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In What Ways Can Drama Inspire Key Stage 2
Children to Enjoy and Excel at Creative Writing?

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Introduction

There are many commendable schools around the world and great education for young people. As a result, they emerge as brilliant students for colleges and universities alike but, in the matter of creative writing not so much where primary school is concerned. This is supported by news articles and practitioners. In this study I propose to explore the use of Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert (MoE) to improve younger pupil's creative writing skills.

Background

Primary school children are developing more poorly in writing than in other subjects and boys get worse results than girls (DFE, 2012). It seems that primary schools have been teaching writing in a way that does not help children to write creatively. They are being taught complicated words and it does not help them to write openly (Flood, 2015). What makes a potential writer depends on how well and how much they read (The Every Day Novelist, 2019). Helping children to make stories come alive through role play and drama helps children to see things from a creative viewpoint. Writing is meant to be an expression of communication. It is effective when young people discover its uses when others are genuine to them. Children need opportunities to see who they are by creating texts. Such opportunities are used to encourage children with talking and expressing their feelings and interests onto paper. They appreciate feedback with kind responses through constructive criticism, which allows them to communicate through writing. What is expected of teachers is that they must respond to the writing by observing the effect it has on children (CLPE, 2018). If creative writing is not as good in schools as it could be, then I would like to try and do something about it and improve the situation.

Aims and objectives

I believe that with performance teaching styles, lessons will be learned in a more creative manner that improves the engagement of pupils (Abbott and

Edmiston, 1997). According to Collins (2013) using MoE changes children's perception of writing from a chore to a creative work and Edmiston (1997) supports this in that children learn differently when they see themselves as experts rather than pupils. This is all about examining the education of young people, performing arts, creative writing and how it can enlighten education so young people do not get bored so easily and how they practise best and be better facilitated through creativity and performance.

Göçen (2019) stated, one of the most important aims in the subject is to give fluent and authentic written texts instead of texts that are dull and allow young people a chance with their skills of creative writing. The whole idea of creative writing is to motivate thinking of learners, to encourage and provoke their imagination and creativity (Abbott and Edmiston, 1997).

Scope

The research is aimed at the education of Key Stage 2 pupils in primary schools based in the area of South Wales. My formulation would be to create a series of six workshops encouraging the children to use their imagination and creative skills, and to help them to connect to creative writing.

Literature review

The Creative Writing in Schools Report by Arts Council England (2018) analysed that after creative writing workshops in schools young people enjoyed writing more, because it gave them pleasure. Pupils who did not write much before, extended their writing skills after the experience. Not only did it boost the confidence of pupils, but also the teacher's confidence as well within the subject.

Jonathan Davidson, the Chair of the National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE) stated:

This report highlights the importance of writing for pleasure, of exploration and play, and the role of creative writing in building confidence for children and young people. It outlines the vital role played by networks in supporting good practice

and developing vibrant writing communities, as well as making recommendations to help the sector meet the needs of pupils, writers, and teachers. We look forward to working with our partners in the next phase, and to building a creative writing ecology that supports all writers in education.

(NAWE, 2021)

While his words serve relevantly to answer the question, the other thing to consider is the topic of performing arts and how it can work with the subject of creative writing. Teachers confess themselves to be dedicated to collaborating with children also in performing arts, especially where Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert is concerned. The website said something very nice; believing that classrooms should always be served as laboratories so children can take advantage of freedom to explore the world in a different way (MoE, date unknown).

MoE is defined as 'an education approach that uses imaginary contexts to generate purposeful and engaging activities for learning' (MoE, date unknown). This means education through a performance project, almost like a re-enactment centre to educate the young people. The method is an educational one which allows the people in learning to become anyone, or anything so escape the real world for a quantity of time.

Children will be aware that they bring a piece of fiction to life. They would see it as the type of play that can start or stop when either they or the teacher decides, serving relevance for curriculum learning. The teachers give them the chance of treating them like an expert team such as pretending to be professors studying Egyptian pyramids. Stopping the story and leaving the fantasy, they can then be taught the skills and knowledge needed for the project that the young people piece together. An admirable detail of education being easily explained for young minds to make fun more relevant to learning.

According to Becker (2014, p. 22), picturing children as writing experts and allowing them to have a go at challenging tasks encourages the confidence of young people, as

well as a positive perspective for reading. Children always attended the tasks of written work with the reinforcement of class discipline, but it all changed when MoE came into the world; the outcome being that they contribute their work without question.

Dorothy Heathcote (2014, p. 1) stated that one cannot be within an educational surrounding without noticing that teachers must participate in the problems that happen when a session flows. She questions herself, when in a classroom with teachers and students, the question being 'What am I doing in this present moment within my society which is of any use? How will what happens in this time contribute to this individual, this group of people, my community, my nation, the world of people and objects?'. She counted herself lucky to possess the philosophy of her practice but was frustrated that others didn't follow her methods. Speaking her mind, she believed that society would need to review its schooling systems.

Though she did not have high hopes of such a thing happening, Heathcote stated her opinion on how conferences may help with the matter (2014, p. 2), as the United States of America had changed systems of language teaching and direction themselves. Her reasons for having low hopes was because it seemed to her that they were purposely avoiding energised commitment or change in practice. She mentioned practitioners like her as an example of people that would have to attend conferences, since they accurately put ideas into action. Heathcote viewed in her perspective that it would take more than one conference, as it would need to be hundreds of people with potential to be motivated. She assumed to call these conferences "Cells of change". She believed in her perspective, raising little people in every community, to be shared by thousands of teachers in British schools.

Dorothy Heathcote reminds us that dramatic activity is aimed at allowing people to become somebody other than themselves and to experience what it feels like to be that character. She felt that that teachers have transfigured it into a misunderstood subject, particularly the teachers in her view, who "see childhood as merely a time spent waiting to become an adult and deny the value of a child's experiencing being a

child (Heathcote, 1969, p. 1)". She complained further that confusion has been caused by the lack of distinguishing between improvisation and theatre experiences, resulting in difficulties in communication and no preference in a relevant experience that relates to drama. Dorothy Heathcote described drama as a subject for opportunity of research which involves public associations. Heathcote says that there are two opportunities in a way for teaching drama: the first one being "The fact that for its express it always demands crystallisation of ideas in groups", and "It can employ the individuals, working as a group, to conceive the idea, area, and level of interest in the first place" (Nate, 1960).

Bolton (2014) made some research on his own opinions of the attitude of pupils and their reactions to reading and writing, which could be widened, placing them in the position of experts and to commit to a big task. Teachers' standards also say that they must "encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study". Bolton proclaimed that his interests of Mantle of the Expert and classroom libraries gave him the inspiration to blend the two things together, so to concoct a positive view and reaction in reading and writing.

Learning is used as a tool for decision-making on how we educate young children and why. Drama in schools can be effective in fun which benefits learning for school children. Children can only be taught when they want to be taught which is built through dialogue and interaction. Children can be easily told about information and views, but they would have to be built upon their own interests and innocence about the world, because they will heed none of this if they are self-motivated. A learning point of view is essential to involve drama in to creating dialogue through the point of views of participants, without questioning them as if it is a regular school test of a regular school day. A balance of those questions is based on a perspective, one would need to use dialogue about events, since everyone lives their lives through different experiences. According to (Abbot and Edminston, 1997) a behavioural theory of learning assumes that meaning is given to us and that we learn best through reinforcement and external rewards and punishments; others need repeatedly to tell us how to behave, what to

think, and what is 'correct'. This view of learning, exemplified by Pavlov's dogs salivating for food in response to the sound of a bell and Skinner's rats scurrying round mazes, is much more pervasive than we might expect. Phrases like "I can't believe she said that," "How many times do I have to tell him?" or "If you're good you'll get out early," betray this theory of learning. In the classroom we are behaviourists when we believe that we can teach by telling children what to do or think.

In comprehensive school when we were studying William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* for an English subject, two activities are worth mentioning. One that shows drama can help with creative writing. Our English and Drama teacher gave us this activity in which we play the role of an agony aunt. The topic is aimed at the beginning of the story where Romeo and Juliet meet and fall in love, subsequently learning that they are from families who are at war with one another. Us, as the agony aunts, had to respond to the letters the lovers had written to us about their situation with letters of our own.

The other exercise made us into experts. The topic was aimed to mixing up a potion, linking to the scene where Friar Lawrence gives Juliet the sleeping potion. The activity consisted of pretending to be alchemists and mixing a potion out of our own creativity. Mine was an invisible potion and I picked random ingredients such as a blade of grass and a bucket of milk. I was scolded by the teaching assistant saying, "That does not make you invisible at all". Where imagination is concerned, there should be no right or wrong to the idea.

Gavin Bolton (Bolton, 1999, p. 6) writes about role-play being used in education of drama. Different examples serve as a different type of role-play. Role-plays should not be put as 'you should do it' but 'this may suit the particular topic', which leaves the person to decide.

According to any authors of *Connecting Drama and Writing: Seizing the Moment to Write* (Cremin, *et al.* 2006, p. 1) individual studies from those who look at drama and creativity have looked into the art of drama and writing collaborating together for education, a variety of views: dramatic play connects to the fluency of writing. Drama is also seen

beneficial rather than just a regular get-together so to meet and discuss. In the cases of primary learning, the young learners commit more to drama rather than writing which results in their more effective style of writing and vocabulary for the emphasis of reading and expressing. Drama for primary learners also have a better impact with their learning and to give them a clearer understanding. Drama and creative writing.

According to the Department of Education (DoE, 2010 p. 15), teachers become more confident by their skills of using dramatic approaches for the ideas of listening skills and reading and writing. It allows teachers to relate to dramatic structures which encourages the capability pupils' learning. School leaders also understand drama and active approaches which improves education for young learners as well as critical thinking skills, as well as see how much see how it effects the practice of teaching by the lessons being upgraded.

This is all very similar to Vygotsky's (Kurt, 2020) methods of understanding people, known as the cognitive development. He feels that when it comes to studies it should be a question of analysing the person in question within society and not the individual alone. Doing so, you can catch the level of growth by each level due to the social interaction that is eventually used. Vygotsky says that the process of learning is not something you can views as something you can repeat, as it only grows through the concept of connections with the learner. Cognitive development comes in four tools: one, the relationship between the student and teacher. Two, society and culture which will influence the learning of the student through education. Three, language and sociocultural influences which aliso develops the learning of children, including sociocultural influences. Four, student-led programs so they can take advantage of social interaction which allows them to grow confidence towards their potentials of developing through education.

Method

The essential method for everything to be focussed on would be action research (Denscombe, 2014). This particular method defines targeting social research. It is seen

more as a strategy as opposed to a method. It concerns the aims of researching and designing it, especially for education on young people. Action research, in short, defines improvement of education and teaching in the matter of practitioners, sort of self-constructive criticism within the situation. Allowing it to flow and see the outcome and then plan on how one can rectify an incident. Action Research comes within four characteristics: One: practical change, which you handle problems in the real world, including situations in work and school. Two: Change (an integral piece of research), in which you handle and discover practical problems. Three: Cyclical process, in which you find possibilities to alter and turn things around in the result of an individual's feedback and four: Participation, in which these are the people who take part in workshops but are an essential tool for the process of action research.

It seems like the type of tool that can work accurately on Key Stage 2 children so to experiment creative writing classes being blended into performance projects, considering this very argument of the topic as a whole. With action research set in the idea of a drama/creative writing workshop, the practitioner can easily be introduced to the struggles of children so to birth problems to be looked at and to help other school children to understand if it was ever to be attempted again.

The problem I have discovered is lack of education in creative writing. The solution I have picked is to help them get better at creative writing by presenting a series of workshops to encourage their creativity by using drama techniques to see the light of one's creativity. My intention is to plan six workshops and I shall deliver and monitor the events as they proceed and reflect as it flows, because when something new is created, a mistake is bound to crop up. I will be able to modify each workshops after reflecting on the last, so when the next workshop is due, some problems may have been rectified before it. I can also monitor the entire project and reflect on the whole thing at the end to make any necessary changes. I can do this by observing and making notes and receiving feedback from the pupils as well as the teachers who are present.

Pragmatism produces knowledge of personal and professional life issues. The tool is used to contribute through the well-beings of others and relationships. As for participatory, it is process in action research in which you research by and for people in the knowledge creation, done in a way that is educational which encourages the capacity of participants to engage. Action research involves itself in its many ways of knowing and understanding how people acts in the world, by looking firstly at everyday experience and then the idea of development of living knowledge, resulting experiments of story, theatre, etc. Worthwhile purposes are also essential to action research, it involves questions of moral, values and ethics. You must always ask worthwhile purposes you are following if they are relevant and acceptable.

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