focused in the hot seating activity. They elicit information from NB, who is in role as a mother who is concerned about her son's behaviour in school.

Tunde: Have you tried talking to him?

Grace: To you he's your son. You think he's a good boy. Maybe he acts different at school.

Martin: He might be really unhappy in school, in his class. Did you ask him what's going on? Has he been going out a lot?

Tunde: I know it's none of my business, yeah, but do you think he's upset about your life in some way, like your working. If there's a problem with the child does it mean there's a problem with the parents?

Bobby: There is a chance he is being bullied.

Children gradually became more experienced at working collaboratively and working in role in drama sessions. Their questions and responses became more sensitive. However Teacher KR continued to express dismay at children's apparent obsession with violence, as in this observation where children discussed the emotion 'Afraid':

Charles: As in, afraid to walk down a road because some one was killed there.

Ese: Like when some one dies, you keep thinking about them.

Grace: (she begins to create a story) There was a bully, he wants you to do something...

Sunil: When you're grabbed as a hostage

David: When you're in a gang, you're forced into it and you're forced to do something dangerous.

Children's ideas for their own films included a stabbing, a suicide and drug dealing on their estate. Arts partner NB and Teacher KR concluded that none of these were 'film-worthy', yet they were keen to acknowledge children's concerns in the filmmaking project.

They love to do, they want to do. If they have the structure, they know what to do. We may think they know how to create structure and generate creative ideas - but they don't necessarily know. I can try to create a place of safety for them.

(Arts partner NB)

Arts partner NB decided to offer children four themes that had repeatedly come up in discussions and drama: *Guilty, Powerful, Lonely* and *Afraid*. Children explored these physically, in role, and discussed the underlying reasons for these emotional states.

Arts partner NB: Powerful, what does that look like? Show me.

A: Big muscles

V: Veins showing

D: Showing off

G: Tough, like you'd be afraid to go to them.

B: HENCH. It means strong. Boys use different words.
N: Rising up, going up, stronger
G: People praise you
Arts partner NB: Is being powerful the same as being physically strong?
M: You can have mental powers, be mentally powerful.
G: You can be popular, if you're weak they won't like you.
M: It can mean confidence, courage, doing something new
K: It would be good to do [a] bullying [film] because some people who do bullying they would watch it and it could make them think about what they're doing.
L: Our whole class can be in it. We'll need a wide shot.

This is word-level work in a wide learning context, involving enactment and discussion. Children know they are making a film, and they already have ideas about what it might look like (*We'll need a wide shot*).

Quality of talk: respect and negotiation

It was observable that children's talk in class activities had begun to change. NB made a point of talking to children as colleagues, with respect.

Will you agree to give 100% to explore together and get interesting ideas for the film? We only have a few weeks left to go. I appreciate your listening, it's supportive for us [teachers] and for each other. Think very clearly about what you're going to do. (Arts partner NB to children before starting a drama session)

In discussions, as the shapes of the final films emerged, there were many more instances of 'what if?' and 'why don't we?' type of interactions. Children's talk became more tentative. They became more responsive to one another.

T: Sorry for talking long
M: At least you're thinking
I: So you're trying to tell us...
O: Can I just say something?
N: I think, this is a different one [idea]...
J: Wouldn't it be better if we started it this way
T: This is how I wish it would start

When children shared their ideas and their writing with the class, responses were more supportive and sensitive:

T: It didn't sound like she was reading it, it was like she was acting it.
D: It was very deep and realistic.
K: It hurts my feelings and damages my heart.
G: N and K showed a lot of passion.
B: They used powerful words to build up a picture

D: N's was very deep, very realistic

T: It was like it really actually happened, like happening right now.

K: It was like a story but a real story. It was short but it explained a lot

Teacher KR observed that children had become better at negotiating and making decisions together and that this was having an impact on their attitudes to other class work, particularly writing.

We see them doing more on-task type of talk when they're working together, making more decisions. At the beginning it was looking very chaotic, the process wasn't as good. They're becoming better at listening to each other. But it's very much an ongoing thing. I think they're better at working in partners as well, better at communicating their ideas, and I have noticed more children are building on each other's ideas in discussion....Some of the children have said since then [writing after role-play activity] that they like poetry writing. I just don't think they would have said that before. They hadn't really done any poetry writing of that kind in class. (Teacher KR)

The language of the arts partner, NB, was a significant influence on children's talk. She emphasised support 'for each other' that included everyone, teachers and children together in the project. She also made clear that there was an urgent timeline involved in the project (*we only have a few weeks to go*), and that work had to be done.

Exploratory writing

Children began to write after drama sessions around the themes *Guilty, Powerful, Lonely and Afraid*. Writing from these themes eventually became the four films *Best Friend, Shame, Framed* and *Sweet Teeth*. Writing included diary entries in role, poems, dialogue, scenes and scripts. These were sometimes but usually not re-written; elements can be seen and heard in the final films. The films could not have been made without these written explorations of language and contexts. Teacher KR observed that children were using language from drama in their writing and also that they understood the ultimate purpose of their writing.

They're learning how to communicate meaning more by working together and sharing in drama. They are learning that there can be wider purposes for their writing. For example when they did the poetry it was for the film, so it was important that it was very good. It was going to be used in a film and you can't put something in a film unless it's very good. It gave them a focus, a reason to do it. They've learned about audience. Certainly they've learned not just the film vocabulary but how to show something, perspective, showing somebody's point of view, how you can create an impact.

Afraid

Dear diary,

I tried to ask Linda what happened but she ran past me crying. I went home thinking about why she wouldn't talk to me. I tried to call her. I was worried about her. I can not sleep until I can talk to her. I always hear her crying. Why diary why? Maybe she is not my friend. But she has been my friend ever since Nursery. I can not believe it.

Guilty

Can I go back in time?

No!

If only

What will they say?

I feel so stupid

Painful in my belly

Fire burning in my heart

Tell the truth

Tell the truth

Tell the truth

Powerful

I am vexed

I can get tormented

But if I

Get vexed

No one must touch me

Because I will

Beat them up into

Crunchy cornflakes

Mad

Outraged

Angry

Berserk

Do not touch me

When I am

Them words!!

Children continued to develop the four film themes, and began to include their knowledge of film and film language as well as their experiences in drama. They wrote scripts, dialogues, scenarios and storyboards. All these texts were shared, enacted and discussed. They were working documents that always looked towards the final films.

Framed

Characters: Lucy, Alice, Mandy and Lila

Scene 1: In playground Lucy shows off with her bracelet. Alice was very jealous so she stole it.

Lila: Wow! Is that yours? (stares at Lucy's bracelet)

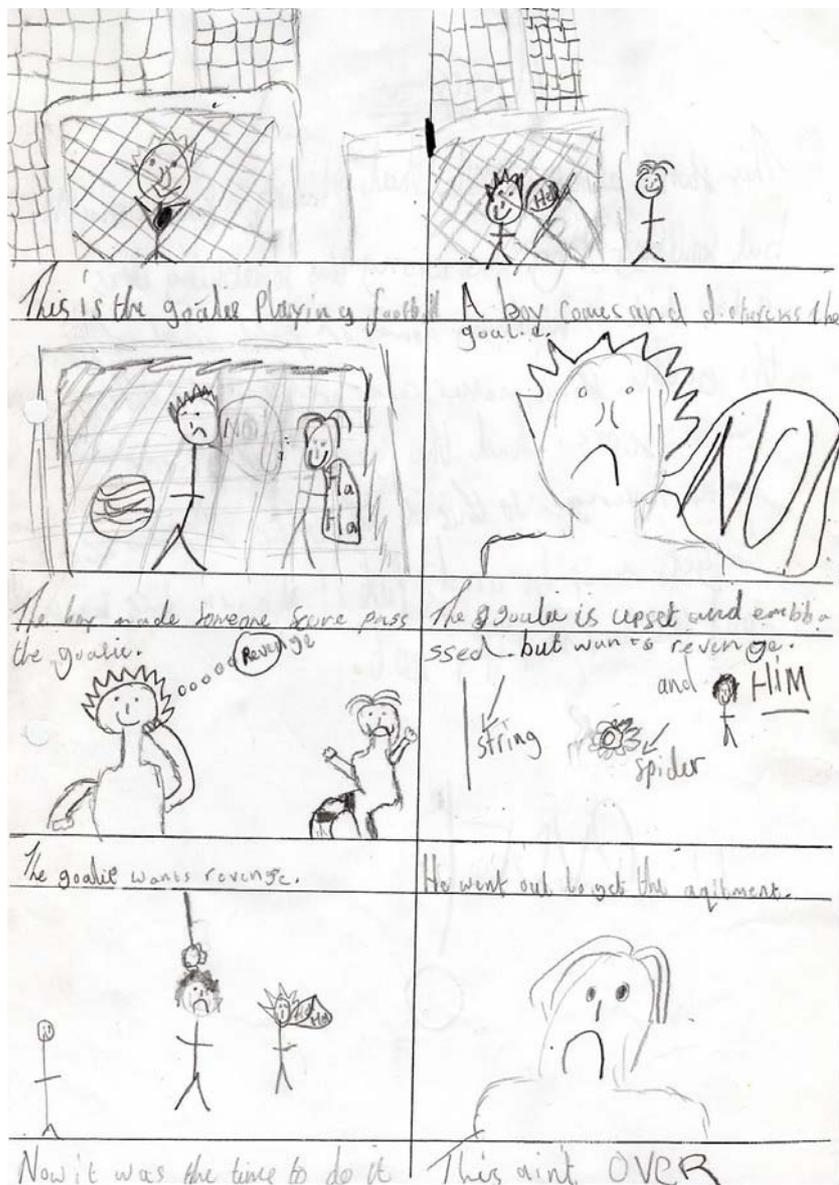
Lucy: I know it's mine and I got it in Hong Kong.

Mandy: Hey Alice look at that, it's very nice (pointing at Lucy's bracelet)

Alice: So. I don't care (Walks off looking angry)

Angry

Ben's 8-frame storyboard (although crudely drawn), shows evidence of his knowledge of camera techniques. He shows each scene with wide and close-up shots, and he includes dialogue in the storyboard ("NO!"; "Revenge!"). On the reverse he writes a brief description of his film:



This story is about a goalie that is playing a football match but something goes wrong. This something is a boy that is watching. He comes over to the pitch and distracts the goalie, which makes someone on the other team score. And the goalie is angry and wants revenge so this is what he does. He gets a spider and puts it down his back. And the boy says, 'It's not OVER!'

According to Teacher KR, Ben was a reluctant writer. In his storyboard he was able to develop his narrative in two directions, visually and in writing. Ben was confident and enthusiastic about this task. "It's easy because I know what to do, it's all there" he said as he drew and wrote. He was simultaneously calling on what he learned in the technical, drama and writing

workshops to develop his story. Ben had found a way into writing where he could also draw, and he could bring his own interests to the story. These types of successful approaches to engage underachieving boys in reading and writing are noted in other school-based research (Safford, O'Sullivan and Barrs, 2004; Barrs and Pidgeon, 1998 and 2002)

In developing writing children did not follow a linear plan that began with a story ladder or writing frame which progressed to first and second drafts and ended with a final copy. The writing trajectory was non-linear, offering different stopping places and thinking spaces (poems, diaries, scripts, drawings, storyboards) as children refined ideas for their films.

The films

The five short films (collectively titled *Playtime*) are powerful and sometimes disturbing. They are a child's-eye view of school. Teachers in the films are unsympathetic and never seem to notice the bullying, exclusion, stealing and other injustices taking place under their noses. They speak to children without respect or understanding - just as the children demonstrated in their earlier role-play: they shout and they want nothing to do with children. Children are left to sort things out for themselves. All the emotional action takes place in peer groups. Everything else - teachers, school, curriculum - is irrelevant.

The films contain ideas and dialogue from children's discussions, role play and preparatory writing. We can see and hear the drama, exploratory writing (*Afraid, Guilty, Powerful, Framed, Angry*) and storyboarding in the finished films. The children's drama skills are also evident in the performances themselves. Their commitment as actors is total. The films have clearly emerged from children's experiences in filmmaking, film study, drama and writing.

In the film *Best Friend*, a girl shows her classmates her holiday photos. She has also brought a present for her best friend 'Kim'. In a series of tracking shots, she searches for Kim around the school. But every time she finds her, Kim ignores her. Kim has 'a new best friend' in another group. The girl is increasingly isolated. She is seen in more frequent close-ups and in a flashback scene she remembers happier times with her best friend. She finds Kim practicing a dance with her 'new best friends'. She displays the gift she bought for Kim, a beautiful blue glass vase. Kim and her friends are entranced. As they reach out to touch it the girl coolly smashes the vase on the ground. In the final shot the girl walks away, casting a triumphant glance over her shoulder.

In the film *Shame* a group of boys are playing football. 'Cameron' kicks the ball too high and it smashes a window in the school building. The other boys blame him and they start to fight. A teacher sees Cameron fighting and (apparently not noticing the smashed window) she excludes him from the game. He must stand against the wall whilst his other friends continue to play. Enraged and

bored, Cameron taunts the goalie and throws a pebble sharply at the goalie's head. As the goalie puts his hands to his head the ball hits him hard in the stomach and he crumples to the ground in pain. The teacher calls Cameron again and he approaches her. The camera now takes the teacher's viewpoint, and Cameron addresses the camera (and the film audience) directly, protesting his innocence.

Each film ends with unresolved questions. Visually they convey the isolation of children in the school. No adult is in close-up, and they are usually off-screen. The children's relationships are intense. The gaze of the camera shifts powerfully from neutral third-party observer to close-ups that convey inner thoughts and feelings.

Changes for children

In interviews, children attributed a wide range of learning to the filmmaking project. They said they learned about perseverance and practice. They felt they could speak more confidently and work more effectively in groups. They learned how to use a range of technical equipment and specialist language, and they had used these for a real purpose. They felt they knew how to see, make and understand films, and that these experiences had helped them read and write better. They saw connections between their work in filmmaking and their work in literacy. They were also aware that their improvements in speaking and listening had a direct impact on their peer relationships. As one girl said, '*We used to bully each other, but we know each other much better now.*'

I have learnt to share ideas and be confident. When you want to say something, but you're not sure and you know it's a good idea, I will say it now. (Grace)

It has helped me feel comfortable, as in comfortable to say something. (Ese)

It takes a long time to make films. I appreciate people that make long films now. What sort of things they did to make the shots, how to make the sound blend in, how to make it look good. (Billy)

It was a proper, proper film like a video, like in Hollywood...I've never done anything like that, properly. [It] has helped me with understanding. I've learned new words cos we did quite a lot of reading. I'm better at my reading. I'm better at everything actually. (Kree)

Outcomes: skills for self-expression

This partnership was characterised by risk-taking. Teacher K confessed she often felt uneasy during the project as end-of-year attainment tests approached whilst children explored their chosen themes and stories of bullying

and violence. Children themselves took risks as they exposed themselves in discussion and role-play.

Their work with the emotions was quite big thing. That is not something you necessarily do in Literacy. The way we have worked, some teachers might find it risky, and not just in terms of the content. We really worked from week to week. We would change our plans depending on how the session had gone. It was child-centred time. The curriculum is not child centred, it's very rigid and children can only bring a certain amount of themselves to that. It's not intended to suit them necessarily. We forget that they are still quite young and still have so many ways to develop. ... A lot is expected of them. They are expected to work together, talk, think, write. It's quite intense for them. (Teacher KR)

The theme of the project did not override technical skills but placed them at the service of what children wanted to communicate. The project connected visual literacy to children's social and school environment and their private experiences.

Literacy in this project began with an enquiry that generated an implicit goal: what are the stories children want to tell, and how can we help them to tell these stories? The project could have focused solely on the techniques of filmmaking, but the teacher and arts partner underpinned technical learning with a strong affective dimension. Filmmaking was a form of narrative, a vehicle for children to say, as arts partner NB hoped, *something that means something to them*. The creative project engaged children in voicing, enacting and writing about their deepest concerns using visual modes and professional, real-world technical skills.

Class Study Five: Dance Your Literacy Lesson

Mixed Years 1 & 2 in School B
Teachers CM, SP and AR; arts partner GA
A 3-term dance project

Context and aims

School B is a successful 1-and-a-half form school in an economically deprived inner city area. The majority of pupils are Caribbean Heritage and West African. The school has garnered numerous awards for academic success and artistic links. Class teachers SP, AR and CM had all been teaching between two and five years across Key Stages 1 and 2. SP was an Advanced Skills teacher in Science.

Three mixed Year 1-2 classes and the teachers had a year-long partnership with a dance company which sent dance specialist GA to teach lessons weekly to each class.

The teachers had interpreted the brief of the Animating Literacy action research literally. They decided that the weekly dance sessions would be explicitly linked to Literacy Strategy objectives and that a dance session would take the place of one Literacy Hour every week. The teachers then had to ensure that the missed Literacy work was made up at other times during the week, leaving little room for the dance teacher to manoeuvre.

We plan - she [the arts partner] listens... We have to plan everything, Maths, English, Literacy, etc. (Teacher SP)

In this situation, the dance project proved disruptive to the teachers' working patterns and exerted considerable pressure on the timetable.

The class teachers were also unhappy with the dance teacher's behaviour management in dance sessions, but months passed before teachers shared their concerns with the arts partner.

Project work: 'Dance your Literacy lesson'

The teachers wanted dance sessions explicitly linked to weekly National Literacy Strategy objectives and they wanted these links to be made clear to children. In dance sessions the dance teacher tried to reinforce target vocabulary or to support the teaching of forms and structures (such as adverbs, verbs or recounts).

A poster in the school corridor stated: *Dance Your Literacy Lesson*. In the following classroom observation the Literacy Hour lesson was introduced as follows on the whiteboard:

WHAT IS THE LEARNING INTENTION?
TO WRITE A RECOUNT OF MY DANCE LESSON.
CAPITAL LETTERS. FULL STOPS.

Teacher SP introduced the children's writing activity:

Teacher SP: *We've been doing dance lessons for half a year now I'd really like to know how you are really feeling about them, how is it going? When you write, I'm not marking for spelling. I'm not asking for lots of difficult words and connectives. It's like writing in your diaries, don't worry about the 'writing' part. Like your diaries, I want you to be honest, it's honest, it's between you and me. I respect your opinions, you won't get into trouble, I want to know what you think about it. It's free writing. I'm only marking full stops and capital letters. In your writing books I want the date, and the learning intention: to write in full sentences with capital letters and full stops. Because I don't have time to chat with you about how dance is going.*

Teacher SP models a full sentence on white board. I like dance because...

Teacher SP: *Why do we make you do it? Why do you dance every Tuesday? Not every class does it. Think hard about your answer.*

Children are directed to work in silence on their tables. Children are given a set of questions to prompt their writing; the high ability table is expected to answer all five questions, the low ability table is expected to answer one question.

The teacher's frustration with the dance sessions is plain (*'Why do we make you do it?'*) and the links between Literacy and dance do not appear to be positive ones (*'I'm not asking for lots of difficult words and connectives'*). The learning objective was not to hear children's thoughts on dance but for them to write sentences with full stops and capital letters; the teacher makes explicit that that is what she will be marking. Children were also instructed to respond in writing to pre-set written questions (eg *Why do we do dance in school? What part of the dance lesson is your favourite part?*). They were not allowed to formulate their own questions. In the absence of any discussion, it was perhaps not surprising that all but the most able children had very little to say in writing.

The dance teachers were constrained in how they could teach and offer their expertise. They found it difficult to link dance lessons to the teachers' weekly NLS objectives such as story beginnings, middles and endings, recounts, adverbs and adjectives.

Sometimes what they want, it's almost impossible to translate it. Sometimes we really struggled, like with 'recounts'. It worked, but I'm not sure how much dance there was. (Arts partner GA)

As a result, children did not develop a particular dance vocabulary or knowledge.

Arts partner GA: Today I saw some beautiful ideas, people working well with partners, beautiful duets.

Child: What's that?

Arts partner GA: Different things I've never seen before. Next week we'll be continuing the story.

Cal (Year 2) [Dancer] GA told us some moves to do, but then the rest we done [i.e. improvised].

Although teachers linked dance to weekly Literacy objectives, children did not always seem to make this connection. They particularly enjoyed the social aspect of dance lessons and being able to work with their friends

Justin: [I like it] because it is something relaxing.

Kamali: I like Josiah's dance. I like his cool moves.

Ava: I like Wilf's dance because he is brave.

Ethan: I like dance because it makes you feel strong.

Jaidan: It is fun and it is for everyone.

Ellis: I like dance because it gives me ideas for playtime. It is fun.

Ava: We do dance in school because our mums and dads might not.

Kamali: I like working with Jaidan because he is one of my best friends. It keeps you fit.

Mariam: I like the music. I like working with Ethan because he makes me laugh. I like showing my work.

Tyrell: it is fun to watch people doing to funny dance. I like watching my friends because friends are good and lovely.

Children's talk and texts

Children in pairs and small groups were observed to communicate intensely during dance sessions as they improvised and negotiated moves and patterns. Sometimes children would not speak but would watch and mirror each other. In dance sessions there was a mixture of simple verbal interaction and complex non-verbal interaction, watching and responding:

Ch 1: Watch me (moves, swings arms)

C 2: Watches, copies and adds to movement

Ch1: No like this. (changes and adds to a new arm movement)

Ch2: Now me.

CH1: Let's do it again. First you.

Children showed their movements to each other and were invited to say what they liked or disliked. There were no opportunities for extensive talk about their dance experiences.

Claire: I liked the wiggly worm dance

Anna: I like Ava's dance because she really controls herself.

Demi: I like Anna's dance because she is happy in her dance.

It was evident that when dance was linked to a class text such *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs children found these sessions memorable.

*I like working with Anna because I know her very well so that I'm confident with her. It is learning because it is always exciting to learn a new thing. I like *The Snowman* one because I liked it when me and Molly was flying and I was the snowman. (Flora, Year 2)*

*My best dance was *The Snowman*. I think I was good at it, there were lots of slow moves I could remember very well...[arts partner] G said 'Brilliant, fantastic, good'. I think I've improved because I'm learning a bit better. (Wulf, Year 2)*

Teachers planned to devote two dance sessions to the Benjamin Zephaniah poem *Body Talk*. Dance was developed with music created by the dance teacher on a computer and with a taped reading of the poem in Patois by the author. The arts partner observed that such changes linking dance to a whole text opened up a wider range of responses from children.

Quite small things made a significant difference. That was very revealing. The Benjamin Zephaniah poem they [the children] found liberating. It just hit a chord with them. It was very open and free,

their choice of body parts. Children like R, T and J - they were in heaven! Some children feel inhibited, are they allowed what they want to do? It resonated with them, it released them to contribute something, and they were very, very happy. (Arts partner GA)

Children's dances were individual and unique. Children wrote a poem in the style of *Body Talk*. Their drawings are also individual and unique.



Their writing however does not stray far from the form and language of the original Benjamin Zephaniah poem:

*In me
Brain
There is a love story
In my mouth
There are
Jokes*

*From me
Mum
I got an opera
In me
Ears
There is de
Rhyme
In my belly
There is
A
Comma
(by Elliot)*

Children's writing during the project showed no evidence of their experiences in dance. For example, teachers created a big book to display children's writing from the Anthony Browne picture book *Piggybook* together with photographs of dance sessions which were linked to this text. Like the poetry writing, the story writing is all similar in structure and content.

My name is Mrs. Piggot and I have a husband and tw sons. My husband is disgusting and my sons are horrible. Every morning I have to make the breakfast. After that I have to Hoover the carpets, make the beds and wash the dishes. I decided to leave the house and never come back. (by Josiah)

My name is Mrs. Piggot and I have a husband and two sons. I love my family even though they don't do any work. I'm so fed up. I feel sad. (by Jennifer)

Photographs of children in dance sessions - unlike their writing - show many different responses to their reading. Every child is engaged as they enact the body language of the Zephaniah poem, or the gestures and images of the Anthony Brown picture book illustrations.



Dance offered children nonverbal ways to inhabit and respond to the poem and the picture book. Interviews with children revealed they had their own knowledge and experiences of dance.

Wilf: At home I make up my own dance. My mum used to be a dancer, ballet. I asked my mum, what if you can't remember something in a dance lesson? And she said, you have to make sure everything is very good in your mind and work it out in your mind.

Justin: At home I do Michael Jackson dance, and Justin Timberlake. And my sisters dance. I dance in the playground.

Savannah: I do dance at home, ballet dancing. I go to dance lessons, different ones [to arts partners'], they do the same shapes as [arts partners], they do flower shapes, different songs. I told my mum I want to go there, she said yes.

After statutory and optional tests in the Summer term, teachers agreed to allow the arts partners to "teach dance for dance's sake" without linking dance to Literacy objectives. This freed-up the project considerably. Teachers also agreed to take the three classes to a dance studio to meet professional dancers and have a lesson there. Children found this visit memorable. They immediately picked-up on the roles and language of the professional studio. They began to see dance as serious 'work'.

I would like to work in [dance theatre], where they dance and see famous people. You'll be on the stage and everybody will see you on the stage. The dance theatre was nice, there was a big gym, and a studio, people who dance. That's my favourite part, the dance theatre. (Savannah, Year 1)

We saw photos of what dancers had done in there. Big split jumps, splits in the air, people carrying people. Very amazing and just a bit weird that really good dancers have worked in there and we were working in there as well. (Wilf, Year 2)

In the Summer term, teachers also began to integrate dance across curriculum subjects such as Geography and Art and Design. Children learned dances from other cultures, Banghra and West African. They made paintings and collage of African and Indian dancers.

Inhibiting factors

There was little collaboration between teachers and arts partners in this project. Teachers were adamant that dance must support Literacy objectives however remote these were from dance, and the arts partners agreed to this limited way of working. The project could have benefited from taking a wider view of Literacy, or working extensively around a small set of children's texts.

The school's very tight timetable of set subjects and regular target-setting also constrained this creative arts project. Only after Key Stage tests in the Summer term did teachers feel free to teach 'dance for dances' sake'.

For the most part, the dance specialist was unable to offer her expertise. Over three terms children did not develop specialist dance skills or knowledge. One child in an interview described dance lessons as "like PE but without the balls and equipment". Children who danced in after-school clubs or at home were unable to bring these experiences into school.

The arts partner was focused on children's enjoyment in the lessons ('They were very, very happy'). But the teachers felt under pressure to cover a pre-set amount of material and ensure children's progress to the next attainment level. They felt dance put children's progress at risk.

Our children were losing one Literacy Hour a week to dance. We have a lot of SEN, ADHD children. What the arts partner offered was totally different to anything else on offer in our school. (Teacher CM)

The project was enhanced when children visited professional dance studios and were able to see dance in a real-life context. The teachers realised in retrospect that this visit should have been organised at the beginning of the project. By the end of the project the teachers themselves could see the positive impact of dance on children and on their own professional practice.

Emmanuel started listening and responding. He wanted to work with his friends. He was listening, his social skills improved. He felt good about working with professional at school. (Teacher AR)

Justin struggles with class Literacy. He is aware of his 'low ability' position in bottom literacy group, that he always had adult help. Dance brought out a different Justin. Through physical learning he became talented, the leader. It was a way to empower him. (Teacher SP)

The project was an amazing, exciting, sometimes difficult journey...We are looking at it differently now. Before, we said: this is our learning objective, this is what we want, this is the text, now you [arts partner] go plan it. We hadn't used their expertise and knowledge... We are looking more now at children's verbal skills. We enjoy asking them about

their dance, how are you moving, what are you feeling?...We've learned from dancers, bringing out their knowledge that we didn't know existed. Our confidence changed, we were more relaxed. Children's enjoyment is evident, our enjoyment is evident. (Teacher CM)

Teacher CM acknowledged the link between the teacher's enjoyment and relaxation in a creative arts project and what children gain from the experience. Teachers in this project also realised that they could not cling to their pre-set learning objectives. They had to let in the arts partner's expertise, and they had to acknowledge what children were actually learning in these experiences.

Common factors in children's language and literacy development in creative arts projects

In effective creative arts projects, children returned to themes and expressed them in a variety of modes over time. They had many opportunities for symbolising meaning, including writing.

We observed that projects which aimed explicitly to 'inspire children to write' generated little, or superficial writing, whereas partnerships that promoted discussion and reflection around big themes (our stories, identity, audience, heritage) produced a wider range of authentic, committed writing.

In the writing-focussed classrooms there was little discussion. Emphasis fell on the production of texts as a response to an artistic stimulus. In the classrooms that were more broadly focussed, teachers and arts partners encouraged children to work extensively in the area of the art form (film study, drama, artwork, storytelling, theatre) and talk was promoted in a wide range of contexts: in role play, in exploratory thinking, in group work, in collaborative writing, in reflective discussion. Children's talk became more explicit and aware in the context of creative projects as they explored big themes using new vocabulary, skills and understanding.

In effective projects, teachers used the energy of the arts activities to move children from talk towards writing, and this writing development was non-linear. Children deepened their understanding of a creative arts practice by returning to its themes in talk and in writing. As part of the writing trajectory, ideas were explored in drawings, storyboards, models, enactments, notes, dialogues and other forms of multi-modal drafting. There were frequent opportunities for what has been described as "*the interaction of hand and mind*". This is the conceptualisation by the Assessment of Performance Unit in Design and Technology (APU 1991) of the process by which 'hazy ideas' in the head become concrete in reality (see Chapter 9). This model was designed to show development in a specific subject (D&T), but it can also illustrate literacy development: how oral language becomes writing. Using the APU's model, the teaching pattern in Teacher G's class where children worked with arts partner S can be visualised:

Drama, artwork & talk

learning how to work in drama
learning terms, how to use space

Discussing the novel

picture of the character

drawings of her life & family

watching & discussing film
about Bangladesh village

freeze frames: village life

visualisation of landscape
painting of landscape

freeze frames: the playground
responses & discussion

family trees

photograph album
describing memories orally

dialogues in role

role play as school staff,
how can we help?

walking around and seeing estate
through new arrival's eyes

Reading & writing

reading the novel

words to describe her

a magazine feature about her

internet search for images and
flags, hearing and singing anthems

essay on understandings of the
anthem

poetic text around picture

words for mum, dad, etc in
different languages

describing memories in writing

letters in role; poems in role

school policies: new arrivals,
bullying; bilingual support
materials, translations

This pattern of learning begins with explicit naming and teaching of language and skills in the creative arts area. This learning is followed by explorations where children given responsibility to use their new techniques and vocabulary to create something original. They have opportunities to play, experiment and practise with materials, techniques and skills.

Additional factors

There were additional common factors in creative arts projects that underpinned children's language and literacy development. Teachers extensively developed the themes and learning initiated with arts partners. Teachers orchestrated children's discussion, reflection and writing in between the weekly (or less frequent) arts partner visits. Teacher commitment and practice was crucial in embedding creative work.

In effective projects there was three-way creativity. Teacher, arts partner and children brought knowledge and experiences to the project, and each was able to make decisions that influenced its development. Children were allowed to have choice and voice. Their interests and enthusiasms had a secure place in the project, even where these were challenging.

Teachers were co-learners who maximised the expertise of arts partners. They shared their knowledge of the class and individuals. Teachers and arts partners made their collaboration explicit to children in actions and language. They modelled effective working relationships. Children could see them 'thinking aloud'. They set high expectations and professional standards of working.

In some effective projects there were often marked improvements in what Dorothy Heathcote (1985) calls 'the social health of the class'. The experiences and learning in creative arts projects had an effect on the class as a social unit, enabling them at best to become a more positive community, more inclusive and respectful of each other, more effective at working together and collaborating, better at talking together.

Part 2

Children's language and literacy in creative arts work

Chapter 5

Talk

There is value in the natural talk that the arts allow. I wonder how it can be woven into a more structured approach to language and literacy. Creative work, it seems to me, is valuable in language development and therefore intrinsic in literacy. (Teacher AO)

Children's talk in creative arts work

Observations in classrooms revealed a stunning variety of talk amongst children and between children and adults in the context of creative arts projects. Whatever the art form children were learning - how to make a sculpture, how to create a drama or a dance, how to plan a film - it was a process that was usually memorable, active, social and fun. Children often worked with their friends rather than in ability groups, and through their talk they learned from each other.

We observed children using a wide range of talk for learning. They acquired specialist language and concepts which they applied to their talk and their thinking as well as to their doing and making. Where teachers explicitly developed speaking and listening in creative arts projects they observed children's

- Increased confidence in speaking, and clearer speaking
- Improved listening and concentration
- More open questions
- More reflective talk
- Improved interpersonal relationships in the class

Children's learning in creative arts projects was evident in their talk. Children's engagement was also evident because they were often able to bring their personal experiences to the activities in the project. Teachers themselves reported that they had 'real' conversations with children in creative arts projects.

In the following observation, Year 1 children are drawing rainforest creatures to be made into 3-D sculptures for giant trees. Sarah, Mia and Michaela show attention to detail. They are completely engaged in their activity. They show curiosity and humour. As they work and talk, they comment on the transformation of their drawings.

Sarah: I draw the tree like THAT. (draws)

Michaela: Oh that's a nice tree. You drew a tree beside it.

Sarah: Mine [frog] is jumping up.

Mia: I can't draw a tree. I have to draw a branch. These are the leaves. We did one smaller to this yesterday.

Sarah: You can't really see it [legs] because of the branches. It's hairy [bird], in fact it has fur all around it.

Bob: How many legs does a leopard have?

Sarah: Four. [continues drawing] Then a little bit of white.

Michaela: Are we gonna colour these in? That looks a bit silly, I put the legs wrong. When you colour it in you won't see that bit.

Mia: I've got a kitten cat at home.

Sarah: I could change this [bird] into a lizard.

Mia: I've done this in Miss A's class, it's lovely.

Sarah: Mine is a happy one. How do you draw leopard feet?

Mia: Like a cat

Sarah: Oh, claws!

Michaela: I was about to do another leg, a fifth leg! [Laughs]

Sarah: I done a jaguar, a lizard like that, and a chameleon. This is about detail. Not just about drawing. If you draw something, it has to be in detail. There's the iguana. There's the fly comin' into its mouth, it is IN his mouth! How many flies do they eat?

Mia: If you come to my house this summer I won't be there. I'll be in Serbia. My family is in Serbia and I speak Serbian.

Sarah: He's got four flies, see, look! How many flies he's gonna get? FIVE.

Bob: This one's a silly one cos he's got 8 eyes and a mouth up here. It's an ant.

This companionable working talk mainly consists of parallel commentaries - individual children talking to themselves about the progress of their own drawings - but there are also occasional exchanges. Children seem aware of each other's drawing, while being focused on their own.

The talk is supportive of the drawing: children give running commentaries on how they are going about their pictures, and the talk seems to help the work:

'I draw the tree like THAT'

'These are the leaves. We did one smaller than this yesterday.'

They offer frequent evaluative comments on each other's work and on their own work:

'Oh that's a nice tree.'
'That looks a bit silly, I put the legs wrong.'

Some talk involves rapid exchanges of information:

'How do you draw leopard feet?'
'Like a cat'
'Oh, claws!'

The children are concentrated on the technical demands of this task and reveal their awareness of techniques they can use:

'When you colour it you won't see that bit'
'I could change this into a lizard.'

At one point, Sarah gives herself an emphatic reminder of the main principle that she needs to remember:

'This is about detail. Not just about drawing. If you draw something it has to be in detail.'

She is echoing something that has been said by the arts partner; Sarah has really internalised this piece of teaching and taken it to heart. As she watches the development on paper of her rainforest creatures, she is also thinking about what she has to do to realise that imaginary world.

The children's talk is unusually focused, and there is little that is extraneous to the task. Towards the end of the transcript, however, a more playful and confident tone enters the dialogue. Sarah acts out what is going on in her picture:

'There's the iguana. There's the fly comin into its mouth, it is IN his mouth!'

In this more relaxed mood, Mia suddenly makes quite a long personal statement:

'If you come to my house this summer I won't be there. I'll be in Serbia. My family is in Serbia and I speak Serbian.'

Perhaps Mia feels able to trust her peers with this confidence in the warm and supportive atmosphere generated by this activity. Nobody actually replies to her, but she has shared something of importance with the group.

The talk in this group has a learning function; their talk is supportive of their work and serves as a way of controlling their activity, as when Michaela plans to change her drawing and Sarah reminds herself of the need to draw *detail*. It highlights the amount of self-evaluation that goes on as children undertake this kind of task. It also shows children playing within the task in a way which helps them to imagine what they are drawing more fully. It reveals a growing confidence in children as they move further into the task.

Peer and adult interaction

Children in other classrooms were observed to have lengthy conversations with each other and with teachers as they worked in creative arts projects.

[Year 6 children and teacher are painting together]

Boy: Was there paint in the olden days?

Teacher AO: Yes, but it was always made from natural materials.

Girl: My mum has a farm in Portugal, she has one pig and the floor is all dirty.

Boy: My Nan when she told me to look after the pigs I got scared.

Boy: When I went to Portugal, we had a pig, I was holding the legs, the rope broke, I had to throw the knife at him!

Teacher AO: What! You held a pig? Why were you doing that?

Boy: To kill him.

Teacher: Oh I don't know if I could do that.

Girl: My Nan has a donkey on her farm, behind her house she grows grapes. Everyone knows my Nan and me! One morning I got up early and picked grapes and corn.

Teacher: I love grapes.

Boy: My Nan has horse. Do you know why?

Teacher AO: No, why?

Boy: To put with the cart [mimes horse and cart]!

Teacher AO: And do you think you prefer the city like London or the country like Portugal?

Boy: I like the country.

It was notable that in this climate teachers were not talking *at* children but talking *with* them. In creative project work teachers could ask children questions and children could ask teachers questions that had no other place in the curriculum. Two teachers (AO and KR) said that in creative projects *"It was the first time I had a real conversation with them [children]"*. Teacher-child relationships were noticeably improved in these encounters and also helped teachers assess children's understanding of the work itself.

Talk is so directed in the classroom. It's only when you talk with them that you find out where they are. Otherwise you never know where they are. It's by listening to them that you find out how they learn, what they need to know. (Year 5 Teacher JA)

Children were also observed to use their first languages extensively in creative arts projects, spontaneously translating and 'code-switching' - an indication that they were feeling very secure and relaxed - but not always with approval from peers:

[Portuguese talk]

Boy 1, Year 6 to Artist ML: How do you say 'Colina' in English?

Arts partner ML: Colina - hill. [Gestures] Montana [high], colina [low].

[Portuguese talk]

Girl, Year 6: Stop talking Portuguese, this is not a Portuguese school!

Arts partner ML: But they need to understand, if it's not clear

Girl: They say horrible things about us.

The Portuguese-speaking artist who intervenes here on behalf of the Portuguese-speaking Year 6 children later noted that many of them speak 'country' or non-standard dialects of Portuguese. Non-standard dialects are an aspect of children's language for which there is virtually no official curriculum space. But in this creative arts project the bilingual arts partner created a purposeful context where children were able to use their first language for learning.

Action and contemplation

Children's talk often expressed awareness of two different worlds: the external world of techniques and materials, and the internal world of the imagination. These worlds came together in the making of artwork.

William in Year 5 showed an observer his models of characters in a scene from a fairy tale.

It's time for dipping [in glue] so it'll be perfect. Tomorrow when you take it out, leave it for one-minute, you can see [shapes and colours] coming through. [He dips his models in glue and leaves them to dry]. This is when the prince is dreaming about the princess.

Like Sarah and her drawings of rainforest creatures, William is thinking and talking about two things: the imaginary world of the fairy tale and the techniques to realise that world in reality. He is describing what he has done to make his models, he is observing changes, and he is simultaneously imagining a scene in a fairy tale. He is active and reflective.

Children were also observed to talk to themselves as they worked:

Girl, Year 6 [to herself]: After I paint it, I'm gonna put the sun on. I don't want to put the sun on and then paint it... you don't want to put too much. It's sticky on my hands....I need a brush, oh here it is. Let me get some brown, dark brown. Mine doesn't need too much [paint]. I need yellow for the sun, there are little black dots I need to colour in yellow.

This girl 'sees' her painting in her head. She knows and verbalises what she needs to do to realise this image (*a brush...brown, dark brown...yellow*). She knows the sequence in which she must work (*After I paint it I'm gonna put the sun on*).

Children were also observed to use what they had made for role play and imaginative play:

Girl, Year 5: [to herself, playing with her models of story characters]: You are so lazy people! Sitting down, you can't be bothered to stand up!

Girl 1, Year 5 [with models of pumpkins]: Can I buy some of your pumpkins?

Girl 2: No!

Girl 1: Please let me buy some of your pumpkins! They are so lovely and orange!

Girl 2: No!

[Portuguese talk]

Children became more confident about their work as they talked, particularly where they felt anxious about their skills.

Girl, Year 5: No Shanice, first you curl it around, put in some tissue, roll around, around, around and...

Shanice: I understand what you're doing.

Girl: You have to put them FAT, have a little faith!

Shanice: See, put plastecine here.

Girl: Put some blutack on the tree so it can stand.

Wilf, Year 2: Working together is good, we can share our ideas and work it out. Let's use both of them [ideas], one in one part, one in another.

Children asked 'How' questions (*How do I do this?*). They expressed needs, requests and demands (*I need more tape; Can you help me? You do it!*). They would praise or criticise each other's work. They sometimes expressed frustration (*I can't do this*). They considered materials and possibilities (*I could use straw or pipe cleaners to make the roof, which would look better?*). They

verbalised instructions and often revealed linguistic misunderstandings (*Is a nightingale a girl that comes out at night?*)

The many and varied types of talk in creative work can be seen to mirror the kinds of talk that children may have outside school, at home, where they may engage in activities alongside an adult - cooking, cleaning, walking, driving, taking the bus, shopping, playing computer games or fixing things (cf Gordon Wells 1986).

Work in the creative arts may be able to bridge the gap between the range of children's talk outside of school and the narrow parameters of children's talk we observed in many other classroom contexts. Work in creative projects has the potential to bring the diversity of children's talk and language into the classroom. Children's talk in creative projects activities often revealed their thinking as they worked, as they talked extensively about the process, making decisions, estimating and measuring, choosing, negotiating, comparing and evaluating.

Children's talk in 'literacy'

The wide-ranging conversations in creative arts projects were in sharp contrast to talk in other classroom contexts. It was observable that children's talk in creative arts projects was more sophisticated and lengthy than in other teacher-led classroom talk where children normally responded in short, often one word answers to teacher questions.

Although teachers have flexibility with regard to the Literacy Strategy (now the Primary Strategy), *work in creative arts projects did not seem to be associated with change in this area*. A very narrow range of talk was observed in literacy contexts. Questions were closed. Children had few opportunities for discussion. They were often expected to work in silence at ability tables. There was a strong emphasis on the features of writing genres, word level structures such as connectives, and transcription. This was true even in cross-curricular work.

The following observation follows a teacher (M) and a Year 4 class for one hour in the school's ICT suite. The children were learning how to write newspaper stories, which is a Literacy Strategy objective. They were also learning about Ancient Egypt which was their History topic. This was a cross-curricular project using ICT. Children worked in pairs on word-processing their newspaper stories. Scrutiny of the transcript shows that the multiple demands made on both children and teacher by this cross-curricular topic tended to narrow, rather than broaden, the nature of the learning experience.

Learning Objective: To write a newspaper story

Teacher M and the Year 4 class are in the computer suite. The class is learning how to write a newspaper article through their history topic, ancient Egypt.

(0910)

They begin by listening to a CD rom of the voice of the explorer Howard Carter. He is describing his discovery of Tutankhamon's tomb. The audio recording is difficult to understand because it is an old recording and Carter speaks with a very strong 'RP' accent. The children listen.

M: Brilliant. That was Howard Carter himself, how it felt entering the tombs and what he saw. What did he see?

Children: ?? (uncomprehending)

Boy: Linen?

M: The linen bandages surrounding the body. What did he say when he opened the coffin?

Children: ?? (uncomprehending)

M: How many coffins were there?

Boy: Three.

M: Well done, good listening. What was amazing about it?

Boy: They were still together.

M: He saw the....(waits for answer)?

Boy: Mask.

M: The workmanship of the gold mask. What else did they see?

Boy: Shrines?

M: No. He said there were still wood chippings from their work all those thousands of years ago. What did they bury with the pharaohs?

Girl: Belongings.

M: What kind of belongings?

Girl: Clothes

Girl: Food.

M: And other things from their life, why did they want them to be comfortable?

Boy: They believed in the afterlife.

Boy: When the first one dies, the others are put with him.

M: The family is buried together in the same tomb. Who feels they've learned a lot this week [from our topic work]?

(Children raise hands)

M: I can see it coming through in your paragraphs and in your posters.

The teacher gives a technical explanation of how children should find their saved work in the computers. She tells children they will continue working on the newspaper articles they began writing in pairs earlier in the week. The articles are stories made-up by the children, but using newspaper conventions.

M: First we had to write the five Ws: who, what, when, where, why. What was the point? Why do I need to know these for a newspaper article?

Children: ??

Boy: They go at the end?

M: No. In the first sentence you tell me the five Ws. The next paragraph?

Boy: Detail.

M: How will we write the rest?

B: In order.

M: What kind of order?

Girl: Chronological order.

M (reviews what children need to write in their first sentence, in the first paragraph: the 5 Ws) Anything else?

Girl: Bullet points.

M: No, that was instructions, when we did instructions.

Girl: Past tense.

M: We write it in the past tense.

Boy: Conclusion?

Boy: Third person.

M: We write it in the third person. We use direct and indirect speech. Can anyone give me examples of direct and indirect speech?

Girl: Direct speech is: I saw the car crash walking to school.

Girl: Indirect speech is when you say it to someone else.

M: You need a snappy, eye-catching headline. I don't want you to worry about Spellcheck, get all your ideas down first.

(0930)

The children begin to work in pairs. Teacher M looks at Aisha's and Leonie's writing so far.

M: This isn't a story, this is a newspaper article. What are the facts? [she types for them: 'Pharaoh's wife falls pregnant'] Keep going.

The children are working hard to write one sentence with 5 Ws in it.

After the teacher's headline ' Pharaoh's Wife Falls Pregnant' Leonie and Aisha write:

*Last night pharaoh's wife found out she was pregnant with his baby.
The pharaoh was so happy, he didn't know if it was a boy or a girl.*

Leonie: When my mum was pregnant she knew it was a girl and that it was my sister!

Aisha continues the story orally: When the baby's head was coming out, pharaoh saw it was a boy and said, 'We will name him Tutankamon'!

[Aisha and Leonie have a seemingly irrepressible urge to tell this as a story as they revert to narrative.]

Aisha: [asking herself the rhetorical question] Where? In a birthing pool. [she continues orally as if she is telling a story] But when he went to birth school [sic], he found out it was a boy.

Leonie: Now we need to do Spell Check. [they correct spellings on the two sentences they have written]

Aisha: [continuing the narrative orally] When he saw the baby he said, it's a beautiful boy!

Leonie and Aisha do not get any further.

(0950)

Teacher M stops the class to review the work in a plenary.

M: Tell me again what we need in the first paragraph?

Children: The five Ws.

M: We do it in ONE sentence, not in two or five. Am I allowed to give my opinions?

Children: No.

M: What am I allowed to give in a newspaper article?

Children: Facts.

M: You need to give evidence to support the facts. Facts only in a newspaper article. Who thinks they have written a really good paragraph with 5 Ws? [She asks two other girls to read out their first sentence, listens and responds] I heard only 2 Ws. Who?

Children: Pharaoh

M: And What?

Children: Building a sphinx.

The cross-curricular nature of the lesson was presumably intended to make this activity more immediately interesting and accessible to children. Here was a real voice from history, on tape, describing an amazing experience. But children seemed not entirely to appreciate the significance of what they were hearing. It might have helped them to have had a transcript of the audio recording, which was difficult to take in on one hearing.

In the event, not much time was spent in discussing this account of a historic experience. Instead, the teacher concentrated on finding out what children had heard and remembered, often asking questions which did not require more than a one-word answer:

'How many coffins were there?'

'Three.'

The teacher is moving through this part of the lesson, which relates to the History topic, in order to arrive at the newspaper article writing, which is the main Literacy learning objective for the session. This necessitates a further question-and-answer session, recapping on what children have been taught about writing a newspaper story. Again, the teacher-pupil dialogue becomes mainly a series of teacher's questions with short factual answers:

'How will we write the rest?'

'In order.'

'What kind of order?'

'Chronological order.'

Sometimes children know the answers, sometimes they just guess:

'Anything else?'

'Bullet points.'

'No that was instructions, when we did instructions.'

The need to teach the features of the chosen genre dominate this dialogue, and the lesson. Many children struggled in this activity, and especially with the requirement to write the '5 Ws' (who, what, when, where, why) in a single opening sentence.

The teacher here is conscientiously trying to cover all the bases, and to teach everything she believes that it is important for children to know in order to gain control of this genre. (She is also following the Literacy Hour timetable: 20-minutes of whole class teaching, 20-minutes of independent work and a 10-minute plenary.) But the tight focus on this learning objective seems to overwhelm other possible learning that might have resulted from the experience of hearing the discoverer of Tutenkhamon's tomb speak in person.

An added difficulty for children was that they were being instructed to write an imaginary story about ancient Egypt (using their own ideas and what they knew from their History topic) in the form of a newspaper article, which the teacher stressed should be factual:

'This isn't a story, this is a newspaper article. What are the facts?'

Leonie and Aisha's attempts to follow these instructions showed that they were much more at home with a narrative mode than with the report genre that the teacher wanted them to adopt. They continually moved into story-telling:

'When the baby's head was coming out, Pharaoh saw it was a boy and said, 'We will name him Tutenkhamon.'

Despite the modern resources of this lesson, therefore, with its use of media and ICT, the teacher-pupil dialogue is an example of teacher-dominated question and answer, with pupils' answers getting shorter rather than longer. This example, however, was not uncharacteristic of the kind of talk which went on in Literacy plenary sessions. It is difficult to generate and sustain high quality talk with children in a whole class group, but it is nearly impossible to do so while trying to transmission-teach the features of a genre in this way. As Robin Alexander (2004), drawing on the evidence of several research studies, observes:

'...while teaching methods, patterns of classroom organisation and the handling of time, space and resources have changed considerably in literacy and numeracy lessons, practice below the structural surface has changed rather less. Pupil-teacher interaction is still dominated by closed questions, brief answers which teachers do not build on, phatic praise rather than diagnostic feedback, and an emphasis on recalling information rather than on speculating and problem solving.'

The role of reflective talk

The contrast between the confident talk and extended utterances observed when children were working on creative arts projects, and the more hesitant one-word answers that were often their only contributions to whole class Literacy sessions was striking. Work in the arts creates contexts where children talk with each other and with adults. Their talk is practical, about doing and making. It is also companionable, social and personal. Children's talk is speculative and exploratory. It is also imaginary and empathetic, in role play with peers and in solitary, internal monologues. Through their talk children mediated external, practical worlds and internal, imaginary worlds.

As we also showed in Chapter Four, looking at common factors in children's language and literacy development, how teachers used the energy of the creative arts activities to move children from talk towards writing. We will now look at some of these texts in more detail.

Chapter 6

Writing and multimodal texts

*I love Jamdher, my beautiful village
Climbing trees in that hot place
Playing football
In the burning space
The eating my mum's yummy rice
It makes me red with the spice!
(Rahela, Year 5)*

Moving towards writing

Talk and work in creative arts projects helped children generate ideas for their own writing. Teachers observed children write enthusiastically and spontaneously after activities or workshops such as storytelling, drama, music or artwork. They did not stare at the blank page because they had had an active, often physical, experience and context for their writing.

For teachers like MK (Class Study Three) the creative arts project provided a stimulus for children's writing. For teachers like GD (Class Study One) and KR (Class Study Four) creative arts projects provided themes for a range of children's writing. Where teachers explicitly linked talk and work in creative projects to texts, drama, speaking and listening and then to writing, they observed children's

- Increased confidence and willingness to have a go at writing
- Increased control of narrative
- Enthusiasm for writing
- Improvements in quantity and quality of writing

In these situations children had many opportunities to return to their ideas and try them out in different multimodal forms such as storyboards, scripts or drawings with words. Writing did not follow a linear path that began with an outline or story-ladder, progressed through first and second drafts and ended with a final copy in a Literacy Book. In Teacher KR's class, children's writing was in the context of a final, visual product (films). In Teacher GD's class, writing was a mode to explore and enact different scenes, situations and voices.

In this section we present a range of children's writing and multimedia texts that arose from work in creative arts projects: a poem, a painting with writing, a multimedia story, a film storyboard and a collaborative film. These texts are from the Class Studies in drama, multimedia and filmmaking.

In each sample, we examined children's writing and multimodal texts using an analysis framework that reflected the diverse nature of projects in classrooms (Appendix 6). The framework first considers the context of the writing, how it was part of the creative arts project. It notes the history of the writing, how it emerged and was developed in the context of the project. It looks at what makes a text multi-modal: is it artwork, computer images, graphics, moving images or is it references in the writing itself to other modes such as film? It notes where the writing shows evidence of skills that can be traced to children's learning in the creative arts project. The framework also notes how work in the project has influenced the writer's stance, sense of audience and imaginative engagement in the writing. We evaluate the overall effectiveness

of texts, and to what extent other influences - such as computer games or television - are also apparent.

I am Aysha

A poem and a painting with text

Rahela, Year 5, School H
(Class Study One)

Rahela is a bilingual child who was born in London. She uses Bengali and English fluently. Her family's roots are in Shilwa, Bangladesh and they visit Bangladesh every summer. Raehla's mother is a child minder, her father works as a waiter in a restaurant. Her family prefers to wear traditional Bangladeshi clothing. Her mother and two older sisters are confident in their use of spoken English. Rahela's family have a close relationship with the school and attend most functions and meetings. Rahela's ambition in Year 5 is to be a doctor or lawyer "because *they earn plenty of money*".

Rahela's poem and her text-painting were two of many writing activities developed through dramatic explorations of the world of the class novel, *Lost for Words*. Children had found out about the protagonist Aysha, her family, the events of her early childhood and what kind of girl she was. Children learned Bengali words for members of Aysha's family (Rahela already knew these words) and the names of her relatives. At this point in their reading of the novel, Aysha has learned that she is moving to England.

I am Aysha

A woman, the prophet Muhammad's favourite wife

Hussain's helpful cousin

Comla's steadfast cousin

Ama's and Uba's loving daughter

Dada's and Dadi's faithful granddaughter

Active and sporty

Like an olympic star

I run like a whizzing car

I am agile, strong

Fast as a leopard

Brave and powerful

Like a Bengal tiger

*But
I am kind, thoughtful
Or as shy as a timid deer*

And never give up!

*I love Jamdher, my beautiful village
Climbing trees in that hot place
Playing football
In the burning space
The eating my mum's yummy rice
It makes me red with the spice!*

*I feel upset leaving my family
Depressed at saying goodbye
Why did Uba not take me
When I was little?*

*Why now?
I would like to meet new friends in my new school
To have Bengali friends to teach me the English rules
And talk to me in Bengali so I can feel religious
And stop the others looking suspicious.*

Rahela's work in drama is evident in her writing. She has internalised the history, voice and stance of Aysha, a fictional character in the novel. She writes as 'I'. She is addressing the audience personally and forcefully: *this is who I am*.

Rahela has also internalised the expressive skills of drama which have allowed her to give full voice to the fictional character in writing. The poem is effective; we find out quite a lot about Aysha, her past, present and future, from this short piece of writing. The poem begins on an assertive, lively and optimistic note. There is a strong shift in mood as Aysha expresses her fears about leaving her village.

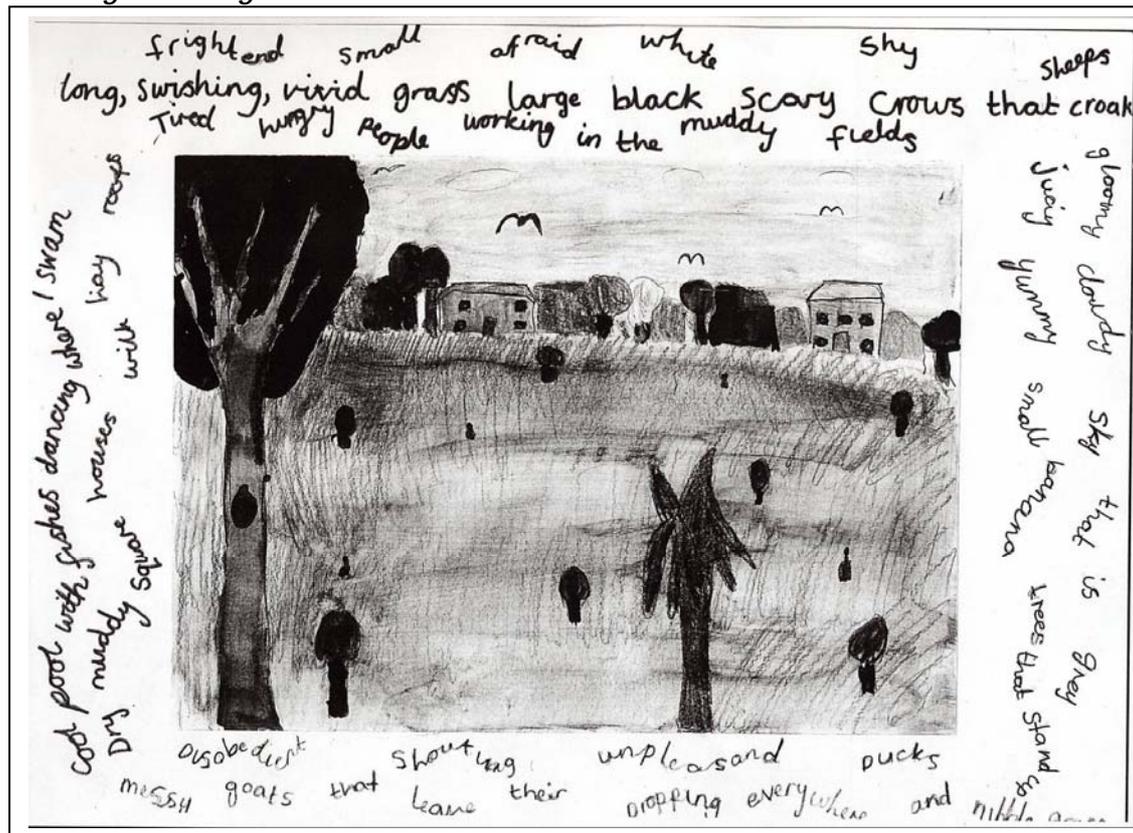
In drama work Rahela learned how to explore the pauses and thinking spaces in the story where narrative action momentarily stops. There is no doing in her poem. It is all thought. Aysha is on the brink of a new life, but not there yet.

Her poem tries to answer a fundamental question, *Who am I?* It is an internal monologue even as it addresses the reader. In her writing Rahela has also used her own knowledge, language and experiences as a Muslim girl in England. She alludes to the 'English rules' and other people 'looking suspicious'. These

experiences have not yet appeared in the novel but Rahela knows they are there, waiting for the fictional Aysha.

High-quality poetry was not the final writing outcome of the creative project. It was one of many different written responses to the novel, part of a continuum of writing that flowed around the novel and through work in drama.

A village in Bangladesh



This is Rahela's watercolour painting of a Bangladesh village. The class made these painting using what they learned from searching the internet, watching a video and from the novel itself. Around this image, they created a border of lyrical, descriptive statements. The words surround all four sides of the painting.

In Rahel'a panting, the text further illuminates her understanding of the home of the novel's protagonist, Aysha. Rahela used her own memories of Bangladesh for this writing and painting.

*Frightened small afraid white shy sheep
Long swishing vivid grass
Large black scary crows that croak*

Tired hungry people working in the muddy fields

*Cool pool with fishes dancing where I swam
Dry muddy square houses with hay roofs*

*Disobedient shouting unpleasant ducks
Messy goats that leave their droppings everywhere
And nibble grass*

*Gloomy cloudy sky that is grey
Juicy yummy small banana trees that stand up*

Rahela's watercolour painting in the centre of the A3 page shows an agricultural space, verdant and quiet. The whole text is highly decorative. The words, the artwork and the calligraphy itself all have equal importance. The sentences are poetry, and surround the central image on all four sides in wavy, dreamlike lines.

The artwork is a visual backdrop for Rahela's dramatic work around the novel. There is a sense of sadness and loss in the painting and in the words. The painting shows an empty expanse of field surrounded by village homes. Small figures of people sparsely dot the field. Black birds fly around in the sky. The words convey a sense of anxiety and describe the fictional Aysha's psychological frame of mind: *frightened, small, afraid, tired, hungry, disobedient, shouting, unpleasant*.

Rahela has a strong sense of the audience as readers and as viewers. She is helping us to build a mental picture of this place and the feelings it evokes. It is as if we are looking through a window onto this village, or standing in the wide empty space of the field. There is a tension between the words and the image and they each make demands on the reader. We are drawn into the village but the words pull away at our gaze, just as the birds in the picture are flying away. The multimodal text is thoughtful and tentative. The whole story, beyond the borders of the picture and the frame of the words, is not yet revealed.

The purpose of this text is to telegraph, in words and images, a memory of a village. This is not a draft, but a form of high-level participation in the world of the text. Words convey deep feelings as well as information about this place. It is a poetic meditation, and - like Rahela's poem - it is a pause in the narrative of the novel where we look around, hear, see and smell this village. This text powerfully and simultaneously shows and tells in a non-linear, non-narrative mode.

The influences of Rahela's creative arts experiences are evident in the careful use of art techniques and media, and in the dramatic and visual explorations of

this fictional world. In her multimedia text, Rahela has used her knowledge of the class novel, her knowledge of how to work dramatically in role, and her own experiences in the creation of school texts.

Make the writing beautiful for the picture

A multimedia story

Amina, Year 4, School F
(Class Study Three)

Amina is a refugee from Somlia who arrived recently in Year 4. Her parents speak limited English. At first Amina struggled to express herself orally but quickly gained confidence in speaking. She continues to find written work challenging as she was also learning a new script in school.

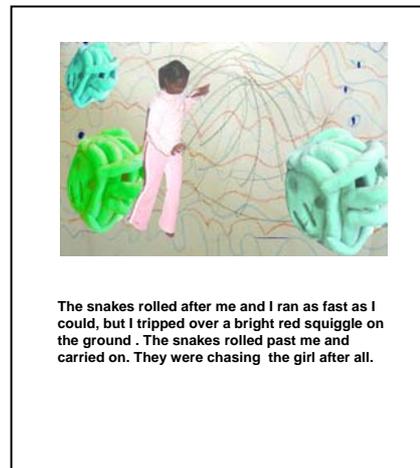
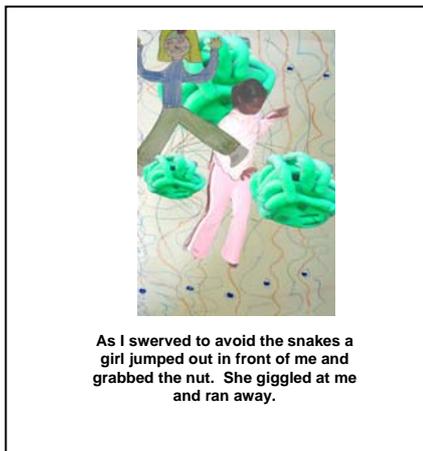
Amina's *Sense Story* is a 4-frame powerpoint presentation that combines manipulated images of her artwork (a background of red and blue crayon squiggles, a clay model, a drawing of a brown nut-like shape and a drawing of a blond girl) a photograph of Amina herself in a drama workshop and electronic sound effects. The words themselves are animated, fading in and out and moving within the text box space.



It was a cold night,the wind was blowing hard. I heard a hissing sound, so I crept slowly into a dark corner. As I searched around, I bumped into a strange hard object, it felt like sleeping snakes in a bundle .



I jumped up and ran as fast as lightning. The darkness lifted and I saw the snakes. They looked dangerous. I tried to tiptoe away quietly but I heard a bang above. I was frightened that the snakes may wake up. I looked up and saw a huge nut heading for the biggest snake pile.



Amina wrote her story after multi-sensory workshops, related preparatory writing and a drama workshop where she moved through her imaginary landscape. Her preparatory writing followed a sound workshop and described this landscape (Class Study Three).

Amina wrote at length in her preparatory writing, but this was not incorporated into the framework of the final story. Like other children, Amina seemed constrained by the limited space for text in the powerpoint slides. However Amina does use fragments of the preparatory writing in her final story: a 'buzzing sound' becomes a 'hissing sound'; *I saw the wind push the wavy grass* becomes the less complex *the wind was blowing hard*.

Amina alters her visual landscape across the four slides. She changes the colour of her clay model and replicates it several times across the screen. In frame number two a 'huge nut' rolls into the scene. In frame number three a new character enters, a drawing of a blond-haired girl. Throughout the four slides, Amina herself appears to dance and weave around the artwork.

Amina writes in the first person. It is a simple narrative without character development or inner psychological action: she is in a slightly sinister fantasy landscape, she meets snakes and a girl. Amina said that '*because it was ME, I was in it...it would be much more better.*' For Amina, the story is not 'about' her, it *is* her. She is literally in the world of her text. She has written the story for herself and her peers; there is no awareness of a wider audience.

Amina had one-to-one support for her writing, where an adult helped her find words such as 'swerved' and develop literary phrases (*the darkness lifted*). Amina uses her artwork to inform her writing. She turns her clay model into *sleeping snakes in a bundle*. She refers directly to her background drawing (*I tripped over a bright red squiggle*). Her story is playful.

But the fanciful quality of the story belies the struggle Amina had in writing it. Amina needed substantial support in writing her *Sense Story*. She wasn't sure what to do even though the task appeared straightforward: to write a story to go with the series of pictures. Amina tried to create a narrative for her images. Initially she thought her pictures and story would be about a jungle.

When I was writing the story I was thinking about how to make the picture and the writing go together. I thought, if the picture is about a jungle, the writing could be about the jungle. I found putting it together hard. I had to make the pictures part of the writing... I was saying to myself, I have to try and make the writing beautiful for the picture.
(Amina, Year 4)

The pictures seem to create barriers rather than free-up her writing. Amina struggled to 'make the pictures and the writing go together'. Her storyline became set at the point where she decided that her clay model looked like a bundle of snakes. Amina's images are stronger than her writing, and she is aware of this (*I have to try and make the writing beautiful for the picture*).

The skills evident in Amina's text are mainly computer skills. There is no equivalent evidence of skills development in artwork. Amina had an experience that offered much input but little development. The project was open, with many different stimuli and freedom to respond spontaneously, but at the same time it was constrained by a narrow writing framework.

Amina's story may have been hindered by the stated aim of the creative project: *to inspire children to write*. This could imply that it didn't matter what Amina wrote as long as she wrote something. Ideas in this context don't have to count for much. Sinker (2000) has described this lack of expectation as part of the "chameleon character" of multimedia:

...a tool for writing, reading, talking and listening, a tool for drawing and looking, a tool for animating and viewing, and a tool for gaming, interacting and consuming - makes it less easy to gauge in evaluative terms..[T]he very fact that there is no overall model for evaluating multimedia work...makes it a liberating experience for young people...Not because they have some natural inclination towards this way of working...It is much more to do with expectations, or lack of them.

Amina took great pride in her multimedia presentation. Because it is not unlike all the other *Sense Stories*, Amina was doing the same level of work as the other children. This type of multimedia project with its diverse elements may be part of the learning curve of creative projects involving ICT in schools. As Sinker (ibid.) observed, and as this case study demonstrates, multimedia is not judged in the same way as writing or drawing, yet it can be significant in producing in children like Amina a real sense of achievement and confidence.

The Bully

A storyboard for a film

Jahura, Year 5, School A
(Class Study Four)

Jahura is an Asian heritage child in Year 5. She dresses modestly in school but does not wear a headscarf. Before the filmmaking project, class relationships were unsupportive and she was often reluctant to speak for fear of being ridiculed. She said the filmmaking project transformed how she felt about speaking.

*Before I was kind of quiet, I couldn't really speak that loud, I was shy. After we finished the film I felt louder, my voice projected and I wasn't really shy. I was happy and confident to speak, not embarrassed.
(Jahura, Year 5)*

Jahura said she '*really liked acting and doing drama*' in the filmmaking project. She admitted that '*I don't usually do that at my house because I've got four sisters and I'm doing housework.*' She said that because of the project she would now like to be a film director.

I liked to use the camera. The first time I used the camera I didn't know how to put the camera on and use the different shots. Now I know how to turn the camera on and do it. The tripod, when I was working with [arts partner] F, she showed me how to use it. It made me feel like a proper person. (Jahura, Year 5)

Jahura was excited when the four films were shown at a local cinema because she had never been in a cinema before.

When Jahura's wrote this storyboard the films were still in development. Jahura's text is part of exploratory thinking and writing about the film that also included role play, writing in role, poetry, dialogues and scripts.

Jahura created a storyboard for a film which she titled *The Bully*. It depicts what must be a routine playground incident, so authentically is it shown and told. From the upper floor of the school building, a girl (the narrator) spies her friend below in the playground. She sees that some one is with her friend, but

this character is partially hidden behind a tree. It may be the bully. She waves but they ignore her. She goes down to the playground to meet her friend. They laugh at her and the friend tells her to go away. In a close-up, the girl wonders what is happening. The bully throws the girl's book bag on the ground and all the books spill out. The girl picks up her books as the bully looks on.



Jahura's storyboard clearly draws on all her previous experiences. She is thinking of what the film will look like. She combines her knowledge of film as

a medium, drawings and writing. Her skills in the techniques of filmmaking are evident, as are the facial expressions and body language of drama and role play work.

Jahura's storyboard is sophisticated. She includes a camera direction (WS, CS, MS,) in each frame, and each frame shows a powerful and distinct camera point of view: above the playground, on either side of the tree, a close-up, a wide shot. Jahura does not need a synopsis because her storyboard tells everything visually with only a skeleton written narrative beneath each picture. Jahura created this text with enthusiasm and commitment - even though a film of her story was never made. The storyboard was part of Jahura's exploratory writing as the class developed ideas for their films.

Jahura's imaginative engagement in this text is powerful. In spite of the limits of the 8-frame paper medium, the theme of the story comes across strongly. Jahura's written language shows evidence of her experiences in the creative project, in the camera direction, in the dramatic story and in the internal reflection of the narrator. Frame 5 is a dramatic pause in the narrative, a close-up shot, in which the character ponders what has happened to her best friend.

Jahura's text is effective and it does a job. It conveys meaning in pictures and writing, and a film could be made from her storyboard. Jahura takes three distinct stances as the writer of this text: the scriptwriter creating a working document, the camera shooter looking through the lens, and the first-person narrator in the writing. There is a very strong awareness of the point of view of the main character, the crew that will shoot this film, and of the film audience itself.

A film: *Shame*

Boys in Year 5, School A

This short film was one of a group of four films made by a groups of children in School A (Class study Four in Chapter 3) in partnership with filmmaker NB and her colleagues. Like other films made in this project it is based in the playground, and is a pupils' eye view of school life. It deals with relationships between pupils, the hard reality of 'play', and authority relationships between teachers and pupils which are sometimes experienced as arbitrary or biased by children. Above all this film is a fully realised study of one troubled boy, Cameron, and of the factors that push him to make trouble.

The film begins with a playtime football match. Cameron is trying to get the ball and accidentally kicks it high against the school building where it smashes a window. This incurs the fear, blame and anger of the other boys who attack

him. When he fights back, the teacher spots him and sends him to 'sit out' by the wall. He lingers by the corner of the wall behind the goal, and the game resumes. One of his friends commiserates with him and he blames the teacher: *'She's banned me. I could be in goal, yeah, because That Stupid Goalie Over There is rubbish.'* The friend tries to comfort Cameron by telling him that he's only banned for the afternoon. Left to himself, Cameron investigates a cavity in the wall and finds a stone.

Meanwhile, around the corner, visible to the camera, the goalie defends the goal ineptly. Cameron wanders round the corner as the goalie lets two goal kicks through; he puts his hand on the goal proprietarily, and his foot on the ball, doing all he can to distract and intimidate the goalie. When the play recedes, he taunts him: *'You're rubbish in goal'*, and continues to jeer while the goalie tries to ignore him. Finally, exasperated, Cameron throws the stone at the goalie's head. The goalie puts up his arms to protect himself and at that moment the ball hits him in the stomach. The goalie doubles up in pain on the ground as his classmates look on aghast. Cameron ducks under the goal and strolls past the goalie's prone body, muttering sarcastically *'Shame!'* (as in *'Too bad you didn't stop that goal'*). Cameron's friend challenges him: *'What did you do that for man?'*
'Because I wanted to.'
'You really hurted him!'
'So, do I care?'

As Cameron walks off by himself the teacher summons him and the last few moments of the film are shot from the teacher's viewpoint as Cameron approaches her reluctantly across the playground, saying: *'You always blame me...Why man, it's not fair...you always do it'*. The last shot of the film looks down on his sullen, resigned face.

This film, like the others made by the class, is an economical cameo of what the pupils' side of life in school can be like. It shows the tough culture of the playground, the teasing, taunting and bullying that goes on between pupils, and the sudden bursts of temper that can end in violence. It shows how pupils experience teachers' authority: Cameron's brooding presence by the wall is literally, visually red with his burning sense of injustice.

Technically the film is well thought out, using its location ingeniously and effectively. The fact that the goal is near the corner of a brick wall in the playground allows the camera to cut between Cameron's isolation around the corner and the action of the children's play; sometimes we see two aspects within the same shot, as when Cameron is kicking a stone (foreshadowing the later incident) while the goalie attempts to cover the goal. The action of the football game, rushing away from the goal so that we can focus on the interaction between Cameron and goalie, and rushing back to create a dramatic climax, is very well managed. Point of view is used, in the scenes

with the teacher, in a way that is strongly expressive of the way Cameron sees the adult world - powerful and unsympathetic.

This film gives a remarkable glimpse of one episode in a boy's school life, and has great resonance; it goes on working beyond the final frame. Cameron's face lives in the memory because the film seems to catch something about him, and about what he might become. Cameron is the kind of boy who is unable to get out of the hole he digs for himself, he is unhappy but he can't see another way to be. He seems to be in the process of isolating himself and damaging his own chances and there is something ominous about his story.

This is a short film but it has a strong plot based on accurate psychology and lived experiences. The film is well imagined visually and technically impressive, and it is realised in very good performances. The film grew from other learning in drama, role play, improvisation, drawing, writing and film study. As well as devising the plot, storyboarding the film and writing the shooting script, the group of children acted and took the roles of camera operators, sound operators, and director's understudy. Film as a medium has allowed the class to combine many different ways of making meaning. Although adult editing has obviously made the most of what the children did, the underlying material and the idea for its visual treatment are what make the film special.

Many routes to meaning

These five very different texts show how literacy learning may be woven into the fabric of creative arts projects. Through work in the creative arts, children took on different voices and stances as writers. They had strong imaginative engagement with the work and with the writing that arose from it. They wrote with commitment and purpose.

Jahura's storyboard, Rahela's poem and painting and the boys' film all show strong evidence of their work in creative projects. They use their experiences and skills to select and inform their mode of expression. Jahura's writing is economical: she conveys her meaning decisively through shifting visual points of view as well as through narration. Rahela paints a picture of a village in Bangladesh in images and in words; her combination of modes has a strong impact on the reader-viewer. The boys who made the film *Shame* use their knowledge and skills in drama, film study and camera technique to tell a tough, uncompromising story where words convey only a superficial meaning. Some of these texts are still in development, and children sometimes struggled with the forms of expression. Amina found it hard to create writing that she felt would do justice to her images.

The more experience children had in the working practices of the creative art form, the more evident this knowledge and these experiences were in their writing. Powerful writing did not come at the end of creative arts projects, as a way to demonstrate children's learning or understanding. In the projects from which these four texts arose, writing was part of a learning processes; writing in different modes was a form of thinking. Children had time to talk and reflect, to move between practical work and exploratory writing. They also had opportunities to express meaning in other, non-verbal modes: in visual art, in sketches and drawings, in facial expressions and body language, in storyboards and camera viewpoints. Children needed extensive opportunities to explore themes in different modes before they could create whole, convincing texts that reflected their work in creative arts projects.

Chapter 7

The power of story and literature in children's creative arts work

When I read, it just comes when you read what you have to do. When you read, ideas just come into your head. You just write it down, it makes a good story. (Kiah, Year 5)

Creative arts projects, reading and writing

The impact of whole texts on children's work in creative arts projects appeared to be significant. In classrooms where creative arts work emerged from stories and literature, children recalled both the process and the outcome of this work vividly and in great detail, calling on their knowledge of the texts to do so. Teacher knowledge and practice created and sustained this learning.

Reading however was central to only one of the ten creative arts projects. Class Study One describes the impact on children's literacy of working extensively around a literary text. This was the only project to work in this way and also the only one where children produced a consistent and significant amount of quality writing.

Other teachers did not make reading and extensive work around a text the focus of the creative arts project, although some projects *referred* to children's literature. In School J, children made sculptures of characters and scenes from the novels *Krindlekrax* by Phillip Pullman and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl. In School B, children danced an interpretation of a poem (*Body Talk* by Benjamin Zephaniah) and a story (*Jamil's Clever Cat* by Fiona French). In these situations texts were used as a stimulus for artwork.

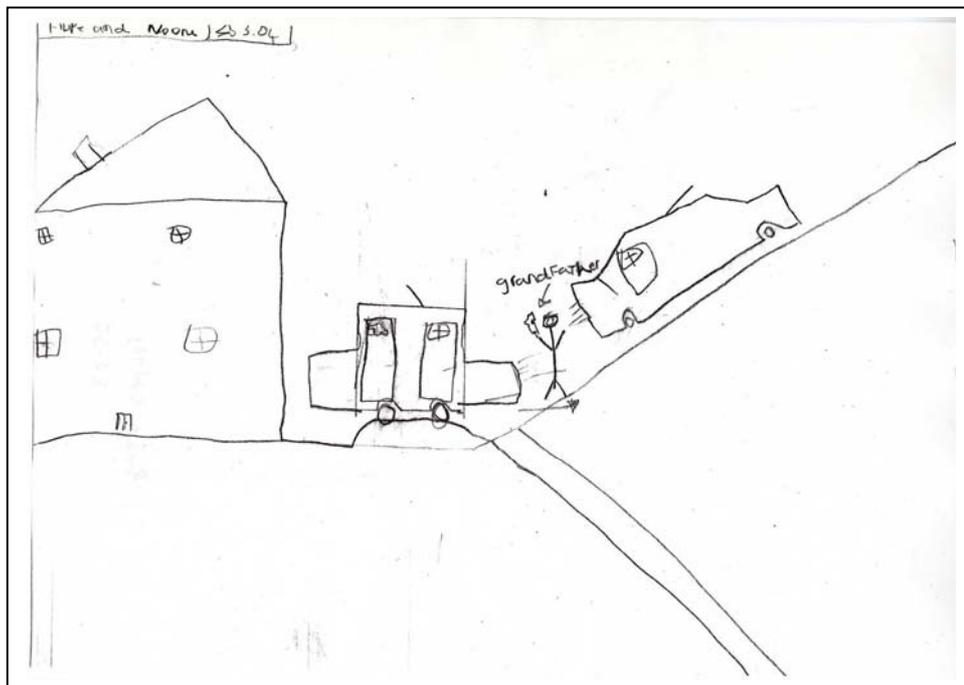
Teachers were chiefly concerned about children's writing abilities; there was less concern about children's reading. Many teachers hoped to see improvements in children's writing as a result of creative arts projects. In effective projects, children were able to make strong connections between reading, writing and work in the creative arts.

Storyworlds

Storytelling, which could also involve enactment and visual art work, supported children's imaginative engagement in literacy through visualisation, role play, drawing, craft-work and performance.

Teacher AO worked with storyteller JB over two projects, in School E which has a high proportion of children with English as an Additional Language. These projects were supported by a national performing arts centre which included a poetry library.

The first project involved extended storytelling work with Year 2 for three terms. JB initially asked children to draw a picture of a story. In this observation, Felipe in Year 2 is drawing such a picture. His first language is Portuguese. As he draws, he tells the story behind the picture. He is creating a storyworld visually and orally:



One day my dad came to my house and my grandfather came. They started to have a fight because my grandfather doesn't like my dad coming to my house at Portugal. [draws incline of steep hill] That's a rocky place where trucks go, where they cut the trees. [draws curving road] My grandmother has animals down here. Pig, chickens, some rabbits. Then my dad had some friends in his car and they came out to stop the fight. They took my dad in the car and they went away. But then my grandfather just had something in his hand - a hard thing, it was made of metal. And it broke the window of my dad's car. Finish! My dad still lives at Portugal. I'm gonna meet him in the holidays. He's gonna pick me up at the airport. He has a white car, dark windows.

Felipe is creating a story-world with pictures and language. He moves straight into storytelling mode as he begins to draw. Felipe talks partly to himself, and partly to the observer who is present. His talk recalls the monologues that young children are sometimes observed to engage in when playing alone - but with an adult nearby. This being 'alone in the presence of someone' can be helpful to children in expressing their thoughts and imaginings.

Felipe's account of an actual dramatic (and unsettling) incident from his family life in Portugal has a clear narrative development, and he recalls all its stages. The event he is remembering evidently made a big impression on him. As JB observed:

'Stories are a way to describe what is happening to you.'

Felipe ends his story with a flourish (*'Finish!'*) and adds a coda (*My dad still lives at Portugal...'*).

As Felipe talks, however, he is drawing all the time, and in the middle of his storytelling he pauses to focus on his drawing of the landscape. This landscape is more than just the background to the story, it shows what Felipe's family life is like in rural Portugal:

'That's a rocky place where trucks go, where they cut the trees. My grandmother has animals down here. Pig, chickens, some rabbits'.

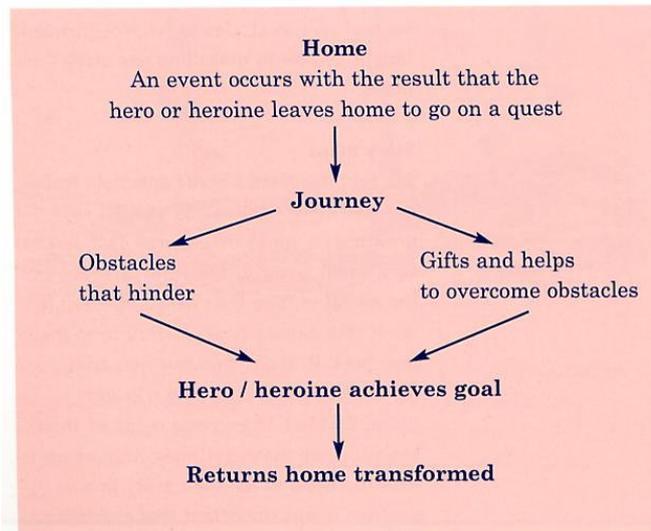
Talk and drawing are mutually supportive throughout this activity: Felipe's talk helps him to shape his drawing, just as the picture that he is creating supports him in describing his experience and telling his story. In class, Felipe normally struggled with writing. Yet he has a compelling story to tell. Teacher AO said she learned a lot about Felipe and other children by listening to them talk about their drawings, and she also learned about the writing process:

I found out there was a huge amount of pre-writing, before writing. It made me think about everything that must be going on in their heads.

Some children in this class constructed storyworlds that began with their own experience but then sent the narrative in imaginary directions. JB modelled this type of story as *"Usually I get up and go to work, but one day something unusual happened..."*

Story quest

JB also showed the Year 2 children a 'Story Quest' structure to help them tell and then write their own stories. She shares this same concept in workshops for corporate clients who want to overcome adversity in their work lives. Like the storyboards in Class Study Four, the Story Quest framework works differently to a story 'ladder' or other linear writing frameworks that demand a beginning, a middle and an ending. JB's structure is more fluid. Each part is necessary for a 'good' story. Children could see the whole shape of the story before they began working on the parts.



They could access the map, they could structure and see their stories, get the stories inside them, hear the voice inside them, get the story-voice. (Arts partner JB)

Children used the Story Quest framework to write about all sorts of circumstances in their own lives. They conquered their fears in stories. One girl learned how to swim. A boy learned to spell by slicing words into manageable parts with his magical sword. Mina achieved her goal of getting a good report from her teacher:

The Queen of Thinking

Once upon a time there lived a girl who wanted to become the Queen of Thinking. Her name was Mina. One day Mina said, 'That's it! I've got to behave and get a '5' for my report.' So she told the teacher but the teacher said, 'I am a magic teacher and that is a secret'. So this is what she did. She pulled her ear and she felt as if she knew every single instruction. Mina was never behaving and she always sat by the door. That week she tried everything. She followed instructions. She sat on the carpet quietly. She did everything the teacher told her. At last Friday came. When Mina looked at her report she was shocked. She had a '5'! Mina had achieved her goal! She went home very happy indeed. The end.

In her writing Mina has used JB's 'Story Quest' to confront obstacles and overcome them. It is a brief story, but full of detail. She is addressing readers and we can hear Mina's voice clearly. She has used story language (eg *Once upon a time there lived a girl*) which is approaching literary language. She has created a world where her story takes place. Her school, classroom and teacher take on magical qualities.

Yet we may wonder what Mina's story reveals about her school experiences. Mina was 'never behaving'. She seems to spend a lot of time 'sitting by the door' excluded from the class. Mina must figure out for herself how to succeed. Her goal is to behave and get a '5' on her weekly behaviour report by doing everything the teacher tells her and by sitting quietly.

Creating a community

Teacher AO said the storytelling project '*enriched our life as a class community*'. Children brought stories they had written at home to class. A large bulletin board displayed children's writing, drawings notes, story maps and diagrams from home.

Children became storytellers and performers through working with JB. They emulated her style and language, her vocal cadences and rhythms. When Blessing told the story of *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* she drew on everything JB had modelled.

Blessing used facial dramatic expressions, she used her hands to gesticulate, she clapped her hands as she slammed the door, the tone of her voice rose with shouts for help and lowered on notes of warning.
(Teacher AO)

Teacher AO observed children's oral language become more sophisticated as they heard and told stories. She was fascinated when children said that JB had also taught them how to read and write.

Blessing said that Jan taught her how to read and write. But the sessions rarely included much formal writing and certainly no reading! Storytelling motivated Blessing to read and write. But the project was an exploration into unknown territory. Now that I understand that territory a little better I wonder whether I can develop a map and a structure in order to capitalise on what I learned and reproduce it with other children. (Teacher AO)

Teacher AO did have this opportunity, with a different class and in a shorter time period.

Storytelling, crafting and writing

Teacher AO and storyteller JB worked together on a second project, with Year 5 and Year 6 children. This was a one-term storytelling project where children also worked with a visual artist to make storyboxes (shoebox-size 3-D scenes) illustrating traditional tales. Children's artwork and writing were displayed to the public as part of a children's literature festival.

To begin, Teacher AO and JB helped children to internalise stories through retelling them with props and 'freeze framing' tableaux of different scenes. Small groups of children enacted sequences of scenes from two stories: *Snake Magic* from West Africa and Hans Christian Anderson's *The Swineheard*.

Children then made storyboxes illustrating their scenes. They used pipecleaners and fabric to make tiny figures of people and animals. They made trees, houses, huts, fields of pumpkins, rivers and forests using colourful cloth, straw, sticks, and a range of other collage materials. As they worked, JB told and re-told the stories and reminded children to think about what was happening in their scene of the story:

You can't have a picnic because there is no picnic in your scene [of The Swineheard]. It can't be snowing because, remember, in the story the rose trees are in bloom. Think about what is going on in your part of the story. (Arts partner JB)

Crafting a storyworld was powerful for these children. They acquired stories and story telling skills as they acquired design and making skills. Art became a physical manifestation of their knowledge of the stories, and they took ownership of both the stories and the artwork. Kara in Year 5 showed her story-box scene from the African tale *Snake Magic*, where the princess is selling pumpkins and sees her wicked brother:

These are the customers, and these people are selling pumpkins. My scene is the bit when she sells the pumpkins. One of these people is the brother. He - in the next scene - he chops her hand off! Scary! It's not very nice. [sees one model is missing] Oh no! The brother is gone! I need him! She [the princess] is clever - she climbs the tree with her one hand. (Kara, Year 5)

Kara knows the sequence of the story perfectly. In her mind she sees it unfold scene by scene. She expresses her feeling of possession of the story and 'her' scene which she has enacted and now made three-dimensional. She moves back and forth between the story in her head (*in the next scene he chops off her hand*) and her model of the story (*The brother is missing!*).

Kara was able to tell the entire story of *Snake Magic* in great detail and with expression. Children like Kara used their storytelling, enacting, making and crafting experiences to move on to writing. Their writing reflected their internalisation of story language. They wrote about the scenes they had created in the voices of the characters they had enacted.

My Story

I felt sad when I left the palace with only my baby boy and a pot. In the forest I saw a snake. He asked me 'Would you let me hide in your pot?' 'Yes.' So he slid quietly into the pot. There appeared another snake asking 'Where is my brother?' I said 'He went that way' and the snake slithered away. Then the snake crept out of the pot. He said, 'Thank you for saving my life'. Then he cried 'Come with me to the Kingdom of Snakes'. On the journey we stopped at a beautiful clear pond to rest. There I walked with my little boy to the cool water. (by Sofia as the Princess in Snake Magic)

My Story

I'm smart with my clothes you know. My shoes are black and brand new. Oh, did you see my gloves? They're bright yellow. Anyway I needed some fresh air. I went to the balcony and opened the window to see the view in the garden. Hmmmm, I wonder why there is a crowd next to the pigsty. I'd better go and find out, I said to myself, and I walked across the grass. I said as loud as I could 'Why is there a crowd next to the pigsty?' What do you think I saw? Oh my goodness! What do you think you're doing? My daughter was kissing the swineherd! 'Get out! Get out! You're banished from the city and I mean it!' I cried. (by Rafael as the Emperor in The Swineherd)

Although these two stories come from very different cultures, they are linked by the powerful theme of banishment, and JB's Story Quest framework is very much in evidence as characters encounter obstacles and ultimately triumph.

In their writing, children are moving away from language that is close to everyday speech and they begin use literary, written language forms. Sophia writes lyrically: *Then he cried 'Come with me to the kingdom of snakes'... On the journey we stopped...There I walked with my little boy to the cool water.* Rafael writes as a more bumptious character: *Oh, did you see my gloves?...I'd better go and find out, I said to myself...What do you think I saw?* Children have physically enacted the story, and they have moved on to tell it and then write it. Children have taken on the voice and stance of imaginary characters, and they have also taken on the voice and stance of the storyteller.

Storytelling, story writing and sculpture

Teachers in School I also observed the influence of stories on children's creative work. In this school, Key Stage 1 children made giant tree sculptures to transform the school dinner hall. Each giant tree sculpture is unique, decorated with children's artwork, drawings, collage and paintings. They made the trees after listening to traditional tales by a storyteller who encouraged children to re-tell the stories and, like JB in School E, to become storytellers themselves. Storyteller PP also encouraged them to use their story ideas for their artwork.

That's the end of my story. I hope it's given you lots of idea for the work you're going to be doing with [arts partner] G, and I hope you enjoyed it. Now you can tell somebody else the stories. (Arts partner PP)

PP returned at the end of the project to re-tell the stories under the giant trees.

The story-teller was amazed that the Reception children remembered stories from a year earlier. One child said, 'But last time you said it was a different animal!' (Teacher RM)

The large-scale artwork and traditional tales became the starting point for story-telling and story writing across the whole school. Key Stage 1 children re-told traditional tales to Key Stage 2 children, who then wrote their own versions of these stories.

We hadn't thought about the story element, since our project was very art-based. The stories just grew. It naturally evolved. (Teacher RM)
The Junior children wrote their stories, and when they went back to the Infants to read their stories, the Infants were saying - but our story wasn't like that! We said, they [Juniors] listened to your version, now theirs is a version with more detail. That is how stories grow. The young children got something out of that. For the older children, every person in the class, including the four children with statements, could say 'This is ours, this is our story.' It was ownership. (Teacher CJ)

At the end of the project, each giant tree in the dinner hall had a name: *The Autumn Tree, The Whispering Tree, The Chinese Tree, The Family Tree, The Flower Tree, The Fairy Tree, The Rainforest Tree, The Monkey Tree, The Winter Tree*. Each tree had a book of tales written for it.

The Whispering Trees

A long, long time ago there was an axe man. He had lived in the Garden of Eden but he had been removed. He wanted to chop some wood for to build a house and for a fire. So he went searching for some trees. Firstly he found a pine tree. It was very tall and thin. He was lifting his axe when, 'NO! Don't cut me down! Or I will cry enormous sticky tears and you won't be able to make a fire!' So the axe man went further into the forest. He found a spruce tree. He was lifting his axe when, 'NO! Don't cut me down! I am twisted and tangled so you can't use me to build a house!' So the axe man went deeper into the forest...
(by Joe, Year 4)

Joe, like Mina and Sofia, is beginning to use story language confidently in his writing. His story continues in the same literary rhythm; words and phrases are

repeated, built-up and embellished. Using patterns of language, and with the three-dimensional model of the tree in his mind, he has created a story world where trees can talk.

Children's literature and creative projects

Children showed a high level of recall and enthusiasm where creative projects involved literature. When children were familiar with a text they had the world of the story in their minds. This helped them visualise what their creative project would look like.

Children who learnt skills or techniques to create 'stand alone' art did not appear to show the same level of recall as children whose work was based on a familiar book or story. Children enjoyed both types of creative work, but a literary or a story aspect appeared to be a memorable path into creative activity for children. One headteacher described this as *"the difference between an art lesson and a holistic, creative experience"*. This difference is illustrated by groups of Year 4 and 5 children in School J who worked with the same arts partners.

The first group of children had made 12-inch 3-D sculptures of athletes, and this work was linked to their PE topic of taking weight on different body parts. But none of the children interviewed recalled doing any writing connected to this work - even though their poems about their sculptures were on display outside the headteacher's office! Children described this project as *"always a surprise"* and *"different every day"* because *"we didn't know what was going to happen"*. Although children enjoyed making the sculptures they did not seem to know where this artwork was going; as they worked, they could not visualise the finished sculpture in their heads. Their teacher also said that the link between the sculpture, the PE topic and writing poetry was not clear to children.

The second and third groups of children in this school made 3-D sculptures based on their earlier readings of two novels: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl and *Krindlekrax* by Phillip Pullman. These children recalled their work in detail, often using their knowledge of the stories. The visiting artist's ideas for sculpture were enhanced by the teachers' knowledge of what would create the most favourable context for children's learning.

[CLPE: how did you get the idea for how the 'Krindlekrax' sculpture was going to look?]

Max., Year 5: From the story really cos the words just come into your head and it gives you a good picture.

Jasmine., Year 5: Yeah so we decided which part of the story we wanted to do, how we wanted to put Krindledrax. Did we want to

put it on the road? Did we want to put it under the sewer? Mine was coming out of a pipe into the sewer. Some of the tail was in the water and the rest was hanging out.

Unlike the 'athletes' artwork, these sculptures had a memorable, literary context. Using their knowledge of the story, children were able to see the path towards the final art product because, as several children said, "I had the story stuck in my head so I knew what it would look like." Their teachers also noticed the strong interaction between the novel and the artwork.

It was memorable for them. [For Krindlekrax] we made cobblestone streets of clay, and they could actually see and feel them, touch them, and then talk and write about them with more conviction and understanding... It was good to work from a book or a story. It made sense to them. It was all connected. Better than just an art lesson. I'm going to incorporate it into my Literacy next year. (Year 3 Teacher SD)

When they know the setting of the book, they can use it in their artwork. They enjoyed it. They each had their own model of Krindlekrax and they were surprised at how each one was so different. They took it further, they wanted to make the setting as well as the model of Krindlekrax. (Year 3 Teacher JB)

Sophia and Louisa in Year 5 worked on a sculpture based on *Charlie & the Chocolate Factory*. This was an enormous (two by four metres) collaborative piece, illustrating a key scene in the novel. Children began by sketching the novel's characters. They then made an armature of wire where they translated their 2D sketches into 3D models of bodies. The armature was covered in mudrock and painted. The novel's cast of characters were set in Willie Wonka's garden, with a chocolate river flowing around trees and flowers made from real sweets.

The novel and the sculpture were not separate experiences for Sophie and Louisa. Each form of communication influenced the other. In a conversation, they described their improvements in art techniques *and in writing* as a result of work in sculpture.

Sophie: We wanted to make a version of the novel to go with the model, like a shorter one that we could attach to the model and people could read it at the same time they looked at it, for people who don't know the story.

Louisa: When we were making the model, we would look back - leaf back - into the book to get ideas for what it could look like.

Sophie: When I'm in secondary school I will know how to use these tools and materials. And I'll remember the wonderful story - the most wonderful bit, our favourite bit - the candy river and garden. It's stuck in my head. Doing it helped with my writing, to get everything in, to describe everything.

Louisa: Instead of just saying 'there was trees and a river' now you say 'there was a gorgeous chocolate river and grass that melted like mint in your mouth.'

Joseph in Year 5 described how reading helps him to visualise his art work, both in specific school projects like his model of Willie Wonka for the *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* sculpture and in his own, free drawing and modelling:

First you've read the story, you've got descriptions, you can think 'this is how his round body would go'. But if you just draw it out [without reading], you might miss something out. It would all be new, I wouldn't know how to draw it. But if I read a book, that means I've got the description in my head and I would know how to draw it. ... The thing that helps me do art is my reading. You see how one author describes a person, and how another one would, then you can compare, take half of one or half of another, and draw it yourself and it'll look weird. (Joseph, Year 5)

A fourth group of children in School J made small-scale models of chairs. This could have been a pure Design and Technology task. However, as they were planning their teacher said they could imagine these chairs for a particular character in a story. With this prompt the work came to life:

We had to think of a character that we wanted the chair for. We did an Alien chair, a Mermaid chair, a Harry Potter chair, a Baba Yaga Bony Legs chair - that one has chicken legs - a Giraffe chair - that one had a long back, for the long neck - , Goldilocks, James and the Giant Peach. We had to do things that matched the person [character]... An ordinary chair would be boring. Because you know the character, it's easy to know what to make it [the chair] like. You know what it's for. Even if it's a made-up chair. (Daniella, Year 6)

Children used their knowledge of stories for this Design and Technology work, to design and make a chair in their chosen story-world. It was interesting that these children, like those who worked from the two novels, also recalled the sequencing and techniques of this work in great detail. It was teacher knowledge and intervention that 'lifted' this activity, made it memorable and connected it to other learning for children.

Children's stories, literature and poetry were powerful paths forward in creative projects, even where *reading* was not fully developed. Where children had a story, a poem or a book 'in their head' they knew what this imaginary world looked like. They had ideas of what they would do in, or make for, or write about this imagined world. They could enter and enact, move, dance, create artwork and writing in the imaginary world that develops between the reader and the text.

Invented worlds

In all of these examples, children's interests and skills in art, design and technology are supported by drawing, crafting and model-making. But making, crafting and modelling are also opportunities for children to represent real and imagined worlds; work in the creative arts offers children access to 'third spaces', or 'secondary worlds'. Children's work and evaluations in this chapter are evidence of their awareness of this heightened reality.

Kate Pahl (1999) describes how young children enter a 'third dimension' through model-making and crafting, and how children use their bodies and space to play and enact stories with their models. They become 'larger and more powerful'. Through their play and enactment, children become 'larger and more powerful', and play becomes 'more real'. Children use symbolic structures to express thoughts and emotions which transcend the external content of their models.

Pahl writes that '*literacy activities can be experienced as three-dimensional*'. Model-making is children's response to narrative, a way for children to continue stories they heard or stories in familiar texts. Their models are reflections of stories they enjoyed. Children use their models in play and in many other activities, including literacy activities. Modelling and crafting stimulate children's talk, and that talk can become writing. In the examples in this chapter, children's work in creative arts enabled them to make and share their own secondary, imaginary worlds.

Michael Benton (1992) also describes this imaginary world as '*the limbo between the author and the reader*'. Benton discusses how literature and the creative arts both create imaginary, 'secondary' worlds that respond to and try to make sense of the real, 'primary' world. Through reading and through work in the creative arts, children can enter and interpret these worlds. Benton quotes an 8-year old girl who said that when she reads a book:

I sort of feel like I'm invisible and walking around unseen with the things or people in the book.

In the projects presented here, young readers enter imaginary worlds and, through work in the creative arts, represent these worlds in drawings, models, enactment, talk and writing. Children were able to manifest stories and

literature in three-dimensional forms and these were powerful literacy and artistic experiences. We observed 'three-dimensional literacy' in creative arts projects, where children moved between the world of the story and their physical or visual manifestations of the storyworld. This process deepened their understanding of the story and of the artistic process. As Michael Benton (ibid.) notes: reading, writing and the creative arts '*entail abstraction and filling in*', they are '*anticipatory yet retrospective*.' Children demonstrated how capable they are of this type of sophisticated work and response.

Chapter 8

Children's reflections and self-evaluations

When you're working with a teacher, you feel you are trying your best. It's just normal. When an artist comes, you know he is very good at something. So for me, you have to push yourself upwards to be good enough to let him teach you. You can't keep talking and waste time. I feel I have to push myself upwards to be a good enough standard to let him teach me. (Vivien, Year 6)

You can never get it wrong

Children we interviewed were articulate about the many ways in which they felt working in creative arts projects made a wide impact on their learning. In interviews, children said they felt they could 'never go wrong' and 'never get it wrong' whilst working with professional 'arts partners' in the classroom.

The emphasis on doing, making and crafting (*practicum*) in creative arts projects was a welcome way of working for many children. Children said they enjoyed 'getting on with things' and that this way of working gave them more confidence in a range of other work in school. They also felt that arts partners gave them more responsibility and respect than teachers.

Dance is fun and you can't get it wrong. (Cassie, Year 2)

It was different for us to just get on with things...I learned how to use the computer a bit more, and how to set your imagination free. It helped my writing by boosting up my confidence because I didn't used to write a lot, but now I write quite a bit more than I used to, because I have more ideas.(Gordon, Year 5)

(CLPE: how is [arts partner] different to your teacher?

Tashi, Year 5: He shows, he takes really quickly to show us how to do it, he's quick - da-da-da-da- -- and that's really good, that's how you do it, and we actually get on with it, and we do it. [Teacher] takes, she likes telling everybody perfectly how to do it and if even one person doesn't understand she tells the whole procedure again. With [arts partner] we just got on with it... he said, the thing I liked about him, he says - 'it doesn't matter what you do because you can never get this wrong'.

They trusted us. They showed us ONCE how to do something and then left us to go help some one else. Teachers - they don't ever leave you! 'Cos they're never sure if we can do it.(Sorcha, Year 6)

Children reported feeling more confident in their ability to communicate with peers and with teachers as a result of work in creative arts projects. Children felt that creative arts projects also improved class relationships.

[Arts partner] J plays games and tells stories. She teaches us what we don't really know. When I first did stories I was shy and nervous of the children and the teacher.(Bobby, Year 2)

Our class is split up now. When I see the model I remember the good time we had making it. The group work was good, we all got to do it. You see it and think, we did that?! You don't think it's going to turn out good, and it turns out good!(Sophie, Year 6)

We used to bully each other, but we know each other much better now. (Grace, Year 5)

Doing and knowing

In creative projects there was a live connection for children between *doing* and *knowing*. Creative projects were memorable for *what* children were learning and *how* they were learning.

Even the very youngest children recalled in detail their work in creative projects. In this observation Nursery children returned to the studio after a gap of one week to un-peel plaster casts they had made of their hands:

(CLPE) What's in there? [a paper cup full of hard plaster]

(Tia, age 3) My hand.

(CLPE) How do you know your hand is in there? Is it really your hand?

(Tia) This [indicates] is my real hand. In there [the cup] is my other hand. (her teacher starts to un-peel it) My thumb! My ankle! (Tia looks at her own hand and compares it with the plaster hand). It's heavy, and smooth. It's hard.

(CLPE) How did you make it?

(Tia) We dipped our hand in the plaster. It was soft then. It was...wet. cold. Soft. sticky. We had to keep it in there, keep the hand very still. Then we took it out. Now it's all hard.

In interviews with older children, creative projects seemed to generate a lot of indirect learning. Children attributed their improvements in reading and writing to work with the creative arts partner - even though the arts partner had never explicitly taught these things.

It was a proper, proper film like a video, like in Hollywood...I've never done anything like that, properly. [It] has helped me with understanding. I've learned new words cos we did quite a lot of reading. I'm better at my reading. I'm better at everything actually. (Kiah, Year 5)

Apprenticeship

When children learned skills they also learned related language to these skills. This *naming* of techniques and media helped them feel proficient and professional in project work and enabled them to apply their learning to new contexts in school. Children said they '*knew what to do*' in creative projects because they had been able to practice and rehearse.

In conversations, children recalled this process vividly. Dami, Vivien and Jasmine in Year 5 describe their memories of working with their arts partner nearly a year earlier:

Dami: Step by step she told us what to do. In the beginning she told us what to do. I think she knew that children don't remember stuff that well.

Vivien: She gave us the time.

Dami: She was an artist. She told us what she does and what she was going to teach us.

CLPE: What did she teach you?

Dami: The modelling.

Vivien: How to make newspaper roll-up muscles, and how to bend wires.

Dami: And she taught us new words, words we are not familiar with that had to do with muscles. Long words. Contour. Anatomy. Tension. Tendon. Armature.

Vivien: We had to mix colours. It was hard to get the exact right colour for the skin.

Dami: We had special paper to try it out, because if you just go and put it on the model, that's the end of it, you can't take it off.

Dami: Maybe when we go to secondary school we might come across those big words because in primary school you don't really learn big words like that.

Vivien: It might help us when we write about art, we can use these words. It was fun, and hard.

Jasmine: We couldn't go wrong with her directions, the way she explained it. It was hard but surprising. You think it won't be good, and it turns out good! We could even show our new teacher how to do it because she didn't know.

Children said they learned 'real things' that made them appreciate the nuts and bolts of real-world culture. Arts partners gave a clear message to children that nothing comes without hard work and practice. Working with professionals gave children a sense of high standards.

We practiced. Every Thursday [arts partner] N would come down...We just practiced a lot and we got used to it. If you rehearse again and again you get better. And it turned out good. (Kiah, Year 5)

My stories wouldn't be better if [arts partner] J didn't come... I get help from her because she is a storyteller and she's for everybody in the class.....She says everyone in the class is getting better. (Nura, Year 2)

I have to say, I have to be true, it was quite fun but she [arts partner RB] was quite strict... But you couldn't really think about her being strict, you had to leave that alone. You had to concentrate on what you were doing...She wanted all of us to be high-standard. She wanted us to be really good. She was forcing us - actually forcing us - to go high. Even if you were in the middle she would force you to go high. (Dami, Year 6)

World-making

In interviews, children repeatedly spoke of ideas 'coming into' their heads when they worked in creative projects. Children described creative work as a kind of 'day-dreaming', making mental concepts and images visible in artwork, words, play and bodily enactment.

When I write then I'm talking in my head, I'm looking at my work, I'm day dreaming and then I write again...I take lots of ideas from movies I see. Making a story is like pictures in a movie. When I write I think about different pictures from a movie, that helps me to write a story. (Tunde, Year 5)

It kind-of helped us [with writing], because we done the dance and we still got ideas in our head. It was the next day that we wried a bit. The dance did help us a lot. We had to remember. The dance helped us sort-of, well, remember. (Wilf, Year 2)

[In dance] instead of seeing it [mimes reading with eyeglasses], we were seeing it in our heads, not acting it. We were seeing it in our heads...I did see pictures in my head, when I was dancing. I imagined it. Shall I just show you? I imagined it like this [he makes a box-shape with his body on

the floor]...It was more imaginative, thinking how you would do it. That's why I like dance. [Arts partner] G taught us: do not be shy, to dance, and how to be a sort of crab and a sort of snake. (Cal, Year 2)

In interviews, children expressed a growing awareness of how their minds worked in creative modes. They were able to articulate why they enjoyed working in the creative arts. They were also beginning to evaluate their skills and progress.

Once I was drawing the pictures, I started going into a different world and making up all different stories myself. Even though I didn't know the stories, I got my ideas together.. Me and my friends imagined and we kind of went crazy. I really can't help it, whenever I see something I just start day-dreaming and thinking - every time I make a work. (Tashi, Year 5)

I love drawing. I feel like I'm going to another world. When you draw, you can remember the things you've drawn. You can get into it. Artists like RB really get into it. They draw details, not only a simple drawing. (Vivien, Year 6)

Houses I can draw, but not like a house you see here. I draw pretend houses, not normal houses. I might be better now. (Dami, Year 6)

Children would often internalise the 'voice' of their arts partners. They recalled what arts partners told them about how to observe and how to work.

With [arts partner] RB you couldn't go wrong. Even if you did something wrong, she would say, oh you can do this or this with it, you can fix it so it's not a mistake anymore. I'm more confident with art now. Now I know what to do. In class now when we went to the woodland to sketch squirrels, I was thinking about what RB told me about looking and drawing what you see. What I remember RB saying is, 'Look, concentrate'. (Louisa, Year 6 was in Year 5 in the arts project)

Arts partners often conveyed to children a strong sense of audience and purpose for their work.

[When I work now] I kind of half-think of [arts partner] T's ideas and what he says. I kind of picture him in my head and remember the good way to draw...[The purpose of the project] I think it was for T to take away and give to the people he was doing it for. It made me do it a lot better to know it was going to go somewhere where they had to look carefully and they would see it and look at it and do stuff with it. I tried to make it the best thing I've ever done. ...[When I work now] I try to imagine that T is gonna give it to somebody. It gives me - what's

the word? - it gives me better writing. It begins with E - it influences me. (Tashi, Year 5)

If we did it another time, we would all get on with it. We should be able to do it again and improve. For me, it makes me feel that our school is really special for an artist to come and be able to work with us and be able to teach us new things. It makes us feel special. That's how I feel. (Dami, Year 6)

Creativity in a context of making and imagining.

These self-reports show children responding and expanding in situations where their own creativity is being called on by artist partners who are at home with creative ways of working. In these contexts, children begin to access their own powers of imagination and inhabit their own imagined mental worlds. These experiences of exercising their own creativity, within a context of imagining and making, often give them confidence in other contexts, and they feel changed.

There is sometimes a sense of being galvanised and released about these accounts (*'Once I was drawing the pictures, I started going into a different world and making up all different stories myself... Me and my friends imagined and we kind of went crazy'*). Children are freed up, in particular, by the sense that *'it doesn't matter what you do because you can never get this wrong'*. This freedom from a preoccupation with the possibility of error enables them to venture and to experiment.

Children become more aware of how their minds work in this creative mode. Sometimes they experience their own creative imagining as a kind of eidetic imagery on an inner screen (*'Making a story is like pictures in a movie', 'Instead of seeing it, we were seeing it in our heads'*). Sometimes they are conscious of an inner monologue that accompanies their writing (*'When I write then I'm talking in my head...'*). Sometimes, in relation to dance and enactment in particular, their imagining is bodily imagining, experienced through kinetic imagery (*'I imagined it like this' [he makes a box-shape with his body on the floor]*). These self-reports show children becoming more confident about their own artistic abilities and learning how to tap into their creative processes.

The evidence from these self-evaluations shows how important artistic experiences can be in the awakening and development of children's creative thinking. Artistic routes into creative modes of thought are concrete, they involve enactment through the body, play, and the use of symbolic languages (like drawing) that complement and support each other, and enable ideas to be realised through representation. They involve children in 'daydreaming' and storying in ways that resemble their own imaginative play.

In interviews, children would describe two distinct qualities of their learning experiences in creative partnerships. They were aware of their improvements in skills (*'I might be better now'*), and they were also aware of how they felt and thought in these contexts (*'I did see pictures in my head'*. *'It makes us feel special'*). Children's evaluations of their work and experiences always had a strong affective dimension. Artistic ways of working take account of affective learning. They are not - like the subjects of the primary curriculum - completely focused on the cognitive. They often result in an artistic product which can surprise its makers:

' When I see the model I remember the good time we had making it. The group work was good, we all got to do it. You see it and think, we did that?! You don't think it's going to turn out good, and it turns out good!'

Creative arts projects engaged children at an emotional as well as a cognitive level; they developed children's abilities by involving them in work to which they developed a deep personal commitment.

Creative communities

Within some of these classrooms, though not all, artist partners and teachers working with children established, at least for a time, creative communities in which everybody was involved in the creative work. Children often experienced learning in the arts sessions as powerfully different from other school learning, because they felt trusted and 'left to get on with things'. They felt as if they were treated differently by artist partners, as people rather than pupils. As Jahura (Class Study Four) said, *'I felt like a proper person'*. Children learned by watching and imitating, trial and error. They took on demanding roles and were sometimes surprised by their own abilities to fulfil them. They learned to share and collaborate and work together as a creative team.

These successful communities were marked by two apparently opposite tendencies. On the one hand there was a relaxed, easy and informal mood in many creative project sessions, and a general sense that 'you couldn't go wrong'; error was part of learning and practising, and there was time to carry projects through and finish them. On the other hand there was a focused and professional workshop atmosphere in which expectations and standards were high. Children were inducted into particular art forms, into related skills and techniques, and into specialised vocabularies. They did not resent the fact that artist partners were often making difficult demands of them, instead they appreciated the trust that was being placed in their ability to match up with expectations. They reached up to meet the standards they felt were expected of them, sometimes surprising themselves in the process:

'She wanted all of us to be high-standard. She wanted us to be really good. She was forcing us - actually forcing us - to go high. Even if you were in the middle she would force you to go high.'

'...I've never done anything like that, properly'

'When an artist comes, you know he is very good at something. So for me, you have to push yourself upwards to be good enough to let him teach you.'

There was a craft-apprentice model in this way of working which suited many children. They understood and accepted the fact that getting better in a particular art form involves frequent practice. They felt capable and appreciated, they enjoyed what they were doing even when finding it quite difficult (*'It was fun and hard.'*) They appreciated the possibilities of developing their own ideas within a supportive context. They respected the professionalism of the artists they were working with. The fact that these chances to work alongside professional artist-craftsmen were unusual and one-off experiences, probably enhanced children's sense of the specialness of these opportunities.

Children's inexperience in practicum

Teachers and arts partners expressed shock and dismay at many children's lack of skill in basic craft techniques such as cutting and sticking. It was observable that many children are inexperienced in, as one arts partner described it, *"the rhythm of making things"*. Those who were experienced at drawing or modelling inevitably did this at home regularly with parents or siblings.

[At home] I like drawing. I do write on the computer and search around on the computer. If I had that stuff what [arts partner] T helped us with, at home, I would do a story but with a different plot. [At home drawing and writing] It's different cos you ain't got teachers or assistants always helping you or always telling you how to do it. Mum and Dad just let you get on with it. (Jordan, Year 4)

[At home] I make model castles from boxes, and I draw cars that go by, or cars that are in the street, I do a lot of drawing with my parents and my brother.... The last time I did this kind of [3-D sculpture] modelling [in school] was in Year 2. (Joseph, Year 5)

We do collages at home. We do drawings. Our little sisters make houses out of boxes but we don't do that no more...[In school] we hadn't done junk modelling for a long time. Like those models up there [points] in Reception. We hadn't done it for a long time, so we were confused. (Louise and Daniella, Year 6)

The work they [Year 5] did was no better than Reception cutting and sticking. They were like kids in a candy shop, they went wild with the materials. It is no one's fault but the curriculum.

(Year 5 Teacher JA)

So many of them hold the scissors upside down or the wrong way and this makes them discouraged. They say, "I can't do it!" (Arts partner ML on a mixed Year 5/6 class)

Children who learned techniques and skills with arts partners said they feel more confident to attempt other design and art work in class.

We're doing things like chairs and tables and sofas now for our 1930s houses. You know how you fix things together? We're doing lots of fixing things. Like now we know how to make furniture stand up off the floor. (Louise and Daniella, Year 6)

However children did not always have such opportunities to practice or extend their new skills. In interviews at School GM, Year 5 children said they wanted to create sculptures about their current class novel *The Iron Man* using the 3-D modelling techniques they learned with the arts partner in the previous year. Instead, they made charcoal drawings of this character. Year 4 children similarly said they wanted to create a large sculpture based on their current class text, *The Ugly Duckling*, using techniques they learned in the previous year with their arts partner.

Teachers and arts partners did not always take children's inexperience into consideration when planning. Two partnerships realised that children needed extended time to play and practice with materials and techniques before attempting to make a piece of artwork.

Children's inexperience in making and crafting was symptomatic of their inexperience in other 'atelier' ways of working. Children were also observed to be inexperienced in practices that involved drama, role play, movement, discussion, negotiation, experimenting, visualising and drawing. *It took time to induct children into these ways of working.* Arts partner GA said it took six weeks for children to feel comfortable working in a different way to their classroom routines.

In the projects we observed for this research, children rarely moved beyond 'induction' into creative practices. Even where projects ran for three terms, children went on to new teachers in new classes, or to new schools, and did not continue or progress in filmmaking, dance, drama, sculpture or storytelling.

Matt

Matt was four years old when he attended Nursery School C. For three terms he had lengthy (up to two hours) sessions working in an art studio with his teachers and with professional artists. In *Animating Literacy*, his teachers tracked Matt's development in a range of artwork and how his language and communication developed through his drawing and making. When Matt went on to primary school, Nursery Teacher AB contacted his new teacher to find out whether he continued to develop in artwork and communication.

Nursery Teacher AB: Does Matt appear confident when participating in artwork?

Primary School teacher CM: Yes. He likes to talk about his work with others and also ask others questions about their work.

AB: Have you noticed anything interesting or unusual about Matt's art work?

CM: No not really.

AB: Do you think he communicates through his drawings?

CM: No more than any other child.

Matt's prior artistic and language experiences did not appear to count for much in his new primary school. He seemed to be starting from the beginning in a new context.

Lincoln

Lincoln was ten years old when he was in Year 5 at School A. For three terms he worked in drama and filmmaking with arts partner NB. At the end of the school year, a letter from his mother testified to what he had learned in the creative arts project

For my son, his attitude towards literacy has changed from a negative one to a positive one. He came home and related tales of his literacy classes with an enthusiasm that I'd never witnessed before. It really turned things around for him...He felt he was treated as a mature student and allowed to follow through on his own ideas with guidance from the adults. This was a key factor in helping to create a positive experience for him. Thank you for showing this faith and trust in his abilities. I felt the project was able to deliver a message to the students that learning can be fun. What a legacy.

He particularly enjoyed having an acting part in the films but also found being a member of the film crew a pleasurable experience. I heard that

he was described as a 'natural' with a camera. We would like to get him a camera for his birthday to allow him to pursue his new hobby in photography. (Mrs. K.B.)

At the end of the school year, this filmmaking and indeed all creative arts projects at School A were abandoned. The school was in the lowest band of attainment in the local education authority. There was considerable pressure on this school to devote all resources into raising children's attainment. A new headteacher intended to focus on improving academic achievement and raising test scores. Lincoln would have to develop his interest in filmmaking elsewhere. However it was the creative arts project that motivated Lincoln to get involved in school work. His own mother observed his changed attitude (*'It really turned things around for him'*).

It seems as though children may continually be re-inducted into creative arts practices, processes and apprenticeships in school. There is no long-term strategy about their learning and development in the creative arts. Yet, as teachers and arts partners observed, other areas of learning were strongly influenced by children's work in creative arts projects. Children themselves in this chapter have testified to their thinking, awareness and learning as they work in the creative arts.

Being creative in school

Current policy discussions of creativity tend to downplay the role of the arts in children's creative development, as if there were something déjà vu about discussions of creativity in this context, or as if a focus on the arts (as low status subjects in schools) might weaken the case for 'teaching for creativity'. The QCA 'creativity framework', for instance, is closely focused on teaching thinking, on questioning, brainstorming, and critical thinking. It deals in mental processes and abstract learning. It takes much less account of creative activities which are rooted in making, picturing and pretending.

The QCA (2003) model of creativity emphasises skills in divergent thinking, where children can see connections between apparently disparate things, brainstorm ideas and solve problems. In this paradigm, the creative arts hold no special place in creativity. QCA examples in *How to Spot Creativity* offer exemplar lessons in Science, Maths, PE, Music, and Design Technology. QCA states that

Creative pupils are curious, question and challenge, and don't always follow rules. They:

- *ask 'why?' 'how?' 'what if?'*
- *ask unusual questions*
- *respond to ideas, questions, tasks or problems in a surprising way*

- *challenge conventions and their own and others' assumptions*
- *think independently*

(QCA, Creativity, Find It, Promote It!)

QCA goes on to state that *'pupils can't be expected to think and behave creatively in every single lesson'* and that teachers can promote creativity *'by making only minor adjustments to their lesson plans'*. But Ellen Winner (1982), in her study of the psychology of the arts, says the links between brainstorming, divergent thinking and creativity may be tenuous.

Perhaps a clear relationship has not been established between divergent thinking and creativity... because of the fact that the types of tasks used to measure divergent thinking are a far cry from the nature of creative endeavour. The ability to rattle off fifteen unusual uses for a brick, or twenty-five words beginning with b, suggests a mind that is clever, quick and flexible, but not necessarily capable of the kind of deep thought which is generally associated with creativity in the arts or sciences. (Winner 1982)

Our observations appear to confirm this. What we saw in classrooms was not the QCA model of divergent thinking but something deeper, more meditative and reflective. Observations of children at work in creative arts projects - and children's own evaluations - revealed a combination of inward contemplation and outward action that was rare in other curriculum tasks. In effective creative arts projects there was always *'Interaction of Hand and Mind'* (APU op.cit.) and *thought in action*, where children mediated their thinking and their language in the acts of imagining, doing and making.

Self evaluation and assessment

Children's self-evaluations in this chapter, of the ways in which they were changed by the opportunity to work with artists and practitioners, give a powerful insight into how well they understand their own learning. They also demonstrate how explicit young children can be about the kind of learning contexts that work best for them. The quality of the observations is striking, children find language to describe what was happening to them and what was special about these experiences. The opportunity to look back and reflect on their own learning was something that most of them appreciated, their responses were detailed and honest. In any assessment of these projects, and of the learning that went on within them, children's self-evaluations deserve to be given a central place.

Work in the creative arts provided children with symbolic languages for representing thought. Children's hypothesising was rooted in pretending, and

their verbal thought was rooted in other than verbal symbols, in visual or in kinetic imagery. As children took on artistic languages in creative arts projects, they were also taking on the means of representing ideas and feelings. Children's responses in this chapter show how important and rewarding these learning experiences were for them.

Children saw connections between their work in creative arts projects and their literacy work, and they understood the importance of narrative or *story* in both of these processes. Work in a creative arts project heightened literacy learning, making the experience concrete, physical and multimodal.

Writing a story is just like a film because you have to write the story before you can film, so it's kind of just the same, except you're acting it out, you have to do action. (Kiah, Year 5)

The routes into creative thinking established in these projects could be developed in other curriculum areas. Creative thinking can be as valuable in science as in the arts. But for this to happen, the active, concrete and imaginative modes of learning evident here would need to be recognised as valid in other areas of the curriculum. Children's responses in this chapter have made clear how opportunities to learn through doing and making and practising, and through playing, storying and imagining, continue to be important throughout the primary school.

Chapter 9

Issues in assessment and progression

*The children could have got a lot more out of the [filmmaking] project. There was a lot of motivation to write, there was a lot of interest in these story ideas, but then it was the end of the day. It was lost in the follow-up. When I saw their levels of literacy, I felt they were quite low. There is loads of potential but it is very hard to measure. There is long-term work here in terms of their literacy, in terms of the work with each other, on lots of different levels.
(Arts partner NB)*

Problems of assessing creative projects

All teachers and arts partners carried out some form of 'closure' activity at the end of creative arts projects. Sometimes this was in the form of a performance or exhibition. In other classrooms children were encouraged to evaluate projects informally by describing how they felt about them. In one class children made mind-maps to demonstrate their understanding of the sequence and relationship of project elements. Such evaluations focused on children's self-assessment of learning and feelings rather than critical appraisals of final products or performances. Schools celebrated the occasions and opportunities of creative arts partnerships with exhibitions, performances and community evenings.

For the most part, there were no problems in the work of creative arts projects. Teachers and children enjoyed their experiences. However issues arose *for teachers* over whether, and how, to assess this work. Because creative arts projects crossed curriculum boundaries teachers were sometimes unsure where to locate children's learning: was dancing to music and a Benjamin Zephaniah poem recorded in Patois work in PE, music, PSE or literacy? Was enactment of a novel set in Bangladesh work in geography, PSE, drama or literacy? Was a documentary film work in History or English?

In project classrooms and in schools there was some unease at the idea of assessing children's creative work and dissatisfaction with available models of assessment to do so. Some headteachers frankly thought it was unnecessary to assess children's work in creative arts projects.

We don't have to persuade parents of the importance of the arts. Parents are not saying, 'I'm worried that my child isn't doing enough of the basics, they're doing too much art'. They can see in the children's work their achievement in 'the basics', particularly the fantastic writing. And they know how inspired their children are because they talk about the work at home. (Headteacher PB)

I get irritated! Why should we have to prove that the arts work and make a difference? I feel that there will never be 'hard' evidence, only anecdotal evidence. I feel the main impact is on children's motivation and engagement. And also on their speaking and listening, when they have something in front of them it inspires them to talk. I do know that I have hard evidence linking the arts to school attendance. Since we've had arts activities every Friday, attendance is up on Fridays. Before we started the arts activities attendance always went down on a Friday. (Headteacher SA)

There was a general feeling that children's work in creative arts projects could be characterised but not measured, that this work was distinct from the curriculum. Creative arts projects were viewed as opportunities for something exciting and different to happen, even where this was only a one-off experience.

I've seen literacy come to life in these creative arts projects, not just 'Animating Literacy' but animating children!...Parents of children who were at the point of being turned-off have come in and said to me, 'My child can read, my child can write'. (Headteacher SW)

For the most part, work in creative arts projects seemed to exist in a parallel universe to statutory curriculum and assessment frameworks. Teachers who wanted to evaluate children's work in creative arts projects separately therefore had a double-work load.

Assessing literacy outcomes from creative arts projects

By its very title, and by emphasising the potential gains for children's literacy that might result from their involvement in creative arts work, the *Animating Literacy* action research project raised expectations among teachers. With this in mind, several project teachers set out to map children's progress in literacy in relation to children's arts experiences.

Nursery teachers at School C showed children's progression along two parallel tracks: the *Stepping Stones* for *Language and Literacy* and for *Creativity* of the *Foundation Stage Early Learning Goals*. Children worked alongside artists in the Nursery and in a studio outside of school. The teachers tracked children's development in a range of artwork. They also analysed both how children's language developed through their artwork and how they communicated through their artwork.

We are not able to determine whether they have progressed purely because of the project or has this been a natural development? We would like to think that it is a combination of both and that the children are confident artists who are aware that adults value their work and that they will continue to develop their literacy and creative skills concurrently. (Nursery teachers AB and BL)

Two teachers used non-statutory assessment frameworks to show improvements in children's writing as well as their attitudes to and participation in literacy work after creative arts projects. Teacher AH was interested in children's attitudes to literacy which he was able to evaluate at different points in the project with a simple framework (Appendix 2a). Like Teacher GD, he found CLPE Reading and Writing Scales (Appendix 2) a useful measure of children's progress:

Rather than a purely numerical score, the Scales focus on how children move from inexperience to experience. It was this word experience which seemed so important and useful when trying to find ways of helping children to make progress. (Year 6 teacher AH)

Two teachers also showed children's marked gains in Key Stage optional and statutory tests (Appendix 3), and attributed these to developments in children's literacy occasioned by their work in creative arts projects.

The two focus children, Nura and Blessing, moved from achieving below Level 2c at the start of Year 2, to 2a and 2b respectively in their statutory SATs tests. For Nura who only recently learned to speak English, and for Blessing who was at risk of becoming seriously disaffected, these were exciting results. More importantly, however, story telling changed their view of themselves. Both Blessing and Nura will confidently tell stories in class. Blessing says that before [arts partner] JB came, she could not read or write but now she can do both. The whole class benefited from this work, but particularly children who have English as an Additional Language. (Year 2 teacher AO)

Three teachers who also showed gains in statutory tests were unsure how these were related to children's work in the creative arts project.

To answer our initial question, is dance an effective way of supporting the writing skills for Key Stage 1 children? Our answer is no. It is impossible to collect numerical data to support an answer. We can not separate the development and academic achievement of children into defined categories. We can not attribute achievement or progress to one thing. (Year 2 teachers SP, CM and AR)

Teachers felt it was difficult to assess gains in the big shapes of literacy that emerged from work in creative arts projects. Whereas the 'small' shapes of literacy (spelling, punctuation, handwriting) were relatively straightforward to assess, teachers were unsure how to assess the marked improvements they observed in children's attitudes to literacy work and their speaking and listening. They were also at a loss over how to make count, in terms of statutory assessment, improvements in children's collaborative work, and in what Dorothy Heathcote has termed the 'social health of the class'.

The National Curriculum: Speaking, Listening and Drama

In general teachers did not use the National Curriculum's Speaking and Listening attainment targets, a statutory strand of the Programme of Study for English, to show progress in children's language within creative arts projects. Only one teacher (AH) made the development of spoken language, and especially children's ability to ask relevant and thoughtful questions, the focus of his investigation of their language and literacy progress. But the National

Curriculum framework for teacher assessment in Speaking and Listening did not seem to be being used extensively in participating schools. Most teachers readily acknowledged the key role of speaking and listening in children's learning. But speaking and listening is measured only by teacher assessment. The two other strands of the English curriculum - Reading and Writing - are both teacher-assessed and assessed by written examinations that are marked externally and moderated at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment scores for Reading and Writing (but not Speaking and Listening) are published in national 'league tables' of school achievement. This in itself gives Speaking and Listening lower status in the statutory assessment framework. Because project teachers knew speaking and listening 'counts' for less compared with assessment through the SATs, there was far less focus on progress in speaking and listening than on progress in writing.

The attainment target for Speaking and Listening is a part of the assessment of the English Curriculum, rather than any broader cross-curricular language development. It is focused on the development of forms of talk. Although the attainment target draws attention to children's ability to work positively and flexibly in groups, group discussion is rarely envisaged (with rare exceptions) in any other context than the English classroom and is seen as a matter of learning how to use formal group procedures.

At Key Stage 2 children have six areas of attainment: speaking, listening, group discussions and interactions, drama, standard English and language variation. With the notable exception of drama, none of the attainment targets refer to children in any creative art activity. Overwhelmingly, progress in speaking and listening is seen as the ability to adapt communication for increasingly public and formal audiences and to use appropriate language, including standard English.

In Group Discussion and Interaction: to use different ways to help the group move forward, including summarising the main points, reviewing what has been said, clarifying, drawing others in, reaching agreement, considering alternatives and anticipating consequences.

In Listening: to recall and re-present important features of an argument, talk, reading, radio or tv programme, film.

In Speaking: to gain and maintain the interest and response of different audiences.

Because of this, the Speaking and Listening AT would not have provided teachers with sufficient room to record those aspects of children's talk that they viewed as demonstrating really significant steps forward in their learning. These included:

- the increased enthusiasm and confidence that children communicated about their learning within creative projects
- their increased readiness to contribute to group talk
- their increased ability to talk at length about their work and to demonstrate and discuss the features of their projects
- the development of their capacity to evaluate their own work and that of others
- the development of their capacity to reflect on what they had learned

The ATs for Drama (another statutory strand of the Programme of Study for English) are much less extensive than other Speaking and Listening targets and describe children working in role, using different modes to convey stories, themes, ideas and emotions, using dramatic techniques and evaluating performances. Although weighted more towards drama as performance than drama as a process for learning and understanding, these ATs could be used effectively to evaluate the kinds of processes and performances we observed in classrooms where storytelling, drama, enactment and role play were features of children's learning.

The National Curriculum: Foundation Subjects

Several teachers wanted to describe and demonstrate broader improvements in children's attainment as a result of creative projects, but none of the off-the-peg models immediately available to them seemed to fit the experiences and outcomes in classrooms and in children's learning. Yet assessment criteria in a number of National Curriculum subjects could have provided teachers with possible ways in to the assessment of children's work in creative projects.

The Attainment Targets for Art and Design at Key Stage 2, for instance, emphasise the communicative nature of art.

Level 1: pupils respond to ideas...communicate ideas and meanings...describe what they think and feel about their and others' work.

Level 6: pupils explore and assess visual and other information...they develop their ideas, taking account of purpose and audience...they interpret to communicate ideas and meanings, and realise their intentions...they analyse and comment...they explain how their understandings of the context affects their views and practice.

Children are expected to communicate their ideas and meanings through their art work, and to evaluate and reflect on their work. There are specific links made to the Speaking and Listening Attainment Targets in English.

The NC ATs for Physical Education reflect some of the work that we observed in dance and in drama. The PE programme of study discusses skills and practise.

Dance activities are included in Breadth of Study (*children should create and perform dances using a range of movement patterns, and respond to a range of stimuli and accompaniment.*) At Key Stage 2:

AT1: Children describe and comment on their own and others' actions

AT6: They analyse and comment on how skills, techniques and ideas have been used in their own and in others' work, and on compositional and other aspects of performance, and suggest ways to improve.

In these examples talk (and, potentially, writing) is used as a medium for reflection, analysis and self-evaluation. These Attainment Targets, relating to visual art, craft and design, alongside the aspect of the Speaking and Listening attainment target which relates to drama, could have been used to assess children's progress in many of the creative projects that made up *Animating Literacy*. But, perhaps because these projects were seen as separate from the curriculum on offer, teachers did not turn to the ATs in creative subjects when considering how to assess children's learning.

It is quite possible that teachers were less focused on, and less aware of, these criteria because of the government's downgrading of the importance of the 'foundation subjects' which took place in the late 1990s in favour of the three core subjects of statutory testing : English, Maths and Science. The primary curriculum in recent years has narrowed children's opportunities for making and crafting and for work in the creative arts in general. In essence, teachers were simply not used to thinking about assessment beyond the SATs. As teacher SP in School B said:

SATS are the only assessment that matters.

Even had teachers drawn on these Foundation Subject attainment targets, they would have met the problem that these creative projects were one-off projects with a short life, and were not necessarily going to be built on in future. As we observed in Chapter Eight, children would often have liked to have used and extended some of the techniques they had learned through creative arts projects in their subsequent curriculum work, but systematic opportunities for doing this were rarely if ever available. The National Curriculum enshrines children's *entitlement* to art, drama, music and dance, and the National Curriculum Attainment Targets assume that children's educational experience is going to be a matter of progression within a particular discipline. But in most primary schools, the long-term development in the arts that is envisaged in these attainment targets is not allowed for within the timetable. Children have access to these experiences, but development is rare.

Without the possibilities of building on previous creative experiences, where, when and how will the type of talk envisaged in the Art and Design and PE

attainment targets take place? How are children's skills to be developed so that they may talk about their work with increasing sophistication? When the opportunities for crafting, making and doing are limited, so are the opportunities for developing the language to talk about creative work and products.

Alternative frameworks

In addition to the NC ATs, some other frameworks do exist for the assessment of progress in creative subjects, and for evaluating multi-modal texts. Below we analyse some of the more relevant models that could be helpful to teachers embarking on the assessment of multi-modal creative projects.

Look Again! A teaching guide to using film and television with three-to-eleven-year olds (2003) The British Film Institute

The BFI outlines progression in becoming 'cineliterate' and makes links to National Curriculum targets in what BFI calls 'creative subjects' (Art and Design, ICT, Music and Drama), 'investigative subjects' (Science, History and Geography) and 'moral and personal subjects' (PSHE, Citizenship and Religious Education). For the most part however the BFI curriculum is focused on film as its own subject and children becoming 'film literate' through close analysis of moving image texts. Like the Speaking and Listening AT, the focus of the BFI progression levels sometimes touch on but do not fully take in the broader competencies that, for example, Teacher K's class (Class Study Four) developed through their study of film.

Drama in Schools (2003) Arts Council England

Drama in Schools makes links to ATs and assessment descriptors from National Curriculum subjects (Music, Art and Design, English, and PE). It also refers to targets of the National Literacy Strategy, the National Primary Strategy and the QCA guidance on Speaking and Listening. In referring to a number of assessment frameworks in different subject areas, *Drama in Schools* in effect argues for a holistic approach which recognises many different kinds of learning inherent in creative arts work.

Drama in Schools also takes a specialist approach within a broad framework that acknowledges current curriculum realities. It explicitly shows how a wide range of drama work can be taught and learned within the statutory frameworks. This would support teachers in making assessments of work in creative arts projects 'count'.

Talk and reflective discussion have a central place. *Drama in Schools* takes account of the kinds of learning we observed in teacher GD's class (Class Study One) where children used drama to explore and reflect on the themes of a novel. Teacher GD would have been supported by the way in which *Drama in Schools* makes reading a key feature of learning in its specialist area. The framework makes references to literature and poetry. It envisages children

doing a range of reading and writing as they develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of drama.

However *Drama in Schools* is weighted more towards theatre and performance than multi-faceted exploration. Teacher GD's class would have covered few of the level descriptors and attainment targets in Performance which are a significant aspect of the framework's progression.

Drama in Schools - like the National Curriculum foundation subjects - also envisages progression in educational contexts where drama (like art and design, music or dance) may be one-off experiences. *Drama in Schools*, like the National Curriculum attainment targets, assumes that children's educational experience is going to be a matter of progression within a particular discipline.

More than words: multimodal texts in the classroom (2004) UKLA/QCA

Writing tasks formed the bulk of teacher-led follow-up to arts partners' weekly visits to classrooms because children's writing could be evaluated clearly within current assessment frameworks. Yet some of the more multimodal texts that were produced as an integral part of these projects were harder to assess in this way. Teachers may therefore find *More Than Words* useful in beginning to think about to assess multimodal texts.

Using exemplar multimodal texts, *More than words* shows how the statutory assessment criteria for writing may be applied to children's drawings. It includes other elements besides writing in writing assessment (eg drawings, graphic design). However, because it subsumes these elements into 'writing' they cannot be looked at in their own right.

Teachers may find the approach taken in this document risky; they would have to make their own evaluative judgements about children's drawings and about graphic design in children's writing. For example, in experimenting with the application of the writing attainment target to a young child's labelled picture, the authors make claims for children's multimodal texts that may be idiosyncratic rather than intentional (eg a child's 'smudging' effect on a picture to indicate uncertainty, or a child's use of white space as visual 'punctuation').

The framework is focused on the end product of writing. The language to describe progress in writing has not been changed; visual elements are simply added 'ingredients' to be assessed within the invariable framework. Teachers would have to work very hard to overlay this framework on the range of multimodal texts such as collaborative films, storyboards, drawings with an oral story and Powerpoint presentations that we presented here.

Most importantly, because the language of the attainment target is the language of summary assessment, there is no attention to the *process* by which children might learn these multimodal skills of expression. It seems to be

assumed that children are familiar with such texts through their experiences in the world, and that they bring this background knowledge of multimodal forms to producing school texts. Yet our research has shown how important it is for teachers to focus on the process by which children learn, through making, to apply a range of skills to the production of multimodal texts.

The Assessment of Performance in Design and Technology (1991) APU

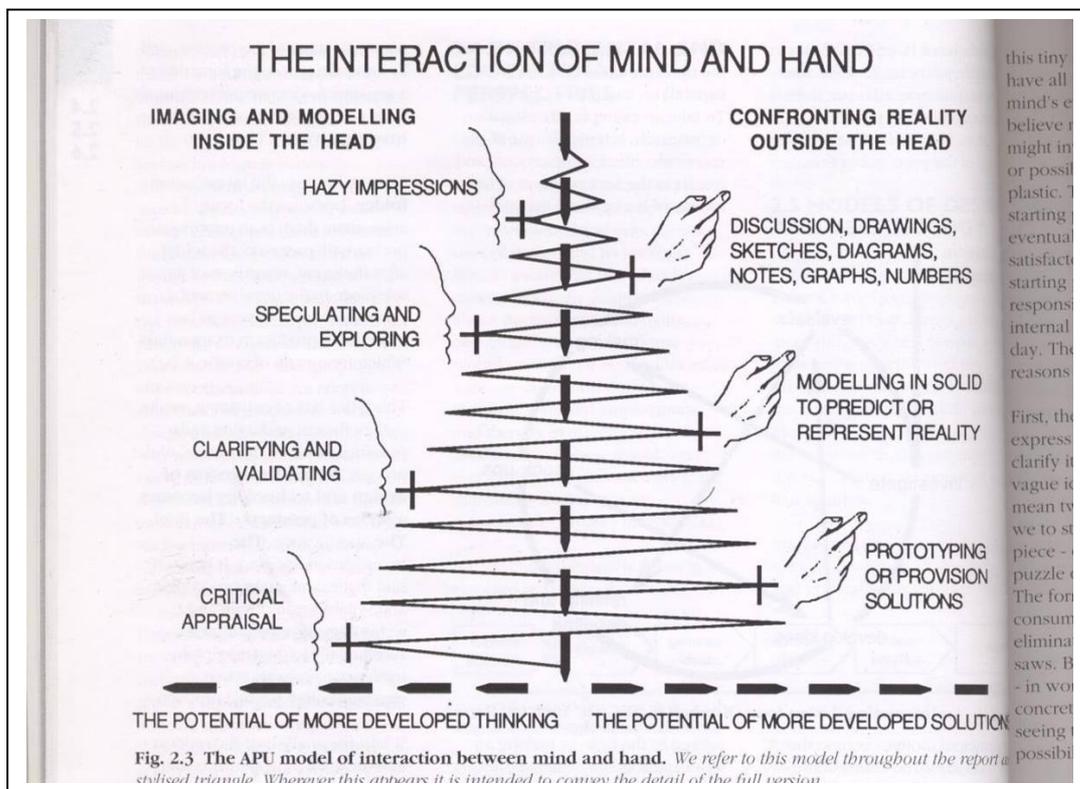
One of the most innovative and exciting ways of assessing progress in creative projects, with due regard to the process of learning as well as to the end product, is the last report produced by the Assessment of Performance Unit. This remarkably forward-looking document offers a most thorough and thoughtful guide to what is involved in making a judgement about pupils' learning in areas which involve them in both thinking and making.

The authors of the report describe why they reject an atomistic model of assessment, one which consists of analysing a competence into components and testing these component bits. Of such atomistic approaches to assessment they say:

'Whilst the analysis of the process into ... discrete elements may have helped teachers to get to grips with the parameters of what is involved in tackling a design and technology task, it has frequently emasculated it by ripping it apart in quite unnatural and unnecessary ways. Assessment in design and technology has too often assumed that you can measure the quality of an omelette simply by measuring (and aggregating) the individual quality of the eggs, the milk, the butter and the herbs....'

This holistic model of analysis developed in this report made thinking and decision-making as important as making. Among the most thought-provoking aspects of the report was its account of the '*interaction* of mind and hand' in any design project. The report's authors recognised that projects that involve making also involve thinking, but also stressed the constant interplay between thinking and making in such projects.

'It is through externalised modelling that complex ideas can be expressed and clarified, thus supporting the next stage of cognitive modelling. It is our contention that this inter-relationship between modelling ideas in the mind, and modelling ideas in reality is the cornerstone of capability in design and technology. It is best described as "thought in action" '.



These twin aspects of capability - action and reflection - were apparent too in the projects that we observed. An assessment model which took into account the thinking behind making, and which gave space to children's capacity to reflect on their own learning, would have provided teachers with a rigorous, yet open, framework for looking at learning in these creative projects. It would have enabled them to record the development over time of children's work within the projects. It would have included children's texts as contributions to an overall project, even when they were not the main outcomes (such as the poems that children at MF wrote as part of their work in drama). It would have enabled children's working talk, and their own self-evaluations in talk or writing, to count towards their assessment. It would also have enabled teachers, guided by the NC ATs, to apply relevant artistic standards to the outcomes of these projects.

The APU model starts with 'hazy ideas' in the head and moves back and forth between doing, making and thinking. It makes thinking and initial, exploratory modelling an explicit part of the working process. We observed this in action, in project classrooms where children made exploratory notes, drawings and storyboards (Class Study Four), exploratory dialogues (Class Study One), sketches and models (Class Study Three). Children used these initial, exploratory modes to think, talk, and move forward in their work.

Phases of learning

As Somers (2000) observed in his work with children in drama, and as our class studies also demonstrate, in creative arts projects a number of forms of learning are taking place. The most easily observed - and measured - is the acquisition of specific skills, but this does not exist in isolation from other elements of the experience.

The multifaceted learning inherent in creative arts projects is what makes the assessment of them so challenging. In the projects observed for this research, children were learning how to 'work' in different creative practices, exploring, talking, creating and reflecting. They were learning skills, techniques and related vocabulary. They were writing about their experiences and their understandings in different modes. They were becoming more aware of they were talking and thinking. They inhabited different phases of learning throughout projects as they became more confident and proficient with art forms. Somers (ibid.) described phases of learning in drama, which we modify only slightly here to describe phases of learning in the creative arts projects we observed:

- 1. Knowledge of the facts, skills and issues that underpin a medium*
- 2. Knowledge of which aspects of what has been discovered have most relevance to children personally*
- 3. Ability to discern which aspects have most relevance for the medium itself*
- 4. Ability to capture material effectively in the medium and communicate it to others*
- 5. Ability to reflect on the process and product and to build this knowledge gained into future work*

Patterns of Learning

These different 'phases' of learning might more appropriately be termed 'facets' or 'strands'. They do not succeed each other so much as interact. For instance, the ability to reflect, as is indicated by the APU Report and in Somers does not come into play only at the end of a creative arts project, but is part of its development. The creative arts projects of this research showed that teachers (and children) need a multifaceted model of learning, in which the different strands interact and inform one another.

The Primary Language Record Learning Continuum (*Patterns of Learning*, CLPE 1991) was devised in order to provide just such a broad map of progress and development. Although originally developed in order to describe progress in language and literacy, it can also be applied to learning across the curriculum,

and in cross-curricular projects. Because of this it offers an obviously appropriate model for assessing creative projects. It consists of five interrelated strands, each of which describes an important aspect of learning.



Confidence and Independence

The first strand, *confidence and independence*, to which we might add involvement and enjoyment, is concerned with children's feelings and attitudes towards their learning.

*I used to be shy. I didn't know how to do stories. I couldn't read. [Arts partner] J came and J taught me how to read, how to write, how to make stories. She gave me confidence.
(B, Year 2)*

Arts partner JB did not actually teach reading or writing. But the young girl speaking here became actively engaged in other school work through her experiences in the creative arts project. She became a confident learner. It was evident from our observations that this strand of the continuum was the one that teachers referred to most frequently when evaluating the gains that children had made in relation to creative projects. Yet they had no way of making these important developments count in their formal assessments.

Experience

The second strand of the continuum concerns a child's *experience* as a learner. As children become more confident, they are able to engage in a broader range of experiences and deepen their learning.

When I went to see these plays and talked to the cast and did the lighting myself in the workshop, it made me think properly. The scriptwriter has to think about all those things. It changed my writing. I used to write 'once upon a time there was a girl' stories, quite imaginative stories. I

thought about it a lot, and the stories that are actually something more interesting are about real life, everyday life.
(S, Year 6)

Our observations have made clear that opportunities for extended and repeated experiences in creative arts projects are crucial if children are to benefit from this type of work.

Strategies

The third strand of the continuum is concerned with *skills and strategies*, the kinds of practical abilities that experienced learners draw upon in going about their learning. In reading, they might include drawing on a range of cueing systems to read an unfamiliar word. In art and design projects, strategies might include relevant craft skills and the appropriate use of materials. Through repeated experiences, children gradually take on a range of strategies and learn to use them appropriately.

Now I know how to make slip, to glaze and fire in the kiln. Our teacher was a professional. Now I have new ideas for every new thing I do. I don't just rely on my old ideas.
M, Year 5 (was in Year 4 in the art project)

You read, you write, you act. You play [drama] games. It makes you better with having different partners, making new friends in class. (K, Year 5)

In addition to strategies that are specific to particular subjects, children acquire general learning strategies which apply more widely, such as the ability to work collaboratively, or to generate ideas through brainstorming. We observed children acquiring many valuable strategies in the course of creative arts projects; a broad model of assessment would have allowed these to be recorded and acknowledged.

Knowledge and understanding

This aspect of learning is the one most heavily emphasised in the National Curriculum, with its focus on 'knowledge, skills and understanding'. Children's knowledge and understanding is developed through creative arts projects in many ways, but the kind of knowledge and understanding of the world that was visibly enhanced by the projects we observed is not recognised in any NC attainment target. For instance, children in several of the projects went outside school to observe and work with adult professionals. They acquired a better understanding of the kind of practice and discipline involved in achieving a professional standard.

I learnt all the different shots - long, wide, cherry picker, bird's eye, close, - how the sound works, how to edit films. It was fun. I also learnt that using the microphone is hard work, standing and holding it. It takes a long time to make films. I appreciate people that make long films now. What sort of things they did to make the shots, how to make the sound blend in, how to make it look good. You know how they made it, so that makes it seem better. (B, Year 5)

This kind of knowledge and understanding was an important part of children's learning, and affected their own ways of working within the projects. Children strived to emulate the professional personas and practices they observed outside of school.

Reflection

The final strand of the continuum has to do with the *ability to reflect* on one's own learning. The habit of reflection is a means of learning that children can use from early on. In order to activate this means of learning, children need to be engaged in reflective conversations and discussions, both in large groups and in pairs, with peers and with adults. In reflection, learners consider what they know and what they need to know. The ability to reflect both on what has been learned and on one's own learning processes were very well developed in some of these creative projects.

I'm not bothered about talking to the group now, about sharing. I realised it doesn't matter if I get it wrong, I might learn something. (N, Year 5)

These qualities were evident in Teacher GD's classroom (Class Study One) where children learned about the themes of a novel by linking it to their own experiences. They were evident in Teacher AH's classroom (Class Study Two), where questioning was at the centre of children's involvement in creative projects and was an important prelude to their writing. They were also strongly present in Teacher KR's classroom (Class Study Four), where the painful process of learning to work together, and to evaluate their own progress, was such a striking feature of the achievement of this class. Again, this is a mode of learning which needs to be more fully acknowledged in any model of assessment, and which is greatly encouraged by a focus on children's self-evaluations.

Gaps in assessment and progression

In this chapter we have examined different assessment models in the context of children's experiences in creative arts projects. Only teacher assessment seemed to fairly reflect the extent of children's processes, work and thinking. This type of assessment demands observant, sensitive teachers who are able to describe children in words and not as numbers.

Arts partners working in classrooms can be natural assessment partners for teachers. In our research, arts partners such as SS, NB, JB and TM frequently evaluated the responses and progress of individual children and groups. Their assessments influenced teacher perceptions and teacher knowledge of children.

There is a particular role for this type of assessment in the Foundation subjects (Art and Design, Design Technology, Music, PE, ICT, History and Geography) because they are only evaluated by the teacher rather than exterior, statutory tests. It is clearly valid and valuable in the Core subjects (English, Maths, Science) as well. Yet, as we have shown elsewhere, teacher assessment is under-valued in the current statutory system (Safford, O'Sullivan & Barrs 2004). Teachers could look more closely at the language of the Foundation Subjects' attainment targets to evaluate children's work and progress in creative arts projects.

We have also examined the lack of progression and continuity in children's creative arts experiences. This is connected to issues of evaluation and assessment. The reputation of schools and individual teachers stands or falls on children's attainment in Core subject tests; teachers are necessarily concerned with children's continuity and progression in these subjects. But the National Curriculum also enshrines entitlement to the arts and the Foundation subjects, and therefore schools should also ensure children's continuity, progression and achievement in these curriculum areas.

Chapter 10

Findings and conclusions

*I've wrote stories before, stories on me, not imagining stuff what I would do and gonna do. This is better, because you're imagining what you might want to do later on in life. Or you might want to do what you are imagining. You're not writing the story of what you already done. You're writing the story of what you would like to do. Everyone's is different from each other, cos we all have different imaginations.
(Jordan, Year 4)*

Research findings

Throughout this enquiry we have been examining how children, teachers and arts partners work together in creative projects in classrooms. The projects that have been the subject of our observations had very different starting points, contexts and outcomes. Teachers and arts partners sometimes related closely to each other and had strong common understandings; sometimes, however, they had conflicting aims, beliefs and roles. In several schools, children showed themselves to be capable of responding sensitively and thoughtfully to work in the creative arts. But what was the influence of all this work on their other learning? Did their successful experiences of creative work, as is often suggested, lead to improvements in the rest of their school learning, especially in language and literacy? We returned to our research questions.

Research question one

- *How does children's work in the creative arts influence their language and literacy development? Are there underlying patterns across creative arts forms?*

World-making

Two strands of language are observable when children work in the creative arts. There is the language that is used in real-world contexts, where children are learning and using professional skills, developing professional knowledge and a new vocabulary, communicating with arts practitioners, and performing or exhibiting in public spaces. And there is the language children draw on as they create imaginary worlds, in artwork, music, movement, enactment, stories and writing - all of which world-making is mediated through talk.

These two strands come together as children weave imaginary and real-life work and experiences together in creative arts projects. They create art, dance, films and stories from explorations and enactments in imagined worlds. They describe, discuss, display or perform their work to audiences. These strands of literacy tap into authentic thoughts and feelings of children as whole people. As arts partner SS said, *"Children are not sub-human, they are very human."*

When children work in the creative arts, they look both inwards and outwards: inwards to interior, imagined worlds and outwards to real, but often unfamiliar, worlds. They engage in work that is simultaneously reflective and active, imaginative and practical. The simultaneous inward- and outward-looking, active and contemplative nature of work in the creative arts can be seen to mirror the acts of reading and writing. Literacy is a *'particularly efficacious way to make worlds'* (Frank Smith 1984) and is an essential means of organising ideas and communicating with others; literacy is a creative achievement.

Inhabiting symbolic worlds

In the Class Studies and in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 we examined many forms of world-making, where children imagine and build worlds in different media and in many modes: dance, drawing, crafting, modelling and painting.

Once I was drawing the pictures, I started going into a different world and making up all different stories myself. Even though I didn't know the stories, I got my ideas together (Tashi, Year 5)

We were seeing it in our heads, not acting it. We were seeing it in our heads...I did see pictures in my head, when I was dancing. I imagined it. (Cal, Year 2)

In my box the yellow bit is a playground. Snake children will play there. (Ruby, age 3)

My drawing is a mouse, in a bed, I make a bed for my mouse, a telly, he'll watch telly, some cheese, he'll be in his bed, a big circle bed, a cover, a pillow, that's the brother mouse. (Shaidon, age 3, drawing)

The words just come into your head and it gives you a good picture. (Max, Year 5)

We showed how these symbolic worlds can be transformed into worlds built through words, worlds realised through storytelling, narration, drama and in writing. In Chapter 7, children created 'storyworlds' first as drawings, and through enactment, making and crafting. They used these symbolic modes before they move into writing. Similarly, the older children in School DP (Class Study Four) created storyworlds in role play and then in storyboards; these became film scripts and finally films based on their real lives at school. Children in School MF (Class Study One) entered the world of a novel set in Bangladesh through drama and artwork; they were able to develop unique, continuously evolving dramatic dialogues and writing.

Locating oneself in real worlds

In the Class Studies we have also seen how children begin to locate themselves in the real world through their experiences in creative arts projects. Children learn from professional artistic practitioners. They observe the way they approach their work in rehearsal and in performance. They try out some of these roles. They feel a sense of expertise and responsibility. Through these experiences they sometimes begin to voice their aspirations. They appreciate the hard work and practice that goes into a professional performance. They begin to understand how art is produced. They see that enjoying your work can be life-enhancing.

All my friends in the class, when they grow up, they want to be on camera. Some of them want to be an actor. Some of us want to be a film crew. I would like to be a director.[arts partner] NB said I would be a great director. During the filming...I helped her out. I sorted things out and she said I would be a good director. (Jahura, Year 5)

[When I see my film] I'm a bit excited but then I'm a bit shy and I don't want people to see it. But if you make a film that's what you have to do. If you're a real actor, people have to see your talents. (Kiah, Year 5)

I would not like to be an artist, but I would just like to be a normal person who can draw anytime. When you do drawings, you can put them around your house. (Dami, Year 6)

In creative arts projects, children see real-life expertise and roles and begin to understand how different roles (e.g. lighting, sound, scripts, storyboards) contribute to a group effort. Children like M. in Year 6 (Class Study 2) can begin to imagine their futures, as a 'sound man' or in any number of roles. As Artist O told M. and his classmates following an opera workshop and performance:

In the opera there are hundreds of jobs. Painting sets, designing, singing, wardrobe. There are jobs for all of you out there.

Teachers observe children responding positively to the real-life, three-dimensional, active, social and contemporary forms of literacy in creative arts work. It is work that is purposeful and has an audience in mind.

The whole project is building towards something...all the watching of films, all the writing they're doing, all the drama - it's all leading towards a particular goal. (Teacher KR)

Through work in the creative arts, children understand better the uses of literacy. They show increased awareness of the purposes and audiences of literacy. They also show improved attitudes to school literacy and write with more interest and commitment, because their creative arts experiences give them something to think, talk and write about.

Research question two

- *What are favourable contexts and effective processes for children's language and literacy development in creative arts projects?*

A shared professional vision

In Chapter 3 and in the Class Studies we show how the collaborative teacher-artist relationship makes creative arts partnerships work effectively. Successful projects do not appear to be dependent on length of time or on school context. Teacher GD and arts partner SS (Class Study One) worked together for a single term. Teacher KR and arts partner NB (Class Study Four) worked in isolation from the school. Yet in both cases the gains for children were marked. These partnerships made children's learning the central focus of the project. The Class Studies, that are very different in many ways, nevertheless show how successful projects hinge on a shared vision of how children learn and a wide interpretation of what constitutes 'work' and literacy.

We need to create wider structures for learning, for the kinds of literacy that excite me: debating, understanding, negotiating, listening, communicating, literacy in the broadest sense of the word. (Arts partner GA)

A workshop atmosphere

Work in the creative arts can re-define what constitutes 'work' in the classroom. The Class Studies reveal effective pedagogy taking place alongside many different art forms: in all these cases the projects had created a 'workshop' atmosphere where everyone was engaged and busy, where teaching promoted patterns of concentration, confidence, collaboration and ownership. In the Class Studies of Chapter Four we showed how work in creative arts can be guided by process, by product, or both; work can be an exploration that leads to a 'performance of understanding'.

Children deepen their understanding of creative arts practices by returning to and expressing themes in a range of different modes. They return to the drawing board, re-think and re-work ideas, moving between modes and media in drawings, models, enactments, storyboards, notes, dialogues and drafts. They grow increasingly able to reflect on their learning through these frequent opportunities for what the APU (1991) has called as "*the interaction of hand and mind*". There is time to think and imagine, to go back and forth between ideas and models. Concepts and images in children's heads are realised in two and three dimensions, and in writing.

Thinking through talking

Throughout this research, children's talk emerges as the cornerstone of their thinking in creative arts work. Their talk is promoted in a wide range of contexts: in drama and role play, in exploratory brainstorming and thinking time, in group work, in collaborative writing, in reflective discussion.

Experiences of work in creative arts lead to more abundant and reflective talk, and develop children's thinking. In Chapter 5 we analyse the wide range of children's talk in creative arts work and examine how this talk underpins their learning. The quality of children's talk is a significant factor in the development of their thinking and in the quality of the outcomes of creative projects. In Chapter Four we compare children's language and literacy development in different creative arts projects. Children in Class Studies One, Two and Four were given extensive opportunities to talk through what they were learning throughout the projects. They were able to describe their work and their understanding in great depth and detail. Where the energy of creative arts activities was channelled into purposeful talk, we observed the general level of talk in the class becoming more explicit and aware. Children were more capable of discussing technical features of their work, and readier to share deeper responses. Children in Teacher GD's drama project (Class Study One), Teacher AH's theatre arts project (Class Study Two) and Teacher KR's filmmaking project (Class Study Four) demonstrated an enhanced ability to describe and reflect on their experiences.

Children value the reflective aspect of talk in the creative arts. Opportunities for talk in creative arts projects call on children, as Danny in Year 6 said, 'to think MORE'. Children's own evaluations (*I'm talking in my head...I'm seeing it in my head...I start going into a different world...*) are evidence that their work in the creative arts goes beyond the 'divergent thinking' model of creativity (QCA 2003) and moves into more reflective, introspective and imaginative modes. Through this talk, children become more aware of their own thought processes. In Chapter 8 children also express awareness of direct and indirect learning in their creative arts work. Children attribute their improvements in reading, writing and speaking, and their feelings of enhanced confidence and understanding to their experiences in creative arts projects.

The role of texts

Literature, poetry and stories provided cohesive contexts and memorable paths to work in the creative arts. In some projects, a focus on literature brought together reading, writing, making, crafting and bodily enactment in a holistic way that also addressed curriculum demands. Powerful texts equally inspired the teacher and the arts partner and generated deep responses from children; work around texts also had the advantage of drawing on the expertise of the teacher. Creative arts projects gave children opportunities to explore 'between the lines' of books through talk, drama, movement and visual artwork. As Joseph in Year 5 (Chapter 7) said, '*The thing that helps me do art is my reading*'. Where children had opportunities to move between the world of the story and physical, symbolic manifestations of the storyworld in art, dance and enactment, this process deepened their understanding of both the text and the artistic process.

Research question three

- What is appropriate assessment of children's work in creative projects?

Ways forward in a fragmented curriculum

We have shown how creative arts projects can highlight anomalies in the primary curriculum and its related assessment frameworks. The Class Studies of Chapter 4, and Chapters 5 and 6, show the many different kinds of technical, language, literacy and affective learning that take place simultaneously in these projects. Teachers often feel it would be inappropriate to assess children's work in an 'aesthetic limbo' and tend to evaluate finished products in the context of children's conception, planning, development, problem-solving and reflection. But within these projects teachers struggled to map the available assessment criteria onto their observations and evaluations.

Teachers and arts partners felt that appropriate evaluation ought to be in keeping with the nature of children's work. Product-orientated work may demand a more straightforwardly criterion-based assessment. Process-orientated work may require an evaluation that is tentative and exploratory in character, taking place at many points during the creative project. Appropriate evaluation would also acknowledge and value children's talk and the role this plays in learning.

In Chapter 9 we evaluate models of assessment in the context of creative arts projects. The National Curriculum's *Speaking and Listening* and *Drama* attainment targets (both in the Programme of Study for English) offer pathways to assessment of children's work and talk for learning in the creative arts. Likewise the attainment targets for the Foundation Subjects (Art and Design, Design and Technology, Music and PE) reflect the kinds of talk and learning that take place. However these assume repeated and progressive exposure to creative arts experiences and a long-term strategy for children's development and learning in creative arts practices.

Alternative assessment models could potentially support teachers in evaluations that would reflect the nature of children's work. The APU's *Interaction of Hand and Mind* and the *PLR Learning Continuum* offer possibilities for appropriate assessment of children's learning and development in these projects.

Implications of the research findings: creating the atelier in the literacy classroom

Effective creative arts projects promote the direct teaching of specialist skills and language. Children are then given responsibility to use their new language and skills to explore, practise and make something new. Like the African master tailor who explained to ethnographer Jean Lave (1990, 1991):

When I want to teach some one how to make a suit, first I show the whole suit. I don't show just one button.

effective arts partners model and demonstrate the big shape of the work before children begin making the parts. Children are then allowed to 'get on with it' and work independently, while being held to high standards. Children see their own efforts in the context of high-quality products (in film, theatre, dance, visual art, drama or storytelling) and in the professional, often inspirational persona of the arts partner. In creative arts projects children develop autonomy and expertise as they aspire to and emulate these practices and personas. Children speak of feeling that they are doing 'proper' work in these projects.

These ways of working in the creative arts can serve as models for work in literacy. In this research we have shown workshop/apprenticeship patterns of working taking place in drama explorations, writing workshops, multimedia sessions, filmmaking groups and storytelling projects. Eliot Eisner (2004), like Donald Schön (op.cit.), has called for an 'atelier' style of working to inform educational practice:

It may be that by shifting the paradigm of education reform and teaching from one modelled after the clocklike character of the assembly line into one that is closer to the studio or innovative science laboratory might provide us with a vision that better suits the capacities and the futures of the students we teach.

Teacher AH in his second year of teaching was able to translate the 'atelier' of creative arts projects into a 'writing atelier' in the classroom. He observed that "Everyone was working at their level. Everyone was writing." Teacher GD had been working in this way for many years.

I believe you need to create an atmosphere where children want to learn and can learn. Then you have to let them be independent, to play and practice what they are doing. As a teacher, you don't have to be 'teaching' every minute of the time. You have to let them get on with it...It has to be relevant. They have to enjoy it. They need time to absorb it. (Teacher GD)

In these projects teachers were able to emphasise doing and making, they worked and talked alongside children in shared enterprises, and they drew on children's interests and aspirations for meaningful literacy learning. But for some teachers this way of working involved considerable risk.

For me as a teacher it was amazing to see how children talk to each other and to adults about their work, there was a huge amount of talk, building up their confidence as linguists and as writers. In objective-led teaching I wasn't noticing a lot of things. It has given me confidence to reflect on how children learn. It has implications for how I adapt the curriculum to the children in my class. I have to be flexible. But it's scary. You feel you need things all planned.
(Teacher AO)

The creative arts as a driving force for school reform go beyond recent preoccupations with 'creativity' in education (see Chapter 7, Being Creative in school). The studio-like settings for arts activities serve as a model for learning environments more generally: these settings provide children with autonomy within a creative community. The apprenticeship-like model of learning made possible within these settings recalls Jerome Bruner's '*mutual leaning community*' which '*provides opportunities for emulation, offers running commentary, provides 'scaffolding for novices, and even provides a good context for teaching deliberately*' (Bruner 1993).

Beyond entitlement

We have indicated how assessment is affected by issues of continuity and progression in the curriculum as a whole. Our observations suggested that work in creative arts projects is rarely planned as part of a continuous developmental experience. Teachers were not seen to turn to the Foundation Subjects' Programmes of Study as a context for evaluating these projects and this indicates the current lack of status of these Programmes of Study in schools. Children's progress through the Foundation subjects, and how work in creative projects might contribute to it, was hardly ever discussed.

Through organisations such as Creative Partnerships, it is clear that there has been an explosion of interest and activity in school-based creative projects. The stated intention of official creativity initiatives is to transform learning in classrooms, but the impact of these projects on the wider arts curriculum is not evident from our observations. Although there is currently widespread discussion of 'cultural entitlement' and of the right of all children to have access to experiences like these, there is much less general discussion of children's entitlement to a full arts curriculum and how it is to be achieved.

Schools and teachers may continue to follow narrow definitions of literacy, 'work' and assessment even while they engage enthusiastically in creative arts projects. The double messages now coming from government are experienced

as a double workload by teachers, who must continue to emphasise the Core subjects and focus on preparing children for statutory tests while simultaneously making space for more creative ways of working. What they are learning through these experiences cannot always be put into practice more widely or integrated with their normal curricular planning. Until there is a profound change in the assessment systems, creative projects will continue to create extra pressures on teachers who already feel that their time is restricted.

Glimpsing the impossible

Jerome Bruner (1993) was one of many international visitors who made the trip to one of the most famous centres of early years education: the small city of Reggio Emilia in north Italy. The work of the pre-schools of Reggio Emilia has been recognised around the world. But Bruner confessed afterwards that he wasn't prepared for what he found. This is what he wrote:

What struck me about the Reggio pre-schools was how they cultivated imagination and in the process, how they empowered the children's sense of what is possible... Imagination is what rescues us from the obvious, from the ordinariness of life. Imagination turns fact into conjecture.

What I saw was not just individual imaginations working separately. We were involved collectively in what is probably the most human thing about human beings - what psychologists call 'intersubjectivity': figuring out what others have in mind.... The cultivation of this gift requires a climate of mutual respect and support. It is that kind of respect that is the hallmark of successful schools.

Reggio Emilia has often been taken to be paradigmatic of a creative learning community. Its schools have, of course, the advantage of being schools for young children and do not therefore have to temper their creative approaches with strategies designed to raise attainment in tests. Reggio nursery schools, like the early years establishments in Pistoia, Tuscany, are beautiful learning environments where children are involved in common creative projects, often based on their local environment.

Both Bruner and Howard Gardner, another visitor, have drawn attention to the social nature of the learning in Reggio schools, and the joint nature of these children's imaginative projects. Reggio classrooms often look like spacious artists' studios, a great priority is laid by teachers on providing the optimum conditions for creative work. The work that goes on in them, as documented in *The Hundred Languages of Children* (Malaguzzi et.al 1987), merits the NACCCE (2001) term '*applied imagination*', as Bruner's account suggests.

In Reggio Emilia, the relationship of arts practitioners (*atelieristas*) and teachers (*pedagogistas*) is central to constructing the identities of schools.

Pedagogy and practice are based on an interdisciplinary approach taking into account the different fields of teacher and artist knowledge. Their dialogue offers a way to approach and interact with other worlds outside of the school. Personal and professional growth results from reflecting on the children's work, from giving visibility to the processes of both children and adults. The professional encounter between teacher and artist is reflected in the children's work.

Children are the first to make you shift toward the impossible...this is an enormous responsibility carried by the teacher: what instruments, equipment, 'back-packs', do you have...so that learning is an occasion of growth for you as well as for the children, and so that the children build an awareness of learning and knowing? (Emilia teacher in Malaguzzi et.al.1987)

Our research has examined this type of encounter in the UK, where work in creative arts enables children to engage in practical and imaginary work, to play, practice and become confident with concepts, techniques and media. An atelier/workshop model of education creates time and space for children to practice and play in literacy and in all curriculum areas.

Children need to think about things. They have to play, because play is practice. Sometimes you need to practice for a long time. You practice, then you make a conceptual leap. If you look at Picasso's sketchbooks for Guernica, you see him preparing. He has three sketchbooks of horses' heads. They get more and more abstract. I am sure that he was learning about that horse he wanted. By the time he came to paint it on the big canvas, he did not have to think. He had practiced and played with it. As a teacher you need confidence to let children to that. (Year 5 teacher GD)

There is no quick or simple transition from creative arts to literacy, but the creative arts, because they are fundamental ways of symbolising meaning, provide a powerful context for developing language and literacy. In effective projects, teachers and arts partners have created contexts for learning within which language and literacy can develop and flourish, alongside other forms of symbolising. Where reading, writing, talk, and the creative arts in classrooms enable children to tell their stories, to communicate and make meaning in real and imagined worlds, the literacy that emerges is complex and diverse. The challenge is to make this work count more widely. The interest currently being shown in 'creativity' in education should extend to more creative approaches towards the curriculum and its assessment.

In children's work in the creative arts in classrooms, like the teacher from Reggio Emilia, we can often see a shift towards 'the impossible' in education, in which children's learning is 'an occasion of growth' for adults too. In the

most effective projects we have documented, we have observed the creativity of teachers, children and arts partners combining to create experiences within which all partners have grown, learned and benefited.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Advice to artists working with under children under age 5

- Don't be afraid of them, they are just slightly anarchic small people
- Do listen to them they have something to say
- Don't rush them, they need time to think
- Try different ways of asking them questions, they may not answer you because they don't know what you mean. When our children were once asked by a poet "what is poetry?", one child, after much consideration, answered "Cheese"!!!
- Children often take you literally, listen to yourself too. E.g. you may mean wait there for the moment, when you say "wait there for the present", but the child listening to you may think they are waiting for an actual present !
- Believe in the children's abilities, don't make decisions about what they can and can't do, allow them to experiment with their own creativity.
- Don't be too directive, take your lead from the children.
- Ask teachers for advice and help, we know the children well and have lots of skill in supporting them.
- We do have health and safety issues as well as policies on behaviour and risk assessment. If you have any concerns do ask, but ultimately it is our responsibility to protect you and the children.
- Not all children are easy, don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it.
- We want you the artists for your skill, knowledge and expertise.
- We want you to teach us, teachers and pupils, new skills.
- We want you to inspire us.
- We want your enthusiasm.
- We want to work with you and we want you to work with us.
- Be flexible, working with this age can be unexpected and involve some rapid rethinks.
- Mistakes are good, it is the way we all learn.
- MOST OF ALL enjoy yourselves, relax and have fun, we do and so do the kids.

Appendix 2 CLPE Writing Scale 2 Ages 8-12 years		© CLPE	
Level	Description	Children in October 2003	Children in June 2004
1 Inexperienced writer (NC Level 1-2c)	Experience as a writer may be limited: may be composing orally with confidence but be reluctant to write or avoid taking risks with transcription. Needing a great deal of help with developing own texts (which are often brief) and with the writing demands of the classroom. Relying mainly on phonetic spelling strategies and memorised words, with few self-help strategies. Seldom using punctuation to mark meaning.	Janice, Tanzir, Antonette, Michila, Paulina, Mohammed, Manuella	Janice
2 Less experienced writer (NC Level 2b-a)	Increasingly willing to take risks with both composition and transcription. Writing confidently in certain genres (eg simple narratives) and trying out different forms of writing, drawing on experience of the models available. May find it difficult to sustain initial efforts over longer pieces of writing. Mainly using language and sentence structures that are close to speech. Spellings of familiar words are generally correct and attempts at unfamiliar spellings reveal a widening range of strategies. Using sentence punctuation more consistently.	Danielle, Steven, Tiago, Conor, Nathan, Jake, Emmanuel, Kyron, Nourin, Chau-Long	Danielle, Steven, Tiago, Tanzir Pauline Antonette Michila Manuella
3 Moderately experienced writer (NC Level 3)	Shaping writing in familiar genres confidently, drawing on experience of reading. Widening range of writing and taking on different forms more successfully. Aware of audience and beginning to consider appropriateness of language and style. Learning to revise own texts with support and to link and develop ideas coherently. Spellings of words with regular patterns are mainly correct and attempts at unfamiliar words show a growing knowledge of visual patterns and word structures. Using sentence punctuation appropriately.	Brandon, Glory, Shahina, Isley, Billy, Alejandro, Sorcha, Nara, Sharon, Samara, Isley	Brandon, Glory Shahina, Isley Connor, Jake Kyron, Mohammed
4 Experienced writer (NC Level 4)	A self-motivated writer who can write at length and is beginning to use writing to refine own ideas. Developing own style and range as a writer but needing support with the structuring of more complex narrative and non-narrative forms. Likely to be reflecting on writing and revising texts for a reader, choosing language for effect or to clarify meanings. Using standard spelling more consistently and drawing on effective self help strategies. Increasingly able to use punctuation, including paragraphing, to organise texts.		Billy Alejandro Nara Samara Nathan, Emmanuel Nourin Chau-Long
5 Exceptionally experienced writer (NC Level 5)	An enthusiastic writer who has a recognisable voice and uses writing as a tool for thinking. Making conscious decisions about appropriate forms and styles of writing, drawing on wide experience of reading. May show marked preferences for writing in particular genres. Able to craft texts with the reader in mind and reflect critically on own writing. Using mainly standard spelling. Managing extended texts using organisational structures such as paragraphing and headings.	Danny	Danny Sorcha Sharon

Appendix 2a Assessment of children's attitudes to writing
(with thanks to Gemma Moss, Institute of Education)

Children in October 2003

Can and Do 7 boys 8 girls	Can but Don't 4 boys
Can't but Try 4 boys 5 girls	Can't and Don't 1 boy 1 girl

Children in June 2004

Can and Do 11 boys 11 girls	Can but don't 1 boy
Can't but try 2 boys 2 girls	Can't and don't 1 girl

(Two boys left the school over the course of *Animating Literacy*)

Appendix 3 National Curriculum Attainment Levels

<i>Child</i>	NC level for writing October 2003	NC level for writing June 2004	* indicates progression of more than two- thirds of a levels *
A	3b	4a	*
A	2c	3a	*
B	3a	4a	*
B	3b	3a	
C	3b	4a	*
C	3b	4a	*
D	3c	3a	
D	5	5	
E	3c	4a	*
G	3b	4c	
I	3a	4b	
J	3c	4c	*
J	1b	2a	*
K (focus child)	2c	4b	*
M	-	4c	*
M	1a	3b	*
M	2c	3b	*
N	3b	4a	*
N	3b	4a	*
N	4C	-	
N (focus child)	3b	4a	*
P	2a	3b	
R	3C	-	
S	3b	4b	*
S	3b	4c	
S	3a	5	*
S	3b	5	*
S	2b	3a	*
T	1a	2a	*
T	3c	3c	

Appendix 4 Interview Schedules

2) Teachers

Your professional background (qualifications, years teaching, where, year groups, curriculum responsibilities, INSET in literacy, INSET in creative arts)

How did (arts partner) come to be working in your class?

Describe working relationship with (arts partner). What do you do? What does (arts partner) do?

Describe how you plan, carry out (arts) activities, evaluate them.

What do you enjoy most about working with (arts partner)?

Anything you don't like about partnership?

Do you think you have a different view of the children as learners than (your arts partner)?

Do you think you have a different relationship with the children than (arts partner)?

What have you learned from working with (arts partner)?

Has this partnership presented any challenges to your own ways of working?

When you observe children in (art form), how do they seem to be as learners? What are they learning? Do you observe certain skills, knowledge, understanding? Are they engaged, involved?

What aspects of (art form) do you think are significant for children's learning (eg observation, listening, tactile, movement, enactment)

Describe a session that you think had a positive impact on subsequent learning or class work.

Describe a session that you think went particularly well, and why.

Do you observe links between children's learning and work in (art form) and their literacy work? Any particular links with reading, writing, speaking and listening?

What are the similarities between children's learning and work in (art form) and children's work in reading, writing, language?

What are the differences between children's learning and work in (art form) and children's work in reading, writing, language?

How are you assessing work in the creative arts? Any similarities or differences to your ways of assessing in reading, writing, language development?

What kind of professional development in this area do you think would help you?

3) Arts partners

Your professional background and current partnership work in school.
(any particular training for working with children, in schools)

How did you come to be working in this class?

Describe working relationship with teacher. What do you do? What does (teacher) do?

Describe how you plan, carry out (arts) activities, evaluate them.

What do you enjoy most about working in class?

Anything you don't like about partnership?

Do you think you have a different view of the children as learners than (teacher)?

Do you think you have a different relationship with the children than (teacher)?

What have you learned from working with (teacher)?

Has this partnership presented any challenges to your own ways of working?

When you observe children in (art form), how do they seem to be as learners? What are they learning? Do you observe certain skills, knowledge, understanding? Are they engaged, involved?

What aspects of (art form) do you think are significant for children's learning (eg observation, listening, tactile, movement, enactment)

Describe a session that you think went particularly well, and why.

Do you observe links between children's work in (art form) and their literacy work? Any particular links with reading, writing, speaking and listening?

What are the similarities between children's learning and work in (art form) and children's work in reading, writing, language?

What are the differences between children's learning and work in (art form) and children's work in reading, writing, language?

How do you assess work in the creative arts?

What kind of professional development in this area do you think would help you?

4) Children

Tell me about yourself, how old you are, what year you are in.

How many in your family? Ages? Whereabouts you live?

Tell me about your hobbies (movies, music, sport, games, reading?)

Do you have a Computer at home, what do you do on it, how long do you go on it?

Tell me the Languages you can speak, read and write.

Do you go to Saturday school?

What are you reading now, at home

What kinds of writing do you do at home

What about people in your family, what kinds of reading and writing do they do?

What kinds of artwork (drawing or modelling) do you do at home?

Are you in any clubs or classes (in music, computer, art, dance, sport) after school?

What are you learning about now in literacy at school?

Do you think you're a good reader?
Do you think you are a good writer?

Describe activities with (arts partner). When do they happen, where. What does (arts partner) do? What does your teacher do?

What do you learn about in these lessons? Describe a lesson you liked very much, and why. Had you done anything like it before?

Anything you dislike about lessons with (arts partner)?
Anything that puzzles you?

Have you told your family at home about what you are doing with (arts partner)? What do they think about it?
Do you do anything like (arts work) at home?

When you do work with (arts partner), do you ever think about this when you do other school work, such as writing or reading?

Do you think working with (arts partner) has helped you in your reading or your writing?
Do you think work with (arts partner) helps you with any other kinds of school work?

What was the best part about working with (arts partner)?
What was the hardest part?

1) Headteachers

Your professional background

Describe current partnerships and working relationships with arts partner

Any other links to artists/arts organisations in the community?

How are (arts partner) deployed/managed across school

Describe the value of partnerships.

Can you point to indicators of positive effects? (eg attendance, behaviour)

Does work in creative arts make a difference to children's learning?

What links are there between arts and the curriculum

What is your role in promoting/developing this?

Your view of how children's work in creative arts interacts with work in reading, with writing, with speaking and listening?

How is literacy taught/managed across the school?

What have you learned from working with an arts partner?

What kinds of professional development do you think might be helpful for teachers to get the most out of partnerships?

What's going to happen when partner leaves school?

Any issues about timetables, resources, working relationships?

Appendix 5
Classroom Observation

Date	Timing	Teacher, Year Group	School, LEA	Arts partner

Lessons and aims (refer to previous sessions); where is the session taking place?

Who developed this lesson?
Teacher Arts Partner
Both Other (eg scheme of work)

Other observations:
Is this lesson differentiated?
Yes - by group Yes - by identification of individual need
No - all children completing the same activity
Total no. of children in class at the time of this observation: _____

What is the role of teacher, the role of arts partner, the role of LSA? Does this change as the session progresses?

How the session is started and 'framed'. Language of arts partner and/or teacher. Any preparation or warm-up activity, references to previous sessions.

What do children do in the session. Tasks, materials. How do they work (eg pairs, groups, independent), how much support do they have.

What kinds of talk are evident? (eg exploratory, reflective, open or closed questions, presentations, teacher-led or child-initiated)

What kinds of writing? (multimodal forms, drafts, initial notes or diagrams)

Additional comments and observations/include any teacher & arts partner reflection after session

Appendix 6: analytical framework

Writing sample	
Date of text	
Title	
Child, age	
School, Year Group	
Description of text	

Context: how this writing was part of a creative project Purpose of the text	
History: how this writing was developed	
Multi-modal nature of text	
Main Skills evident (apart from literacy skills)	
Stance adopted (role, viewpoint)	
Sense of Audience evident in text	
Sense of engagement and imaginative participation	
Language showing evidence of creative arts experiences	
Effectiveness as a multimodal text	
Other Influences apparent in text	

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