

'Linccs into Shakespeare' project

Background / aims :

The success of the annual Shakespeare event run in one of the linccs primaries as a whole school initiative provided the impetus for the linccs cross school project. The aims were both aesthetic and educational – developing new performance skills through the fusion of different art forms, increasing the pupils' understanding of Shakespeare's world and creating original writing to be used for performance.



What happened:

An afternoon INSET on 'The Tempest' was run by a theatre director for participating staff. The classes involved also received a half day drama workshop. The linccs consultants worked intensively for half a term with two schools. In one school, the Year 6 classes involved developed, created and wrote performance poetry. The writing was of a high standard and provided quality material that was transferred readily into expressive movement and sound by the pupils. In the other school the script material generated by the two Year 4 classes was closely linked to their topic on the Tudors. Each class focused on different aspects, one on a 'live' news report of 'The Tempest' and the other reflecting the diversity of a Shakespearian audience attending a performance at the Globe Theatre. Using this material and blue screening techniques, two unique films were made at the CLC - 'Mysterious Tempest Strikes' and 'Tudor Globe Experience'.

A public sharing of all the schools work was performed and premiered at Haverstock School at the beginning of the Summer Term 2006. A professional artist was sent into the schools prior to the celebration to create set materials and masks for use in the performance. In addition to providing the venue, Business & Enterprise students at Haverstock took over the marketing, design and production of publicity with KS3 students acting as escorts for the primary schools and FOH personnel.



Impact / outcomes:

The exploratory process and range of performance interpretations provided the pupils with experiences and opportunities to reflect upon and engage in different art forms and media – dance, theatre, music, poetry and film.

Their understanding, language development, confidence and performance skills were all enhanced. *'..the subsequent learning that took place was memorable and fantastic to see. Every child in my class is proud of their contribution.'* Yr 4 teacher *'I love doing the Tudors. I know more about Shakespeare than my sister at...(secondary) school.'* Yr 4 pupil.

Teachers were empowered to experiment with and plan for a broader range of artistic / interactive strategies to promote learning. They were able to acknowledge and experience for themselves the power of learning through the arts. *'I take away with me some new and inspirational teaching strategies that I can see are extremely beneficial in developing the children's literacy skills.'* Yr 6 teacher.

Positive inclusion of parents was reinforced through their involvement in assisting with costume making.

The films have reached an extensive audience outside of the LA. One minute excerpts of both are on the BBC 60secondShakespeare website and www.linccs-camden.org.uk



Considerations:

The model of using a range of different art forms works effectively both as a cross school project and as a whole school initiative.

When dealing with a cross school event the appropriate timing of INSET from external professionals is crucial.

The scope for involving all age ranges in varying ways goes beyond the activities listed above and opportunities for staff and schools to discuss this range would be beneficial.