



# **The Creative Partnerships Curriculum Projects at Kingstone School Barnsley and Queensbridge School Birmingham**

**Research report**  
**November 2008**

**Martin Fautley**  
**Maria Gee**  
**Richard Hatcher**  
**Elaine Millard**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Kingstone School in Barnsley and Queensbridge School in Birmingham

This report is the result of a two-year research project in the school years 2006-7 and 2007-8 into the impact on school change of creative curriculum projects in two secondary schools: Kingstone School of Creativity in Barnsley and Queensbridge Visual and Performing Arts College in Birmingham. The two schools offer contrasting research sites – the former an outer ring, mono-ethnic white school of 1400 pupils, the latter an inner city, ethnically diverse school with 600 pupils – but a common approach to teaching and learning. Both schools utilise drama-based creative teaching approaches in order to stimulate creative learning across the curriculum. They draw on a common body of theory in terms of pedagogy and curriculum. They are both at the forefront of current moves to rethink the meaning of education in schools, as indicated by their designation by Creative Partnerships as ‘Schools of Creativity’. They address all three of the Creative Partnerships Research Themes: access to learning, particularly for young people who at the beginning of the research period were identified as achieving far below their potential; new learning through new curricula; and creativity in teaching and learning.

## 1.2 Research aims and questions

The aims of the research were as follows:

1. To assess the effectiveness of the curriculum projects in transforming teaching and learning.
2. To identify, analyse and theorise the teaching and learning processes and the institutional change processes which the projects generate, in order to contribute to the current national and international debate around alternative approaches in school education.
3. To identify the additionality which Creative Partnerships contributes to the projects in the schools.

The research therefore encompasses an evaluation of the projects but goes beyond it to explore the projects more deeply as illuminative case studies of new pedagogic approaches in the secondary school system in England.

The research study addresses the following research questions:

1. How effectively did the curriculum model embodied in the project motivate teachers and pupils, in comparison with their normal National Curriculum-based lessons?
2. How effective were the forms of assessment of pupils’ work in the project, and what implications are there for the school’s usual assessment procedures?
3. How effectively did the project contribute to pupils’ attainment in terms of knowledge, skills and competences (cognitive, affective and social)?

4. How was the pedagogy underpinning the project made explicit for teachers, and to what extent and in what ways did the project result in changes in teachers' pedagogic understandings, perspectives and practices?
5. To what extent were the school culture and structures appropriate to accommodate and foster teachers' professional development as reflective teacher-researchers?
6. What are the implications beyond Year 7 for the school and its management?
7. What are the generalisable implications of the project for the wider debate within education in the UK and beyond concerning two interrelated issues:
  - a) the conception of an alternative curriculum and pedagogy more appropriate to the needs of young people, especially lower attainers in relatively socially disadvantaged areas?
  - b) the change process within schools, in terms of school cultures, structures and professional identities?
8. What were the specific ways in which the involvement of Creative Partnerships contributed to the projects?

#### **1.4 The research team**

Dr Martin Fautley, Birmingham City University  
 Maria Gee, independent drama teacher and consultant  
 Dr Richard Hatcher (project coordinator), Birmingham City University  
 Dr Elaine Millard, Birmingham City University

At Kingstone the majority of the research was carried out by Elaine Millard, who also had a role as adviser for the project. Teachers and headteacher were also interviewed by BCU staff.

At Queensbridge the interviews with teachers and the headteacher were carried out by BCU staff. Additional research in the first year of the study was carried out by Ted Bunting and Simon Spencer of BCU. Maria Gee was funded by Creative Partnerships as a teacher and adviser on the programme and also as a participant researcher collecting data from lesson observations, student interviews and students' work.

#### **1.5 The research process**

Data was formally collected as follows:

- Individual interviews with teachers, including the headteachers.
- Interviews with students, individually and in groups.
- Analysis of a range of students' written work.

At Queensbridge 18 interviews were carried out with teachers. All the teachers in the Y7 and Y8 project teams were interviewed, almost all of them twice. 22 group interviews and 6 individual interviews were conducted with students.

At Kingstone interviews were carried out with 9 teachers who constituted the core team for developing the course on 3 occasions. The headteacher and course co-

ordinator were also interviewed each time. 6 further interviews were carried out with teachers joining the team at the beginning of 2007-8. 24 interviews with individual pupils and 8 group interviews were carried out. On each occasion, a representative sample of students' work was analysed for content and creative engagement.

The interviews were taped and transcribed. The transcriptions were coded thematically.

In order to preserve confidentiality in this report, teacher interviewees have been anonymised simply as 'Teacher' followed by name of school. The exceptions are the headteachers, the programme coordinators, and the drama workers. Students have been given pseudonyms. The quotes come from across the range of teachers and students interviewed.

We would like to express our gratitude to the students, teachers and headteachers of the two schools for their generous cooperation with our research.

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Birmingham City University  
Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences  
Birmingham  
B42 2SU

## 2. Summary of report

### A new approach

The schools identified the following problems which the new approach was intended to address:

- Transition from primary school.
- Under-achievement at KS3
- Lack of pupil engagement with the curriculum
- Language-related issues

The elements of the new approach which were common to both schools:

- A curriculum which enables pupils to engage with real-life issues
- A curriculum which responds to pupils' interests and concerns
- A pedagogy drawing on the arts
- An integrated cross-curricular project-based approach
- A focus on building relationships between teachers and students and among students
- The centrality of creativity in teaching and learning
- The importance of promoting thinking skills

The new approach contained two distinctive and radical innovations:

- A curriculum based on cross-curricular projects and organised into longer and more frequent periods of time than was normal, representing a fundamental reworking of the normal subject-based curriculum organised in single or double lesson periods.
- Making drama methodology central to the new approach. Drama provided a coherent theoretically-informed pedagogy as an alternative to that fostered by the prescriptive 'standards agenda'.

These innovations posed a challenge to the professional identities of teachers which were defined in terms of their subject expertise and structured by subject-based curriculum and assessment systems.

### Implementation and Institutionalisation

The process of change in both schools can be divided into three phases.

- The Implementation Phase
- The Institutionalisation Phase
- The Extension Phase, which refers to the extension of the new approach into Y8 and above.

The Implementation phase of the projects in both schools had the following features in common:

- The projects were initiated by the headteachers.
- The projects were based on a drama methodology.
- They employed an external drama worker (funded by Creative Partnerships) as a catalyst and change agent.
- They employed external consultants.
- Key members of staff were given the role of change agents, managing the implementation of the project.

- The programme was introduced gradually, being trialled initially with a limited number of classes and a limited number of subject areas, and, at Queensbridge, for only part of the year.
- The teaching teams were volunteers selected by the headteachers because of their suitability for the projects.

### **From Implementation to Institutionalisation**

The crucial issue facing the schools was how to transfer the ownership of the projects from their initial drivers – the headteachers, the external drama workers, and the members of staff coordinating the programme - to the teams of teachers teaching the programme. The principal obstacle concerned the relationship between the new approach and the subject-based National Curriculum.

There were three stages in the process of institutionalisation of the new approach at Queensbridge:

- External experts devising the curriculum for teachers to implement
- A coordinator 'scaffolding' the new curriculum planning framework linking the Enterprise to National Curriculum subjects and levels
- Enterprise team using the new framework to develop their own planning

There were six elements, partly chronological, in the process of institutionalisation of the new approach at Kingstone:

- An external expert devising the curriculum for teachers to implement
- Some opposition to the new approach from subject-based teachers
- A coordinator 'scaffolding' the new curriculum planning framework linking Cultural Studies to National Curriculum subjects and levels
- Teachers using the new framework to develop their own planning
- Expansion of the initial Cultural Studies team from 9 to 18 teachers.
- Allocation of responsibility for each class to a single teacher.

### **Planning and collaboration**

The new approach required:

- Significantly more time for teachers' planning and preparation than the normal curriculum.
- Time for teachers to meet and discuss, both to ensure the day to day continuity of the programme and to enable collaborative reflection, knowledge and practice transfer and professional learning to take place. At Queensbridge, but not at Kingstone, there were weekly timetabled team meetings.

### **The Extension phase**

A key question about the new approach in the two schools was whether it could extend beyond Y7. In both schools:

- A structured programme was implemented in Y8, drawing on the approach in Y7.
- There was some evidence of the new approach influencing teaching and learning above Y8.

There were three principal issues regarding extension to Y8:

- Staff resources. In both schools there were teachers willing to adopt the new approach.

- The relationship of the new approach to the subject-based curriculum, which became more pressing in Y8, especially at Kingstone, where the core subjects were excluded.
- The relationship, in terms of the transfer and generation of knowledge and practice, between the teachers' experience of the Y7 Enterprise and the professional learning which took place there, and the professional development of the new teachers in the Y8 programme. At Kingstone continuity was achieved by using many of the Y7 teachers in the Y8 programme, supported by the coordinator. At Queensbridge the Y7 experience was transferred to the Y8 teachers largely through the intermediary of the coordinator rather than directly.

## **The pedagogy underpinning the new curriculum**

### **Extended time**

The increased time, in the form of longer lesson periods and blocks of time during terms, enabled:

- More creativity in teaching.
- The development of new skills by teachers and students.
- A broader and deeper understanding of any given topic with students.
- The creation of more productive relationships between teachers and students and among students.

### **New pedagogies**

- Drama methodology not only provided teachers with a new pedagogic perspective and repertoire of skills, it acted as a catalyst for teachers to try other forms of creative teaching.
- A crucial bridge from drama to a wider conception of creative teaching was provided by the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills agenda. They provided a language for creative teaching which was not restricted to that of drama.

### **Contexts for learning**

- Teachers in both schools have been creating in their classrooms situations which lure the children into a series of tasks which promote learning, building on both their prior understandings and current concerns. Often they used 'real life' contexts where the children explored issues, including through simulations or basic role play. In some cases teachers used Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert system where the curriculum is contextualised in a fictional world created together by students and teacher.
- Teachers promoted collaborative and dialogic talk where ideas were developed within the group.
- Students' voices were given central importance in the planning of teaching, resulting in a more negotiated curriculum.

## **Developing skills**

- The new approach enabled teachers to focus on the development of skills: technical skills of, for example, literacy and numeracy, and cognitive skills of enquiry, analysis and evaluation.
- Role-play and Mantle of the Expert promoted the quality of oral language and written work, and higher order thinking within the drama.
- A problem-solving approach encouraged independent learning on both an individual and a group basis.
- Students developed their skills in team working and the confidence to present their work to their peers.

## **Summary of the new pedagogy**

The pedagogy that evolved can be characterised by:

- Teachers becoming aware of their ability to shape the nature and quality of the encounter between teacher and student and student and student.
- Teachers understanding that learning contextualised in situations and events with human significance enables students to think feelingly and feel thoughtfully.
- Teachers recognising that thinking, acting and speaking from inside a situation enables new insight, knowledge and understanding to be socially constructed.
- An understanding that it is the dilemmas inherent in the contexts selected by teachers which provide an intellectual coherence for students as they probe bodies of knowledge across a range of disciplines.
- A shift in emphasis from acquisition of information to skill in seeking out and analysing information (e.g. from learning historical facts to thinking as a historian).
- An acknowledgement of the importance of talk and dialogue as the foundation for thought.
- An understanding that active and collaborative work offering a rich diet of experience to students enhances learning

## **Teachers' professional learning and development**

The new approach in each school committed a team of teachers from different disciplines to a curriculum change that challenged the whole foundation of English secondary education – the integrity of discrete academic disciplines within which they themselves were inducted into the profession. It entailed fundamental changes in teachers' thinking, their practices and their professional identities. It demanded from them a willingness to take risks and to give a considerable investment of time and personal commitment.

In this context teachers' professional development was supported by:

- Advice and modelling by the specialist drama teachers.
- Collaborative planning and discussion by teachers.
- Participation in external drama courses by some teachers.
- Advice from external consultants.

## **Students' Learning**

Teachers in both schools were reconceptualising the learning taking place in terms of encouraging student engagement and creativity rather than reaching levels and targets. Students reported the following distinctive features of their learning in the project programmes:

- Children asking each other and their teachers difficult questions as well as dealing with the big questions within the separate elements of each course.
- Using the different groups they worked in to test out their own ideas and develop a shared understanding.
- The exercise of student choice which led to personalised responses to the core themes.
- A willingness to work beyond the set boundaries of a task to make a strong addition to the work achieved in class.
- More emphasis on affective learning which created empathy for a whole range of people and their dilemmas by putting themselves in the shoes of others.
- Increasing confidence and ability to evaluate and learn from their own work and that of their peers.

### **Working with challenging curriculum content**

The seriousness of the curriculum content selected in both schools allowed their students to project themselves into the experience of others to gain deeper insight and empathy for their cultures. It challenged fixed beliefs and developed more thoughtful responses to complex issues. The use of more active learning methods and a focus on their own experience helped students to become more involved in learning through making connections to their own lives and to the world outside of the classroom.

### **Differentiation and equality**

There was good evidence that the new approach was benefitting the whole range of students. It provided valuable and accessible learning experiences for pupils who had significant learning difficulties, while being intellectually challenging for the more able pupils.

Students at Kingstone reported that within their mixed ability classes there were many opportunities for differentiated levels of both engagement and understanding to take place so that the least able could participate but the more able could be challenged to go further in their thinking.

Evidence from students and teachers indicated that there were not significant gender differences in the forms of engagement of students with the projects and that the pedagogic approach had produced improved working relationships in classroom interaction between girls and boys. This was particularly significant at Queensbridge because of the pronounced gender imbalance in the school population, with boys greatly outnumbering the girls, which had often resulted, prior to the project, in girls being unconfident and less willing to take an active part in lessons.

## **The role of assessment**

### **Relating the new teaching and learning to National Curriculum subject-based levels**

In the early Implementation phase of the projects the key concern of the teachers teaching the new curriculum and using innovative teaching methods was whether they were also satisfying the requirements of the National Curriculum. They recognised that the school, and they themselves, would be evaluated by SATs and GCSE results and Ofsted inspections, and they needed to develop the confidence that the new approach they were trying out would not put these at risk. In particular, many teachers tended to conceptualise assessment within a framework of National Curriculum levels. This was more marked at Queensbridge because Kingstone had excluded the core subjects of English, Maths, and Science from the project.

A further complication was posed by the cross-curricular nature of the new programmes, because the National Curriculum levels were designed to be operationalised from within a single subject paradigm.

Both schools took the same vital step in the early Implementation phase to resolve teachers' concerns by produced a matrix linking the content of the Enterprise and Cultural Studies units to National Curriculum subjects and levels. This acted as a bridge between the new approach and the existing assessment framework. Being able to demonstrate that the new approach satisfied external assessment demands was the necessary precondition for its continuing implementation in both schools.

### **The development of new forms of assessment**

As the new pedagogy became more secure, the limitations of assessment based solely upon the acquisition of knowledge became more salient. Teachers began to adopt other forms of assessment, including oral assessment, and to combine summative with formative assessment.

Personal Learning and Thinking Skills provided a framework in both schools for conceptualising and assessing achievement which was not defined in terms of subject knowledge and enabled teachers to assess social learning as well as cognitive learning.

Our evidence indicates that teachers had some difficulty in articulating their conception of creative learning, and this may impede their ability to assess it.

In summary, the changes in assessment policies and practices in the two schools combined the following processes of development:

- A movement from assessment solely or largely in terms of National Curriculum subjects and levels to the employment of a repertoire of forms of assessment.
- A movement from assessment of cognitive learning to assessment of cognitive and social learning.
- A movement from summative assessment to summative-plus-formative assessment.
- A movement from a focus on assessment on learning outcomes to an assessment of both the outcomes of learning and of the learning process itself.

## **The processes of change at Kingstone and Queensbridge**

### **The conditions for reform**

The conditions for the curricular and pedagogic reform at Kingstone and Queensbridge can be summarised as follows:

- The headteacher provides strong leadership, and a compelling vision.
- The senior manager, advanced teachers and the course co-ordinator share this vision and work to implement it in a collegiate way.
- The original team feel a strong sense of ownership of the course and its development.
- The course has been built on existing strengths and rethought the learning process.
- There is a learning community of shared practice and enquiry with high trust and interdependence.
- The students are part of a community of learners who are able to evaluate their own and their peers' learning.
- Drama provides a coherent, theoretically-informed and practical pedagogy which acted as the initial motor of change and the catalyst for the adoption by teachers of a broader 'active learning' approach.
- Key external agents of change provide models of, and consultancy and support for, the new pedagogic approach.

We have identified two principal, and related, limits to the processes of change which have taken place:

- The objective and subjective constraints imposed by the subject-based National Curriculum and the associated assessment regime.
- Limited opportunities for professional learning through sustained teacher collaboration.

### **The generalisability of the approach at Kingstone and Queensbridge**

A key question is what can other schools take from the experiences at the two schools? To what extent can they contribute to wider system change?

Many of the features of the new approach – such as cross-curricular themes and creative teaching for active learning – are not unique to the two schools. What is distinctive about them is the systematic way in which they have developed an alternative to the subject-based curriculum model which has been traditional in English secondary education and adopted a drama in education methodology as the core of a coherent alternative pedagogic perspective. Key catalysts in the process of change were external drama teachers.

This poses two questions for the generalisability of the Kingstone and Queensbridge approach to other schools:

- Is drama the only viable alternative pedagogy?
- Is the new approach dependent on external change agents?

The ability of Kingstone and Queensbridge to contribute to system change depends largely on the extent to which existing networks among schools, currently largely dominated by the 'standards agenda', are hospitable to their input in terms of

creativity in teaching and learning, and the extent to which new networks can be constructed for that purpose.

### 3. A new approach

#### 3.1 Why a new approach?

At both schools the new approach owed its conception to the vision of the headteachers. Why did they see the need for a new approach, in particular in the first two years of Key Stage 3?

In an interview near the beginning of the project Tim Boyes, head of Queensbridge, defined the problems which the new approach was intended to address as lack of pupil engagement with the curriculum, language-related issues and transition from primary school.

The level of dislocation and non-engagement in school is high whether you measure it by behaviour, SATS, GCSE, school attendance. This is a school where children need to be more engaged with the curriculum. If you take on board the scale of literacy issues and language deficit and barriers to learning that are language and literacy related, then I think that that's another major starting point. The extent to which many Birmingham secondary schools with large EAL issues are used to a pattern of very low achievement against national averages at KS3 and a degree of catch-up at KS4, it's almost as if we accept that language deficit coming into a specialised curriculum is going to mean that there is a year or two of just floundering and struggling. Then I think the whole transition question, transition plus language deficit in the secondary curriculum, are all reasons why we've got to do something. The extent to which there is a casual or under-developed assent to ideas around multiple intelligence and diverse learning styles without people actually engaged rigorously or significantly in applying those things, those would be my starting points I think for why this project. (Head, Queensbridge)

In 2005 44.6% of the students at Queensbridge were eligible for free school meals (FSM), making the school intake one of the most socially disadvantaged in Birmingham. KS3 SATs results in 2005 were as follows: English 60%, Maths 61%, Science 52%. 21% of students gained 5 A\*-C GCSEs including English and Maths.

Tim Boyes' aim was to fundamentally change the learning experience at the school, which entailed changing the teaching.

My big aim is to change the way that teaching and learning happens in the school, and to do that we've got to find things that work with youngsters and teachers have got to see that it works and teachers have got to learn how to do that, so it's both of those things simultaneously. (Head, Queensbridge)

Kingstone serves a much less socially disadvantaged area than Queensbridge (though Barnsley itself has a high level of social disadvantage). In 2005 the percentage of pupils eligible for free schools meals was 17%. The school's GCSE results were higher than those at Queensbridge. In 2005 the percentage of pupils gaining Level 5 in the KS3 SATS was as follows: English 71%, Maths 69%, Science 65%. 33% of students gained 5 A\*-C GCSEs including English and Maths.

However, the rationale for the new approach at Kingstone was similar to that at Queensbridge: underperformance at key stage 3, which at Kingstone contrasted with students' attainment in their final two years of compulsory education at the school,

according to DfES performance and value added data, the PANDA and confirmed by more sophisticated analyses from Fischer Family Trust.

At the beginning of the project Matthew Milburn documented the rationale for the new approach. In summary it comprised the following issues:

- The centrality of creativity in this stage of society's development
- The implications of Gardner's concept of multiple intelligences, Vygotsky's work on social development and children's learning, and Reggio Emilia schools in Northern Italy for a new whole school pedagogy
- The importance of promoting thinking skills
- Problems with the KS3 national curriculum
- Transition from primary to secondary school

### **3.2 The aim of the new approach**

At Kingstone Matthew Milburn expressed himself passionately about the need for reform in secondary education.

I think there's a kind of prevailing culture which is a National Curriculum that's top down in terms of this is the content you must deliver. But what of course we were always able to do is say 'Well how do we deliver that?' That's the bit that's significant and if your aim is to empower kids, if your aim is to find ways of giving them a voice, then you have to find a way in which they can engage with material or knowledge, in a way that's active and genuine and authentic for them. (Head, Kingstone)

He described the new approach as

a pedagogy which has its roots in the arts, intended to help us to build social relationships. At the very centre of our curriculum is this idea of shared learning and this idea that kids work together in order to understand the world and to explore the world, so they've got their own voice. (Head, Kingstone)

He summed it up as helping to create 'that sense of a school that is looking outside of itself and giving kids a wider understanding of the wider world', one in which 'the teacher pretty much understands the child and their learning in a much more holistic way than they would if you taught them two hours of Geography, and then somebody else taught them for two hours for History and so on.'

Matthew's remarks encapsulate the elements of the new approach which are common to both schools:

- A curriculum which enables pupils to engage with real-life issues.
- A curriculum which responds to pupils' interests and concerns.
- A pedagogy drawing on drama methodology.
- An integrated cross-curricular project-based approach.
- A focus on building relationships between teachers and pupils.
- The centrality of creativity in teaching and learning.
- The importance of promoting thinking skills.

It is important to stress how radical were the changes which the two headteachers were proposing, in two respects. The first – a curriculum based on cross-curricular projects – represented a fundamental reworking of the normal subject-based curriculum organised in single or double lesson periods. Apart from the organisational issues it raised, there was a more fundamental one: the challenge it

posed for the professional identities of teachers which were defined in terms of their subject expertise and structured by subject-based curriculum and assessment systems.

Both Tim and Matthew shared the view that teachers could teach cross-curricular themes which extended beyond their subject specialisms. Matthew put it like this:

What the National Curriculum does is say 'this is it, you have to be a History specialist teacher to teach the History curriculum'. And I'm sorry, it's bunkum. [...] I think there is a preciousness that the National Curriculum had brought to subjects and it's moved us towards being subject technicians rather than teachers of children. (Head, Kingstone)

The second radical innovation being proposed was to make drama methodology central to the new approach. Both schools already had an orientation to the arts, as specialist performing arts schools. But making drama the basis of the new programme represented a major challenge to the process of change and the professional development of teachers.

### **3.3. The new approach – its roots in drama in education methodology**

The new curricular approaches go under the name of Enterprise in Y7 at Queensbridge and Innov8 in Y8, and, at Kingstone, Cultural Studies in Y7 and Curriculum for Confidence in Y8. The origins of both approaches lie in drama in education methodology. Both Matthew Millburn and Tim Boyes had been drama teachers (both in fact had in the past been MA students of Professor David Davis at the University of Central England, now Birmingham City University), and for both headteachers drama provides a coherent theoretically-informed pedagogy as an alternative to that fostered by the prescriptive 'standards agenda'.

My experience is that many features of working through drama actually transcend literacy issues, develop generic skills, social skills, that facilitate learning, put or redress appropriately the need to focus on process rather than product and outcome, that most of all the extent to which immersion in an experience which is emotional and physical and not simply word-based and abstract gives much greater access to deep learning and my experience is that youngsters in schools like this come to school with a capacity for deep learning and that deep learning is something that we need to engage with much earlier on. (Head, Queensbridge)

We explain in more detail the particular drama-based approach which both schools adopted in the Appendix.

### 3.4 The chronology of change

	Queensbridge			Kingstone		
	Years and classes	Timetable	Subjects	Years and classes	Timetable	Subjects
<b>2004-5</b>	1/5 Y7 class	4 weeks	Humanities, Arts, English, PE			
<b>2005-6</b>	All 5 Y7 classes	2 days a week x 6 weeks per class	Humanities, and arts	4/10 Y7 classes 15/50 hours per 2 weeks	All year	History, Geography, Drama, RE and PSHE
<b>2006-7</b>	All 5 Y7 classes,	whole year, 5 Enterprises x 7 weeks, 13/25 hours pw	English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, RE, ICT, Drama,	All 10 Y7 classes 15/50 hours per 2 weeks	All year	History, Geography, Drama, RE, PSHE and ICT
<b>2007-8</b>	Y7 as above.	As above	As above	Y7 as above	All year	As above
	All 5 Y8 classes	8/25 hours x 9 weeks	4 single subject focus – History, Geography, MFL, RE	All 10 Y8 classes 6/50 hours per 2 weeks	All year	Drama, PSHE, RE
<b>2008-9</b>	All 6 Y7 classes	Whole year, 6 Enterprises x 6 weeks	As above plus Design technology	Y7 as above	All year	As above
	All 5 Y8 classes	8/25 hours x 9 weeks	4 single subject focus – History, Geography, MFL, RE	Y8 as above	All year	All year

### 3.5 Implementation and Institutionalisation

Both headteachers addressed the process of implementation by introducing the new approach in phases. The process of change in both schools can be divided into three phases. The first two refer to Y7 and can be described, adapting Fullan's (1991) terms, as the Implementation Phase and the Continuation or Institutionalisation Phase. The third phase, the Extension Phase, refers to the expansion of the new approach into Y8 and above.

### 3.6 The Implementation phase

#### *The Y7 Enterprise programme at Queensbridge*

#### **2004-5**

The programme began with a small pilot project involving one Y7 class for one month and covering the following curriculum areas: the arts, humanities, English and PE.

## 2005-6

The programme expanded to all five Y7 classes for half a term each in the following curriculum areas: English, history, geography and science.

The four-week pilot project with one Year 7 class in the summer term 2005 was led by Deborah Hull, a drama worker, Deborah Hull, from the Playhouse, a Birmingham theatre in education company, funded by Creative Partnerships. She developed a cross-curricular project based on the 'mantle of the expert' approach based on the fiction of children from Chernobyl visiting the city. The school's Y7 subject teachers were largely in an observing and support role.

Tim Boyes explained the function of the pilot project.

That year with Deborah Hull and the Playhouse was a little anomalous because it was turning the clock back in terms of dependency on a TIE company and a creative partner but that was a necessary convention if you like, that was a necessary structure, in terms of using the Creative Partnership's resource and in terms of providing a sort of a safe starting point for the school which could see that this was a project about curriculum development but it was growing out of an arts-based project and I suppose maybe that was a bit of a detour.

All along I knew I was trying to grow internal capacity and, as I say, the Playhouse was something of a prop or a useful stimulus but [...] doesn't lend itself so well to the continuing journey. (Head, Queensbridge)

Overall the response of staff was very positive, and the four-week one-class pilot was followed in the school year 2005-6 by a programme involving all five Y7 classes for half a term each. Deborah Hull was not involved, but two new contributors were brought into the school. Sarah Mills and Maria Gee, both employed part-time, were drama teachers. Maria also had a role as consultant and mentor for other staff.

The scheme ran for 2 days each week and each group worked with Sarah and Maria for 6 weeks. As an experimental year, several different projects were trialled in order to demonstrate how a wide range of content material could be accommodated within the approach. One hour a week was set aside when many, but not all, of the teachers who were observers could meet with Maria to reflect on the lessons and to consider wider issues around curriculum and pedagogy.

The experiment was regarded as successful and it paved the way for a new curriculum model in 2006-7 to cover the entire school year. Involving 13 hours a week spread over 5 days, the Enterprises were cross curriculum programmes of study weighted to take account of the subject specialisms of the 6 participating teachers. There were 5 enterprises, one of which was subdivided to take account of two teachers who taught part-time on the Enterprise. Details of the subjects covered are given in the table above. A scientist, historian, English teacher (with a Primary background), maths teacher and two Drama teachers (part-time) worked on the Enterprises. Classes were set by attainment in literacy. In July 2007, Sarah Mills, one of the part-time drama teachers, left the school and from September 2007 the fifth Enterprise was taught by one Drama teacher for 13 hours each week.

Between 2006-2008 Maria Gee, an external drama worker funded by Creative Partnerships through the action research strand of the research project, worked with children and teachers to support the development of new pedagogy at Queensbridge.

## ***The Y7 Cultural Studies programme at Kingstone***

### **2005-6**

A pilot course was set up with the support of the Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster Creative Partners. It involved 4 of the 10 Y7 classes, with the other classes serving as a comparison group. All the classes were mixed ability. The teaching team were all volunteers, selected on the basis of being sympathetic to trying out the new approach. Debra Kidd worked in the school for approximately two days a week as the Creative Partner. She taught alongside the teachers, helping to develop new ways of working and new resources to support an enquiry model of learning, and mentored those less familiar with drama pedagogy. Team meetings were held regularly and a course developed that was divided into six large units of work (approximately one for each half term) with full integration of RE, Drama, Geography and History and with some aspects of English also incorporated in a new course which was named Cultural Studies.

In the pilot year of the programme the four Y7 classes were taught History, Geography, Drama, RE and PHSE through a cross-curricular theme-based programme with a core team of 9 teachers. Each class was taught by a small team usually of three teachers sharing the class topic but teaching separate lessons. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science, together with PE, technology and modern foreign languages, were not included in the programme. English was mainly taught discretely, but Cultural Studies also incorporated some English curriculum content in order to involve members of the English team and bring them into the programme.

Students were asked to explore the varying subjects through a single topic each half term; from child labour to civil rights; from global warming to British identity. All units of work were planned to begin with a narrative experience based on Dorothy Heathcote's concept of the 'mantle of the expert'. The pedagogy of the programme was designed to engage students both emotionally and actively; the core team were mentored and trained in drama and arts-based learning styles and individual members of staff were supported with planning and evaluation of both individual lessons and sequences of lessons. This process was facilitated through Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham Creative Partnerships, which funded the drama worker, Debra Kidd, whose role as mentor enabled teachers to apply common techniques to a variety of subject areas. Ondrie Mann, the coordinator of the project at Kingstone, explained Debra's role as the catalyst for staff development.

Debbie was our Creative Friend and Matthew brought her in - a master stroke - because he knew that she was familiar with his way of working and that she would be able to nurture us to have a developing grasp of that same way of working. In short he wanted to grow his own talent - because it takes a particular set of skills which is difficult to find. (Ondrie Mann, Kingstone)

Creative Partnerships also funded Elaine Millard, a tutor from Sheffield University (who later in the project took up a post as Research Fellow at Birmingham City University) to work as a critical friend evaluating the project and as a consultant working with the headteacher and course coordinator.

In summary, the Implementation phase of the projects in both schools had the following features in common:

- The projects were initiated by the headteachers.
- The projects were based on a drama methodology.

- They employed an external drama worker (funded by Creative Partnerships) as a catalyst and change agent. At Kingstone this role was played by Debra Kidd for the first two years of the project. At Queensbridge the role was played by Deborah Hull for the initial one-month pilot and thereafter by Maria Gee.
- They funded external consultants. Debra Kidd and Maria Gee both had a dual role, as drama teachers and as consultants and mentors for other staff. At Kingstone Elaine Millard combined her research role with an element of consultancy.
- Key members of staff were given the role of change agents, managing the implementation of the project: Alison Lee at Queensbridge, Ondrie Mann at Kingstone.
- The programme was introduced gradually, being trialled initially with a limited number of classes and a limited number of subject areas, and, at Queensbridge, for only part of the year.
- The teaching teams were volunteers selected by the headteachers because of their suitability for the projects.

### **3.7 From Implementation to Institutionalisation**

By Institutionalisation we mean the more or less permanent adoption of the new approach in the form it had taken by the end of the Implementation phase. This does not imply that further change was excluded (and at Kingstone there was one important organisational change), but that the fundamental elements of the new approach had now become embedded in the schools' policy and practice. The crucial issue facing the schools was how to transfer the ownership of the projects from their initial drivers – the headteachers, the external drama workers, and the members of staff coordinating the programme - to the teams of teachers teaching the programme, so that it could become embedded in the mainstream life of the school, beginning with Y7.

#### ***Queensbridge***

##### **2006-7, 2007-8, 2008-9**

The programme involves all five Y7 classes for the entire school year and covers the following curriculum areas: English, history, geography, RE, ICT, maths, science and design and technology. It occupies 13 hours a week out of 25 hours – 52% of the timetable. Each Enterprise lasted seven weeks between 2006 and 2008 and six weeks from September 2008 onwards, to accommodate the sixth Enterprise. All of the lessons within an Enterprise are taught by the same teacher. Thus each teacher taught the same Enterprise five times during the years 2006-2008, once to each of the five forms in Year 7, and each student experienced five Enterprises, each taught by a different teacher. From September 2008, this increased to six Enterprises as a result of the school intake expanding from five to six form entry.

Students are placed in the same group for the Enterprise lessons throughout the year. All students at Queensbridge are set for different subjects according to ability. For the Enterprise lessons the students are in sets according to literacy and special needs, following an initial two weeks of mixed ability activities incorporating a diverse range of baseline assessments, and taking account of primary school reports and SAT scores from Year 6, prior to the start of the Enterprise 'carousel'.

The transition from the Implementation phase to the Institutionalisation phase entailed the transfer of 'ownership' of the project from them to the schools' Y7 Enterprise teaching team. The transition was explained by Tim Boyes.

There has undoubtedly been a formation of a team and that team has had a very different feel to it. Back in May/June [2006] that team was beginning to be given time to plan together and work together but significantly the teacher leader of that team was doing an awful lot of scaffolding and structuring that was then handed over to them for them to go and do the planning for it in a way that has never happened in our earlier models. The earlier models have all been dependent on our specialist experts listening to what teachers want designing and then trying to facilitate teacher participation in a model that they have written. Whereas with this stage of development the model is much more like a head of department saying to the teaching team, 'here are your schemes, you now need to go and make these your own and flesh them out and prepare for them', and people knew that they were preparing for something that they were going to teach, something on their own. (Head, Queensbridge)

The team brings together an English teacher, a scientist, a mathematician, a Humanities teacher, a Drama teacher and the new addition of a Design Technology teacher. Five of the six teachers (the fifth is prevented by a timetable clash) meet weekly, on timetable, to share pedagogy, to moderate assessment, to talk about children, to share creative ideas for schemes of work and to influence one another's practice.

There were two key factors which enabled the transition of 'ownership' of the project to the teaching team. One was the role of a new key change agent. The headteacher deliberately appointed a new member of staff with a primary background - Alison (AI) Lee - to take over responsibility for coordinating the Enterprise.

The second factor was the new coordinator's diagnosis that the principal obstacle to team ownership was the Enterprise teachers' need to align the Enterprise to the National Curriculum subject levels.

The difference now is suddenly that the vision of a more child-centred team-based extended Mantle of the Expert or extended enquiry as a structure for the learning to be built around is now in the hands of a team of teachers and at the centre of that is a teacher that has made her starting point trawling through National Curriculum documents to make sure everything is covered, where the group of teachers have known from the outset that one of their challenges was adequately assessing National Curriculum levels in all those other subject areas. And that's such a huge shift from having somebody coming from an external theatre company or people in the in-between position, even Sarah and Maria who are employed here and part of our teaching team but still from a very different staffing point of view. And so there is a sense of planning, a language of lesson planning which is different from the way that either the Playhouse or Sarah and Maria would have sculpted an extended piece of drama. And so I mean we are utterly thrilled with what is happening this year, but it has surprised me in some ways that it has so quickly become something that's quite different. (Head, Queensbridge)

AI provide a 'language of planning' which enabled teachers to integrate the Enterprise with the requirements of the National Curriculum in terms of mapping Enterprise elements onto subject content and assessment criteria. The headteacher

is convinced that the integration of the project into the mainstream of school provision has now been achieved.

The advantages, the strengths and the energies all from the fact that this is now something that's been made sense of in terms of school organisation and it's got all the benefits of having half the primary school running in our year 7 and youngsters are in one place and they are well supported and there is a clear structure and parents know it all, to the extent to which that's now reaping a huge dividend. (Head, Queensbridge)

In summary we can identify three stages in the process of transition at Queensbridge:

1. External experts devising the curriculum for teachers to implement
2. New coordinator 'scaffolding and structuring' the new curriculum planning framework linking the Enterprise to National Curriculum subjects and levels
3. Enterprise team using the new framework to develop their own planning

### **The role of change agents at Queensbridge**

In this section we examine more closely the role of change agents as key factors in the implementation of the new approach at Queensbridge. We begin with Sarah Mills and Maria Gee. Sarah was a drama teacher and Maria had been a drama worker with a Birmingham theatre in education company and had worked with Tim Boyes at his previous school. They taught one of the Enterprises together and Maria also played a mentoring and consultancy role, sharing drama expertise with Enterprise staff.

We have got these two folk, Maria Gee and Sarah Mills, working with us for two days or, in Maria's case it must be two and a half, and what is going to happen is that each group, each teaching group in year 7, are going to have a couple of days with Maria and Sarah in the first half term which is going to be helping to set the youngsters' expectations more clearly, preparing them, but most significantly it's going to be a diagnostic time for Sarah and Maria. So within that half term, [...] we've got time to work much more with staff then, a wide number of staff. (Head, Queensbridge, interview in 2006)

In 2008, looking back on developments, Tim identified the distinctive contributions of each. Because there was no drama specialist in the Y7 Enterprise team Sarah was employed part-time as a drama teacher for the project, working with Maria. Maria wasn't a teacher, but 'she was a brilliant teacher-trainer and somebody who was superb at getting teachers to evaluate their practice and to develop'; 'a very useful facilitator of teacher discussion, thought and reflection'.

Tim wanted to appoint as Year 7 Co-ordinator a teacher with a primary school background and in September 2005 Alison (Al) Lee, an external applicant, was appointed. She became a key agent of change for the programme.

She didn't come specifically from a drama background but she is a phenomenally creative and talented primary teacher and for her to spend a year trying to understand what it was I wanted to achieve, trying to get her head round being in a secondary school, trying to understand what Maria and Sarah were actually doing and to, and to then take that on to the next step, that was a year when there was a lot of chemical reaction. There was lots happening in the laboratory. (Head, Queensbridge)

Al's expertise at managing extended periods of time with a single group and her focus on building strong personal relationships with children enabled her to lead the team with rigour and enthusiasm. Her leadership offered re-assurance to the team and enabled them to begin a journey into the unknown. In revising her Enterprise in order to work with the Special Needs group during the final term of the first year, Al used Drama extensively and to great effect. Her successful risk-taking offered her colleagues an example of the benefits of the approach and, by the end of the first year, others were interested in using drama methodology in their classrooms.

The move back to drama was further assisted by a Saturday course which was held mid-way through the second year of the project, in which Ondrie Mann from Kingstone worked with some of the Queensbridge teachers under the auspices of NATD. He was a significant change agent as he created a renewed enthusiasm for using Drama so that by the end of Year 2, all of the Queensbridge teachers were using drama methodology to a greater or lesser extent and most were keen to learn more about the thinking that underpins it.

The measure of Al's success in both her own teaching and her role in the Enterprise team was such that in 2007 she was able to leave the Y7 team and develop the new approach in Y8. In July 2008 she was promoted to assistant head responsible for curriculum.

Al is utterly outstanding as a teacher and everyone can see that, it's been a team that has epitomised excellence and importantly the Year 7 team no longer includes Al, she doesn't teach in Year 7, there's been a really successful kind of handing on of the baton with a core in that team who've been on the journey right from the start. (Head, Queensbridge)

Matt Allen has now taken over the coordinating role, but the team is now less reliant on a leading figure, more collective and self-sustaining, as these two teachers testified:

I mean there's sort of an oversight, but then because of the collaboration, it feels like more of a team effort in getting things run. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

I have to say that this year we've sort of been left a little bit more to our own devices, having gone through it one year. But, if there's any time we need help, or anything like that it's always there. And it is managed, you know, we have our meetings, when we change groups we discuss the children, we discuss and we also actually in those meetings you know, say talk about a particular lesson that went particularly well, or a lesson that went bad, and we share what we've been doing in our lessons. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

Since September 2008 there have been staff changes so that Matt Allen has been charged with integrating 3 new members of staff (1 internal and 2 external appointments) into the team and from January 2009, another new member of staff will join the team. Only two of the original team will be in place from January 2009.

## **Kingstone**

### **2006-7**

The Cultural Studies programme was rolled out to all 10 Y7 classes for the entire school year and covered the following curriculum areas: Drama, Geography, History, RE, PSHE and ICT. It occupied 7 lessons a week making up 15 hours of the two week cycle – 30% of the timetable. The teaching teams consisted of three teachers,

and included an English specialist, one member of the original team and one teacher new to the course. English and ICT were intended to have 'touching points' where possible. Cultural Studies now included ICT with the Cultural Studies teacher (someone who does not normally teach ICT).

### **2007-8, 2008-9**

Cultural Studies continues as before but now with a single teacher taking responsibility for each Cultural Studies class, although most groups still had shared teaching.

At Kingstone the head described the strategy he adopted:

I think this has to be incremental not revolutionary. You know, it has to be taken a step at a time and you prove this is a better deal for the kids. So I think had we said 'right well we'll go right across year seven, big bang, everybody'... But you have to start with the willing participants in terms of teachers and you then build up that team so that others start to hear about it, so you've got teachers like [the two] ASTs who didn't originally come forward and say 'yes I want to be involved', but who are now absolutely heart and soul throwing themselves into Cultural Studies. [...] It's much more genuine that way because it's coming from within, from within Cultural Studies. It's not me imposing it on a broader team. (Head, Kingstone)

There were two major problems encountered in the process of implementation and institutionalisation at Kingstone. The most challenging was, as at Queensbridge, the relationship between Cultural Studies and the subject-based National Curriculum. To some extent this concern was the inevitable result of moving outside the safety offered by the structure of the National Curriculum.

Early on there were reservations from the teachers taking part about the openness of it. And I think there was a confusion about 'well what are we going to teach them then?' And I think there was some misunderstanding. Well there was a lot of misunderstanding but I don't think you can do something like this without there being in part of the pedagogical start of this that there is a confusion, you know.

*If you weren't giving them just another script to replace the previous one.*

That's the dilemma isn't it, and yet you've got teachers who are crying out for that. So on the one hand you've got to recognise these are very genuine teachers who are anxious about the fact that there's a kind of creative void. [...] And I think that was a tense time [...] and Ondrie I think suffered there because I think he took a lot of the flak. (Head, Kingstone)

According to the head Debra Kidd played an important role in reassuring teachers:

I think that was a real anxiety early on. I think Debbie's role was key in terms of, she comes with such a calmness and a kind of confidence in terms of 'Well, let's not get over anxious about this' and offers very quick opportunities for people to say 'well you can ask these questions which would lead you into a whole new area, which enable you to do some more, you know, to consolidate some of the thinking that's gone on so far'. (Head, Kingstone)

But beyond that there was some staff resistance to the head's vision for change. Despite the very strong lead coming from the headteacher, the culture of the rest of

the school, especially that of established Heads of Departments, was more attached to the subject-based curriculum and more sceptical about the collaborative ways of working essential to the fullest development of the course. In this respect the school differed from Queensbridge. At Queensbridge the teachers were anxious to establish the links between the Enterprise and the requirements of the National Curriculum, but they did not feel that their commitment to the Enterprise team in Y7 was in competition with subject-based departmental commitments. The reason was that there was a common recognition that the existing curriculum was not meeting the needs of pupils, particularly the relatively large proportion from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

Kingstone had a less socially disadvantaged pupil composition and a higher level of attainment in the existing 'academic' curriculum in terms of GCSE results than Queensbridge. This provided the basis for some reluctance to change. The English department, with good test and GCSE results and praise from Ofsted, was particularly reluctant to put these at risk by integrating the subject into Cultural Studies in Y7 and subsequently Curriculum for Confidence in Y8. The head addressed the problem by ensuring that an English teacher contributed to each Cultural Studies class, but that it retained the name of English on the timetable. Nevertheless the link between English within Cultural Studies and mainstream English provision was tenuous.

The full implementation of the curriculum across the year group was exacerbated by another factor at Kingstone: the expansion of the initial Cultural Studies team from 9 to 18 teachers. The initial teaching team comprised teachers who were volunteers and committed to trying the new approach. In the second year the programme expanded from four classes to ten – a much larger number of classes in each year than at Queensbridge. While all of the new team members were sympathetic to the main aims of the course, some could not give it the same time commitment. Some teachers continued to find time to meet and share planning but equal numbers did not. This was caused by conflict with other responsibilities. For several teachers, KS4 work took precedence in their schedules because of the importance attributed to the assessment regimes of Y9 and Y11.

A further early finding was that the very complex structure of the pilot course could not be sustained once the whole year group and a much larger number of teachers were involved. This was much easier to resolve. In 2007-8, the second year of the full programme, it was decided to return to individual rather than collective responsibility for individual classes. A compromise was reached which might allow for teachers' individual creativity of approach while enabling resource development with the continuing integration of the key subjects and some further teacher collaboration:

We now teach things on a carousel, so we're not all doing the same thing at the same time, but there are two forms always doing the same thing, so that you're always working with another teacher. The idea behind that is that we're able to be constantly modifying, developing things as it goes through the year.

The other idea is that at the end of the 6 or 7 or 8 week block ... we pass, resources on to the next teachers who are going to look at how they're going to work their way through it as well, so in theory, at the end of the first half term we should have some fairly decent packs of resources to pass on to each other. (Ondrie Mann, Kingstone)

Reflecting on the decision to change the format, Matthew said:

I think I've come a long way. I think there's obviously been certain things which don't appear to have worked. I think the collaboration, sort of sharing classes, seems to be one of them, as a wide-ranging thing. [...] I think the course is getting better [...] I think next year could actually be, really successful for a number of reasons really. Because I think there's a lot of stuff in place now and I think getting rid of the collaboration between teachers in terms of sharing classes, I think that will improve things. (Head, Kingstone)

He saw the move to making the classes largely the responsibility of a single teacher helpful in overcoming many of the problems of continuity and assessment experienced in the first two years of the course and reported in previous reviews.

I think that continuity has all sorts of benefits. Number one in terms of the teacher being able to be clear as to where the class are up to and what they need to do next and so on. Number two, we tried the other approach and actually the communication was impossible, even with email and shared resources and asking the children, you know, they get sick of that. Number three, the pastoral dimension, that idea that kids, the continuity of care and the kids go from having one teacher to having potentially fourteen is clearly not right. If you have seven teachers but one of those sees you for at least an hour and a half a day, then you feel, don't you, and what I'd like to see is a model which ties that in. In other words, the form tutor is the person who picks up that Year 7 child. You then get to talk about, don't you, potentially, the team being age-specific?

The teachers also support the success of this move to making one teacher responsible for each class:

Well, the whole grouping system has improved immensely, because I didn't used to enjoy it as much because we were sharing groups and it felt disjointed with no continuity. Now that I've got my own group it's so much better. It's like leading the kids, you are actually part of the group with the kids and the good learning experiences, it sounds a bit corny, have become more regular than they have ever been because you are actually facilitating them and you get to know them. (Teacher, Kingstone)

When asked whether this model would allow for cross-over times, the response from teachers was positive:

I was told that there would be carry on classes running together, so that you can team-teach sometimes and have a big group and show each other things, for example, that you'd been doing in class... I think as well when people are on their own, they've got that autonomy within their own class, they won't tend to rely on other people or lean on other people and might feel more empowered, because like I said, it's down to them, it's their own class, it's their own class. (Teacher, Kingstone)

### **Role of change agents at Kingstone**

At Kingstone the crucial factor in creating new ways of working was the influence, support and non-directive leadership of the headteacher, who communicated his own passion for meaningful change and his appreciation of the work to the team. As one teacher reported:

The head's got a lot of understanding of these issues, but he doesn't impose them on other people. He likes them to be self-propelled and does not push people into doing stuff. He makes things available but he doesn't ram things down people's throats. He summarises as well. He doesn't like giving people big, thick documents and he likes to give people food for thought but in bite-sized chunks and he wants people to take things on board. (Teacher, Kingstone)

It was clear that staff were motivated by his personal commitment and example. One vital additional role he played was to provide a context in which teachers had the confidence to try new approaches, even if there was a risk of failure:

The phrase I've used is, I've said to staff over and over again that you have licence to be creative. And I'd rather you went for it, and failed than didn't even bother going for it, and on the wall there it says *'You may be disappointed if you fail but you're doomed if you don't try'* and I think that, I hope that underpins my relationship to staff. (Head, Kingstone)

In addition to the role of the head there were two key change agents: the project co-ordinator, Ondrie Mann, and the external drama worker Debra Kidd, who had worked with Matthew in the past. Ondrie described the successful team-building process that took place in the first stages of implementation with 4 Y7 classes.

I believe that we've, the 9 people that started off originally, we'd argue like cat and dog for a long time but we've put mechanisms in place I feel where we could look each other in the eye and say 'I don't agree with that that's not right', but by the end of the year we'd formed a relationship where we trusted each other, we respected each other's abilities and we'd got a democratic agreement where we worked together and that across all subjects so you've got teachers for the first time having real planning sessions real pedagogical discussion at a deep level and a profound level by the end of the year in some cases but yeah we'd be arguing before and there were almost rivalries between each other but I think now we understand what's important and we've grown up and matured together. We really work and respect each other, we really work well. (Ondrie Mann, Kingstone)

In the second year of the Implementation phase, 2006-7, some conflict between the new approach and the academic perspective risked undermining the project. This was most sharply experienced in relation to the English department, which had very good GCSE results and Ofsted reports. For them the risk was greatest because they had the most to lose, both in terms of pupil attainment and also in terms of staff career prospects within the subject-based curriculum. The principal challenge therefore facing Ondrie as co-ordinator was to win the support of the rest of the staff for a student-centred rather than a subject-centred approach. On it depended the ability of the new approach to influence teaching throughout the school. Ondrie described the strategy he adopted:

The only way you can convince the rest of the staff is by getting it right. It took me 8 months to realise that, it just came to me one morning, I thought you've got to ignore them and you've got to concentrate on what you've got to do and getting it right and when the kids are developing at a faster rate when the learning's more accelerated, when they're doing things which previously people didn't think year 7 and 8 kids couldn't do which to be fair they already are doing, then people step back and say well hang on a minute they might have a point and then they want to learn more obviously. And that's why I

think 9 more people stepped on board this year, I mean they didn't have their arms twisted and it's no accident is it that the only two advanced skills teachers in the school want to be part of it, that's not an accident, they've seen enough to realise that if they're on the inside working with us they can be part of it and make it happen and obviously we want everyone in the school to be part of it eventually, want it to spread out. (Ondrie Mann, Kingstone)

In addition to the head and Ondrie the key change agent in the Implementation phase of the project was Debra, an external drama teacher who was funded by Creative Partnerships to work on the Cultural Studies programme for two days a week from its inception in the autumn of 2006 until she went on maternity leave in 2007. Matthew regarded Debra's role as a critical friend as a powerful model of professional development: 'The key thing is that Debra's thinking is underpinned by theory and she understands the pedagogy '.

The support of an experienced creative partner who was not only a drama practitioner but also had had a good deal of prior teaching experience was cited by all the participating teachers as being crucial to setting up and sustaining their understanding of the pedagogical basis for their work. Her collaboration in the classroom and in the additional training sessions was universally acknowledged as very supportive, indeed 'inspirational'. The freedom to call on her help to create appropriate drama strategies in the first eighteen months of the course and the provision of a multiplicity of engaging resource materials had given other staff confidence to take risks and experiment with drama as a pedagogical tool.

After her departure there was still material support for the new ways of working in terms of curriculum content and ideas for practice but, as this teacher testifies, a folder of guidance materials was not sufficient for helping less confident staff adopt the pedagogy without the collaborative work and physical sharing of teaching which had initially created the course.

And the support was excellent. I got a folder with everything in it, which has been well constructed and it's like a construction manual, so I think it's probably Debbie and perhaps Ondrie who spent a long time putting that together, and it is a valuable document but it's only as valuable as it is, I've still got it in a drawer. (Teacher, Kingstone)

The role of the mentor provided by Debra Kidd was missed. Ondrie was regarded as very supportive but he did not have the time to offer the practical support in lesson structure that had been provided by the creative partner

Additional support for developing key teaching strategies was also provided by the National Association for the Teaching of Drama (NATD). Teachers had given time at weekends attending courses and the annual conference and had spent professional development days sharing responses to their new strategies, particularly in the project's pilot phase.

### **The Institutionalisation phase at Kingstone**

There is evidence that the course was in the process of becoming less coherent and consistent in 2007-8 than in the previous year. We have noted some of the factors above:

- The creative partner had recently taken maternity leave and so there was no longer a sense that support for introducing the new techniques was as readily available to the members of the team as in the first year of the course.
- Although all the teachers had been willing participants in the course (as the head teacher had not used 'pressed men' in the team and had ensured that staff had chosen to become involved) a greater number were experiencing divided loyalties between subject demands and their commitment to pedagogical change - this was particularly clear in relation to work in English.
- There had also been some loss of the collegiality which had been a key feature of the 2006/7 course as a result of fewer opportunities for collaboration. This was an inevitable consequence of expansion which created a greater divergence amongst staff both of interest and relevant training. Some staff seemed content to 'go their own way' with less consultation with others although most of the core team remained committed to collaborative planning. It should however be noted that there had also been gains from the broadening of the staff. In particular, the inclusion of an advanced teacher with specialist skills in ICT and English had created opportunities for expanded work with multi-modal presentation which were impressive and clearly capable of engaging the most disadvantaged. There was also a plan to develop e-portfolios and a VLE with the support from Creative Partnerships, to include a classroom Blog (or CLOG).
- There were key differences of philosophy, theory and pedagogical commitments, particularly evident in the attitudes and reservations of the Head of English. The English department had been judged as outstanding in its last Ofsted inspection and the HOD was eager to retain a commitment to quality and pleasure in sharing works of fiction. It is to be emphasised that the differences were expressed as ones of deep conviction from equally dedicated professionals, all committed to excellence in their work with pupils. Nevertheless, the result had been to create pockets of uncertainty amongst staff and unequal access to aspects of the curriculum for some classes. It was clear at times that this had resulted in a conflict of messages about what was appropriate learning being given to pupils.

### **3.8 Planning and collaboration**

The effective implementation of the programme requires time for teachers to meet and discuss, both to ensure the day to day continuity of the programme and to enable collaborative reflection, knowledge and practice transfer and professional learning to take place.

At Queensbridge the principal vehicle for the project team's professional development, apart from the development sessions with external drama practitioners, has been the weekly team meeting, which has been, apart from one period of some months, a regular feature of the programme.

At Kingstone the teachers reported that there had been too little space or protected time set aside for meetings to take place to discuss developments and this led to a lack of co-ordination in the first two years of the programme (2005-6, 2006-7) when each class was taught by a team of three or four teachers, each taking separate lessons. There was no time-tabled time allocated for team meetings, and the complexity of a secondary time-table militates against casual meetings arranged for more than two or three people. At times it also led to inconsistency in the progression of ideas and confusion in the minds of the students as one frustrated team member pointed out:

In our group, there are 4 of us and it's incredibly difficult for 4 of us to get together, particularly as one person only teaches CS for a couple of lessons a fortnight. So in the list of priorities, Y7CS isn't very high So the 4 of us have got different sets of priorities, you know, for that one group and so it's very, very difficult for us to get together because ... I find that very frustrating and we need some sort of process to bring that together ...

*Some children have reported that they couldn't follow from lesson to lesson because somebody came and started something else. So what you're saying is you can't guarantee that when you follow on from somebody else, what you've expected them to cover has been covered?*

No, no I can't guarantee that and also I have no idea what (other team members) are doing. (Teacher, Kingstone)

In 2007-8 the format was changed and one teacher was allocated to each class. The pragmatic decision to establish individual teacher responsibility for single classes on the one hand ensures that the work maintains pace and that teacher assessment for learning is continuous, but on the other hand there is a danger, which we noted in the process of discussing samples of the work with students, that individual teachers may confine themselves to the knowledge, skills and competences that play out best for them. For example, some classes reported repeatedly discussing issues through 'role on the wall', another group had done several similar newspaper articles and a third group's work was dominated by collage presentations. However, the carousel principle, where two classes study the same topic together, allows for team teaching when appropriate and the development of new lines of enquiry within a teaching pair.

A further issue is that the topics selected for this particular year may start to become fixed programmes of study to be repeated without reference to a particular year group's interests or experiences. However, it is evident from teacher interviews that there is a strong commitment to continue to support each other and work alongside children rather than deliver pre-prepared packages to them. The structure of the course encourages paired teachers to add new resources and activities to the existing theme and one whole unit has been left open for entirely new content.

There were still important concerns that most members of the teaching team considered should be addressed to ensure that the curriculum met the need of all students. They all agreed that it should be essential that teachers should find time to share their understanding and develop their practice in relation to each other's expertise. However, the current school structure works against such a large group of people being able to do this. Most meetings in the school remain subject based and when specific time is dedicated to thematic structures, the group does not find it productive:

Well we do have thematic curriculum meetings which take place roughly once a half term, maybe once very six weeks I think is probably the time frame for that and I personally I don't think that they're really that constructive. I think the time that we spend in those meetings could be better spent in smaller meetings where maybe one or two of the staff who've done this since the start work with some of the people that have joined it later on and I honestly think that smaller working groups would be time better spent, you know, for taking the curriculum forward and for discussing what is going well and what isn't going well. I just think that in that big forum nobody really is able to say

exactly what they think and it's not, it isn't conducive to really taking it forward I don't think. (Teacher, Kingstone)

All the teachers interviewed saw that one of the remaining impediments to the best practice in spreading the pedagogy and developing the course was the lack of time available for anything except teaching on the course. Teachers still had opportunities to attend outside courses which acted as a stimulus to good practice, however in the normal run of things there was still little opportunity for collaboration, even when teachers were sharing a class, as one of the NQT teachers explained:

It is a bit of a nightmare getting around and seeing what everyone else has done, because I know, one of the teachers teaches them third period and I have them fourth period and vice versa and it's so difficult with Cultural Studies to plan for period four when somebody's just had them before you because you don't know where they're going to get up to. So that aspects quite difficult but it does work well in terms of the different knowledges that they get, because we are Geography, History and RE. (Teacher, Kingstone)

As the co-ordinator reported:

We do meet quite frequently but we are reliant on the goodwill of people, it's not structured into the school system in a realistic way because we're not in a department, we do not have departmental meetings, we have pastoral meetings. I mean we are genuinely relying on the goodwill of the staff. (Ondrie Mann, Kingstone)

Matthew Milburn recognises these issues and the problem created for team building:

I think another thing that undermines the notion of team is the fact that schools are structured through departments and Cultural Studies runs across departments. (Head, Kingstone)

### **3.9 The Extension phase**

A key question about the new approach in the two schools is whether it can extend beyond Y7. The initial vision of the headteachers in both schools was that the new approach would be implemented first in Y7 but that it would then influence teaching and learning throughout the school. In particular, it was planned to create a comparable structured programme in Y8.

What are the implications beyond Year 7 for the school and its management? There are three principal and inter-related issues here:

- The scalability of the project in terms of appropriate staff resources: in other words the availability of teachers willing to adopt a new approach.
- The question of the relationship of the new approach to the subject-based curriculum which becomes more pressing with the approach of GCSEs and other qualifications.
- The relationship, in terms of the transfer and generation of knowledge and practice, between the teachers' experience of the Y7 Enterprise and the professional learning which took place there, and the professional development of the new teachers in the Y8 programme.

## **Queensbridge**

At Queensbridge the focus of Tim and Al has shifted from the initial drive to get the new approach up and running in Y7 to spreading it further up the school, as a Y8 teacher explained:

I think Tim still has a drive to see this spread. I think Tim would say he feels like it's embedded now, and it's up and running and he doesn't have to worry about just pushing it to make it go. But now he wants to see it spread, and I think Al's the same. Al was initially a very strong driver of it in terms of getting it up and actually working. She now wants to see it spread, she goes to conferences and takes students away and things like that. So there's still, the push has changed now, we are sort of trusted now that it's up and working and we've seen the success and parents are happy and kids are happy and teachers are happy. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

We asked the head if he felt that all teachers could embrace the new approach.

My experience in three different schools, schools where there has been dramatic, very healthy school improvement, is that there is not a particular limit to how far you can shift the staff. Now that might sound a bit idealistic or whatever but I have got the most phenomenally up for it, positive, willing, group of staff. Where things haven't worked as well as we wanted, I can say that is clearly down to the fact that we haven't put in enough time and support, training, space, for those people to shift. (Head, Queensbridge)

However, some teachers were less confident that all teachers would be willing to undertake the amount of planning and preparation, including creating new resource materials that the new approach demanded.

It makes you wonder about the commitment of certain members of staff, because certain members of staff, certainly at this school, simply won't do that level of planning. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

The second issue is the relationship of the new approach to the subject-based and exam-oriented curriculum. There was a perception among some teachers that subject disciplines would be devalued.

Some subject leaders have taken it on board and have been perfectly happy to run with it. Others have expressed concerns that their subject perhaps is not getting the recognition that it might otherwise have had or it's, somehow it's been devalued because it's been incorporated into, into kind of this large topic area rather than individual subjects. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

This was seen as particularly problematic beyond Year 8 because of the need for subject specialism.

[after year 8 or 9] it almost has to stop there then doesn't it? Because they go on to GCSEs and they have to, and the higher up you get I think the more specialised you need those teachers. You know, I can comfortably teach GCSE History but would I be comfortable teaching a top set GCSE geography class? Would I have the background knowledge? Would I know enough knowledge to test and really push the high kids so they achieve A's and A stars? I think when you get into key stage 4 then you really might need

to start thinking about specialist teachers and then you come back to the old way.

*Right but for the rest of key stage 3?*

The rest of key stage 3 you could roll it out, but you have got to have teachers who are willing enough to put in the time and you know I know there are certain groups in year 8 that I certainly wouldn't like to spend all day with. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

However, a beginning could be made by a gradual process of cross-curricular collaboration.

So what we need to do in year 8 is that we need to very carefully find times, I think where you can start putting in blocks of time... The pressure with 8 is that you've got so many other things coming into play for example, early entry in the arts means that the end of year 8 they will choose their GCSE subjects. So if you were now to say to me 'Well actually, we're going to ask drama and history to deliver their whole curriculum together, next year'. Because that is one where we could go. But you do sustained blocks that you get kids come in, you do a morning on the Monday that actually over the year they would have covered all of their drama and history of the curriculum. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

This is the approach that the headteacher has proposed.

There is a job for one person to develop those same principles to the year 8 year 9 curriculum and into the more flexible elements of the key stage 4 curriculum.

If I've got somebody who is leading and championing that structured, rigorous but fruitful way of creating curriculum space for creative and alternative ways of teaching then my offer would be to give extra resource to any two or three subject areas or clusters or groups of people who for half a term in the year 8 scheme of work might want to try something different. Now I haven't got the space. I can't go on giving everybody the kind of space and resource year 7 have had to get to where they're at and what is a very token model. (Head, Queensbridge)

Al, now appointed as assistant head responsible for curriculum, and now moved from the Y7 Enterprise team to supporting curriculum development in Y8, explained the thinking behind the new approach. In her view the experience of the current Year 7 students was very different from the traditional secondary model, and that Y8 also needed a new approach.

I do feel very strongly that that they can't, they shouldn't go into the traditional secondary model. Not because they're not ready for it, but they will get demotivated by it. I think the experience that they've had this year has been different and enjoyable and has made sense to them so much so that I think, if they go into year 8 to the traditional then they will go 'well, wait a minute that makes sense, and now this doesn't'. And so there's quite a stark contrast. It's almost like when they go from primary into secondary really. So we're doing a lot of thinking about what the model would like for them when they go into year eight. But I think the implications are really from this that they are

actually, you know, there is the bigger picture of what we are going to do in secondary school, you know. (Alison Lee, Queensbridge)

AI distinguished between curriculum reform – cross-curricular projects were not feasible because of the demands of subject specialisms – and pedagogic reform – subjects could be taught using innovative teaching methods.

I don't see that going any further. I don't expect a year 8 teacher to teach another subject. I don't think that's right. People have their specialisms and by year 8 it's the specialist teaching and they need to be teaching that. [...] It's just the context that we put it into. It's really whether we are going to engage with students or not. (Alison Lee, Queensbridge)

How these concerns have been resolved at Queensbridge can be seen in the new Y8 programme. While the curriculum and timetable in Y9 and above remain the same, a structured programme based on elements of the new approach was introduced in 2007-8 in Y8. The format in Y8 retains the organisation of teaching time into blocks of weeks, in this case nine weeks, with each block taught by a different teacher. The pedagogy draws in part on the same approach as that of Y7. However, there are several differences.

- Only four curriculum areas and four teachers are involved – history, geography, modern foreign languages and RE. In particular, there is no drama involvement comparable to Y7.
- The block of time comprises 8 hours a week – 32% of the timetable (compared to 13 hours in Y7).
- The curriculum content is subject-based rather than cross-curricular.
- The bottom set is not included in the programme: it concentrates on literacy.

The view of the teachers involved is that the programme is successful. The block of nine weeks for each subject means that pupils don't encounter the subject elsewhere during the year, but the big advantage of the block of time is, as with Y7, that the frequency of contact between teacher and pupils enables much more productive relationships to be established, and the benefits of that and more innovative teaching methods are evident in the improvement in pupil attainment.

That's the different thing now, obviously that once they've done nine weeks with me, they won't do history again. Which initially was the concern, but I think if you look at the data, and the progress I've made with all groups, it's probably on average looking at three sub levels across the nine weeks, which when you think the national average would be sort of four sub levels across the Key Stage, I'm a complete convert, and I wish that I could have it into Year 9. I just love it. I absolutely love it, it's brilliant. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

AI expressed the intention that there should be thematic links between the subjects in the programme.

If people are just teaching discretely I think the experience that child has is very disjointed. So part of what we're working on is looking at how we join up the curriculum. (Alison Lee, Queensbridge)

The evidence from 2007-8, the first year of the Y8 programme, is that links between subjects have not been created, although teachers recognised that there was the potential for the subjects to address a common theme. The explanation seemed to be lack of time for planning.

We turn now to the third issue: to what extent the expertise gained by the Y7 Enterprise teachers has been drawn on by Year 8 teachers, especially those new to the programme. The view of teachers in both Y8 and Y7 was that there had been no structured or formal professional development opportunities to share experiences and expertise. While some information had been gleaned informally, the main channel for transferring professional knowledge and practice had been through the intermediary role of AI, who had been deployed from the Y7 Enterprise into Year 8 in 2007-8, acting as change agent.

### **Kingstone**

As at Queensbridge, the intention was that the new approach in Y7 would be a catalyst for change further up the school.

I think it's not just about the child's experience in Cultural Studies because the teacher doesn't operate in isolation in Cultural Studies. What they've learnt are pedagogical techniques and ways of working that actually of course then they start to use in year eight, nine, ten and eleven. So actually it isn't that you say 'well we draw the line and that's the end of that, we now go and do the National Curriculum' because actually what's happening I think is we've now got twenty teachers working in this way. So as a model for changing, shifting the way in which teachers teach, and actually the way in which they to an extent relate to the children, I think it's worked really effectively. (Head, Kingstone)

Teachers reported that the techniques developed with Y7 classes were beginning to inform their work with other age groups

I would try and take this kind of approach with my year eights and my year nines tens and elevens as well and get them more actively involved and get them out of their seats, taking on the role of someone else and being involved in debates and try and put themselves in someone else's perspective, if you like. So I think it has had a positive effect on certainly on mine, I don't know about anybody else, but I know people have said so. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Another example came from an experienced English teacher who explained how the 'teacher in role technique' developed when working in cultural studies had enlivened her lessons for the GCSE Poetry anthology.

Again, as with Queensbridge, the extension of the project took a structured form in Y8 with the programme called Curriculum for Confidence, which began in 2007-8 under the management of Mel Storey and occupies 6 hours of the 50 hour fortnightly timetable – amounting to 12%. In 2007-8 the Curriculum for Confidence Course was introduced for Y8 to incorporate Drama, RE and PSHE

Where we are now is all of Year 8 have what we call 'Curriculum for Confidence' which is Drama, PHSE and RE taught through a single dramatic context which, at the moment is building an island and looking at what would be the rules and values that govern lives on this island. (Head, Kingstone)

Drama methodology remains central to the pedagogy of the Y8 programme. However, its curriculum basis is significantly narrower than Cultural Studies in Y7. Only three subjects were involved in its first year (in 2008-9 ICT has been added), and it does not include any of the core or foundation subjects. The explanation is the

demands of the subject-based National Curriculum, which, as we have noted previously, have generated more opposition to the new approach at Kingstone than at Queensbridge from teachers and heads of department because they do not want to put at risk their existing relative success in SATs and GCSEs.

We asked Matthew why the school had chosen not to include a broader range of subjects in the Cultural Studies course in Y8. He replied that he was working slowly towards a more comprehensive integrated curriculum but needed to allow pedagogical practice to become sufficiently embedded before this could happen. He does not wish to impose the new approach on unwilling teachers, and therefore the current Y8 programme represents the compromise settlement he has been able to achieve. He explained that National Curriculum objectives had accustomed teachers to the use of clip files with set subject matter. However a determining factor in the ability of a school to adopt the new approach is whether teachers are amenable to changing their way of teaching. The evidence from the Y7 teachers that the creative drama techniques they had been using with the Y7 classes were beginning to inform their work with other age groups confirms Matthew's confidence that the project would begin to have ripple effects on teaching in the school. He is preparing to secure further support to another group of teachers.

In order for work to expand further, colleagues need to develop the relevant pedagogical skills. This is happening (as you describe with teachers using the approach in other areas of the curriculum). In addition, more formally and as part of our School of Creativity bid, we are contracting Luke Abbott to work with colleagues in Science and Maths so that the pedagogy becomes more widely spread.

The reason the courses are limited to the subject areas that they currently are is that you can only go as fast as the skills of staff will allow. I don't feel held back by Ofsted and I think we now have a body of evidence that learning doesn't need to be subject bound. The limiting factor is the skill set of staff which needs to be developed over time. It's not a quick fix; it'll take years, involve specialists like Debbie, yourself and Luke but is worth pursuing. (Head, Kingstone, email to Elaine Millard)

The next initiative would be to develop similar approaches that 'work the imagination' in Mathematics and Science, although it was intended that these would be kept separate from Cultural Studies. Matthew talked of needing to be aware of the demands of the KS4 curriculum and also that he believed that students should begin to identify their own specialisms and interests within an over-arching framework. In this respect he suggested that the new 14+ Diplomas allowed for the development of more general themes particularly because they are more open than GCSEs courses and therefore more of the curriculum could be integrated.

What is certain is that there is continuing support for developing the new pedagogy amongst the increasing proportion of the staff now involved, who show a growing confidence in their ways of working. This can be attributed to the fact that the original Cultural Studies course with its pedagogy developed from drama practice has taken firm root in the school and, though sometimes treated with scepticism by subject specialists, has been given general acceptance. The initial barriers have been overcome, as one of the ASTs supporting the development reported:

I believe in Cultural Studies as an idea and as a concept and I'm very comfortable with it and I think it's the right way to go, this way of learning. It was, obviously we had the expected barriers to begin with, with obviously

Geography teachers having to grapple with drama and the willingness to grapple with drama as well. I was part of the Cultural Studies review on Tuesday and I went to see some teachers teaching and I see teachers using an understanding of drama now in their lessons and I think that's really heartening and the staff working very, very hard. I would say that the, I would say that the drama pedagogy, if you like, that we're using, in theory is brilliant but I think there's a constant need to energise, like you said, and refresh practice. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Not only this but the achievements of the Cultural Studies course have been carried into the Y8 curriculum by a core group of staff who are engaged in both.

The conviction that they are making meaningful change can be seen in the opinions of a teacher who, despite seeing some of his subject colleagues as unsupportive, states:

Essentially, I believe that what we're doing is the right thing to do. I honestly believe that. I think that it's, we're trying to do something that is better than what we were doing before, which is very, it's a noble thing to do, it's the proper thing to do because we're professional and we're always wanting to improve what we're doing and I think this year, I think what we are doing is good. (Teacher, Kingstone)

## 4. Curriculum and pedagogy

### 4.1 The headteachers' vision

Both Matthew Millburn (headteacher at Kingstone) and Tim Boyes (headteacher at Queensbridge) had, as younger teachers, come into close contact with the ideas, radical practice and indeed the person of Dorothy Heathcote. Both were deeply affected by those experiences and their own thinking and practice has been shaped, in large part, in response to those encounters. It is no accident that as soon as both were in a position to lead curriculum innovation, it was to drama pedagogy that they looked. For the teachers in their schools who were to begin to implement a new way of working, the philosophical and psychological foundations of Heathcote's work would emerge over time but first they had to be introduced to the methodology of her creative practice so that they might recognise its potential in their own hands.

### 4.2 The teachers' motivation

The teachers in both schools, many of whom were newcomers to the theory underpinning the drama, did not claim when interviewed to be experts, nor in some cases even proficient practitioners of this pedagogy. But through adopting the model for organising their teaching within particular contexts that had significance for their students they achieved a liberation of their own practice. The sense that they were engaged in something that was powerfully different is expressed in the words of a teacher in the middle stages of the profession who suggested that:

A lot of young teachers come into the profession wanting to fast-track through the profession. You get it in the medical profession as well, people come in, and they want to work 9 'till 5. It's the post-modern society that we live in, a consumer, disposable society. I think it's a sign of the times that people want to concentrate on things that are about earning money, for example, exam marking and people partition their time, allocate their time, if you like, differently to what people did not that long ago. (Teacher, Kingstone)

He added:

We're in danger of stealing the pupils' childhood because we're under so much pressure as teachers to get results and to get children to this level that you almost feel like you're brow-beating children into doing this or doing that and you pass your stress on to them. I don't know any teacher who came to the profession to look like, you know, to look really tired, to snap, be snappy with kids and not to inspire kids. It is difficult inspiring kids 21 hours a week but I think that we should try and do it. (Teacher, Kingstone)

As well as allowing for more meaningful learning, teachers were motivated by the scope they now had to develop their own creativity as professional educators. There is no doubt that their workload increased significantly. With the freedom to select the content they would be working with came the responsibility for structuring how that content would be taught. There was no recourse to textbooks; all of those were designed for single subject approaches. All the resources and materials for the new courses had to be generated by the teachers themselves. Given the experimental nature of this way of working, the teachers were continually revising and refining

those resources and materials in the light of their effectiveness. Despite this arduous process, the teachers remained committed and motivated.

I can actually be creative. I've got time to run all these little activities, and because I'm feeling much more excited about it, I'm much more likely to spend my own personal time planning it. I'm much more likely to be looking for new creative ways to keep the enterprise really exciting. In a traditional class I'm thinking 'right I've got an hour, I've got to cover this much content because there is the test in three weeks', and so I haven't really got too much time to be creative, maybe a couple of little things, but I've got to get this content across. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

#### **4.3 Extended time and its implications for greater coherence in learning**

Can anyone at all argue that an adolescent's intellectual development is best pursued by exposure in 50-minute snippets to sharply differentiated subjects, each planned in total isolation from the others? (Sizer, 1989)

In both schools, the new approach created opportunities for committed professional engagement with the curriculum. The first important element noted by all the teachers was the increased time available for creativity in their teaching and the development of a wide range of new skills. Both schools reported teachers' appreciation of the provision of sufficient time to develop a broader and deeper understanding of any given topic with students. The comments given below express views commonly reported by teachers in the Queensbridge project that time given to each 'Enterprise' and the longer lessons (compared to the normal one-hour lessons) enabled more creative teaching and greater depth of learning.

Well, you take all the content that you would usually cover and instead of covering it over one year and two hours a week, you cover it in seven weeks and 13 hours a week. It frees the teachers up to be as creative as they like and maybe even miss some of the content if they need to. They can base it all in a context that students are actually interested in, not some artificially imposed something. Kids can then be passionate about the subject and at the same time interweave all these skills that you want them to come out with at the end. I think those are the key differences, and the key aspects of it that make it work.

The huge bonus is having the two-hour slot, and the long sessions because there is so much more in depth that we can go. We can be so much more creative on how we present the work. The group activities are much more fulfilling for the students. It's really exciting, and I have felt a freedom from having to cover so much material. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

A Queensbridge teacher working with the Science Enterprise talked enthusiastically of the freedoms that the structures allowed for developing more meaningful learning

So there is a huge amount of planning but it's invigorating as a teacher to be given a freedom to be a bit creative and to say right, I've got seven weeks all at once, so I can go into a bit more depth on some things. We can try practical activities that we wouldn't normally do. For example, we cover particle theory, which can be quite dry. Traditional teaching of particle theory is two lessons of copy this and can you explain it. We build hot air balloons and take them outside to fly them and video it. The kids then make a video presentation on how hot air balloons work. They make a clip of it themselves; use a voice over

explaining it and they make some animations. It does take three or four days of good work, which we couldn't commit from a normal science lesson. But because we have got this concentrated time, it really works. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

A similar appreciation of the depth of understanding enabled within the generous time frame provided was commented on by a number of teachers at Kingstone. As one suggested, this depth was exactly the opposite of the state of affairs he had experienced from a more conventional delivery of the curriculum:

...it comes back to seeing the depth of study, you know, you are usually just flying through things just for the sake of it and at the end of the day I think a lot of the time you're just giving kids facts which they'll either remember or they won't remember. Obviously you do try and build their skills as well but I think because of the, the huge amount of content you need to go through, I do think you're in doubt in a big way and I think taking a few different topics a year and really looking at them, you know, real depth and bringing lots of different sorts of permutations out of them, benefits the pupils a lot more than just flying through things for the sake of it. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Debra Kidd, Kingstone's Creative Partner, a drama specialist, emphasised the opportunity provided for both depth and continuity in learning:

I think if I look back to my own experiences as a drama teacher and the experiences I had with Year 7 in particular, because I only saw them once a fortnight, I would get to this time of year and not know them at all. I'd feel that the work I ever did with them was lost and was never developed and I honestly would say that my Key Stage 3 teaching was poor in comparison to my Key Stage 4 and 5 teaching, so, and now I look at what Year 7 are getting here and the quality of what they're getting and it far exceeds anything I've seen Year 7 getting in the past because there's a continuity. (Debra Kidd, Kingstone)

A Queensbridge teacher echoed this thinking and summed up the feelings of many of his colleagues in both schools:

I've got a year 9 class and I see them twice a week for an hour and it's a real contrast with the Enterprise you know. You never really get deep into stuff and then it's a number of days before you see them again – as a teacher it can be quite frustrating. It's not as good, not as effective. I wouldn't want to go back to that in Year 7. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

The time afforded to this new way of working had another significant benefit for learning. Alison Lee explained.

We get to know the student so well that I can see what they can produce one day and ensure that there is progression on what they do in the seven weeks. So I think, though personally I was primary trained and I think the benefits of just knowing the student so well are just immeasurable, really I think, that's where you lose out in secondary. Because I know what to expect of them. (Alison Lee, Queensbridge)

Given the concern there is about the apparent stall in performance at KS3, this is an interesting observation and may go some way to redressing the problem.

#### 4.4 Contexts - a lure into learning

Dorothy Heathcote's work describes how learning and thinking are always situated in a cultural setting and her praxis seeks to create an encounter where the child is drawn into a situation which promotes learning. This she describes as a journey from attraction to attention to concern (Heathcote 1989). That is, the child begins with an initial attraction to an idea which then demands a serious effort leading to learning that matters to each individual child. It becomes, in the current parlance of education, personalised learning. (For a further discussion of this process see Appendix.)

Taking inspiration from her work, teachers in both schools began to bring into their classrooms situations which lured the children into a series of tasks that built on both their prior understandings and current concerns. At Queensbridge, a teacher spoke of this as 'a context that students are actually interested in'. He was referring to the concept of a cross-curricular theme as the basis for each 'Enterprise'. Enterprises, he argued, brought real-life issues into the classroom, which students recognised as relevant, important and interesting, and explored them from a range of curricular vantage points:

Mine's the humanities side and it's based around this notion of security, and why security? And what do we mean when we use the word security? And what is a threat to our security? And in that we look at environmental risks, and we look at war, nutrition, conflict and things like that. And we look at migration; there is a whole range of things that we look at, about five or six different things. We look at crime, which is a threat to our security. And within that we bring in, we look at religious problems. We bring in RE and history and geography and citizenship and PSHE, which is kind of classed as citizenship. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

This was echoed by the Drama specialist leading one of the Enterprises. She was using Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert system where the whole curriculum was contextualised in a fictional world created together by students and teacher. (For a further discussion of this process see the Appendix.) She spoke about the student's engagement with a process where they were co-constructors of their learning:

. . . they love being in role as WPU (Witness Protection Unit) they love having the responsibility, they love seeing that they can influence the course of events. They love seeing that they have ownership of materials . . . whatever they do in one lesson is then fed into the next lesson. They love the freedom but also the discipline of it because, of course, it is very disciplined. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

The thematic basis for the Kingstone course also provided similar intellectual coherence, enabling students to see the inter-connectedness of different subject areas. It is clearly very rewarding for the teachers to be given an opportunity to make better links to the pupils' lives:

it's made me realise that there's a lot more that you can do, you know, to make your lessons more interesting, more accessible, just more appropriate to the pupils and it's made me really think about that and you know, I'm trying to influence my normal History teaching and it's giving me a broader skills base, but I would say that, this is obviously still being developed and will be developed over many years I would suppose. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Heathcote's starting point for learning can be summed up in Pope's line, 'The proper study of Mankind is Man'. Her contexts are designed to probe the complex layering of human experience through the bodies of knowledge we choose to pass on to our children. Each generation of children must be enabled to access what our culture values, interrogate and contest it, publish their understanding of it, add to it, and share their novel insights with others.

In drawing on Heathcote's work, the imperative for the teachers was to help their classes explore, in order to explain, a situation seen through the prism of the lives of selected human beings. It is this responsibility that children assume that makes Heathcote's pedagogy different from the project work model with which it is sometimes confused. At the centre of the approach was the drive for teacher and pupils to work alongside each other to explore a particular facet of the human condition and the responsibility was given to learners to explain to each other (and in the case of Mantle of the Expert, a 'client') what has been understood. Much of the work in both schools was therefore focused on 'case studies', whether this was on a child working in bonded labour or a young couple who were to be married in the Warsaw ghetto. The teacher became no longer the repository of 'right' answers which the children had to second-guess.

The contexts developed by teachers and children were hugely varied – the company of tent makers, the astronauts discovering the Huliens, the environmental scientists, the people living in bonded labour, the citizens of Montgomery, the slaves in Virginia, the Witness Protection Unit staff, the NGO staff, the commissioners for canonisation – but all had at their heart, a human dilemma embodied in real or fictional lives. They offered pleasure as well as intellectual coherence for children and their teachers.

Students have really enjoyed the parts where, like, they've had to investigate something. They like being detectives. And we've done, we did about what really happened to Princess Diana and they enjoy that kind of looking at evidence and putting things together, they've enjoyed that. That was a highlight day. . . we can just dig and dig all day. It's great. They've also, you know, I feel they have benefitted a lot from the fact that they see the links between everything. (Alison Lee, Queensbridge)

A Kingstone teacher talked with enthusiasm of her class's choice of housing rather than eco friendly cars when thinking of sustainability:

Just before Christmas we started out, mantle of the expert and it was a housing company that was losing money and all this and it developed into them actually making their own self-sustaining house. But that came from them and that was like a group discussing in a meeting format and they discussed how they were going to do it and it all, all the ideas were coming, you know, from them.

*That's very new isn't it? That's not been done before in the last 2 years. Is that something that you brought in?*

Yes, Ondrie started looking at cars I think and I said, 'Can I do a similar sort of thing but with housing and see where that leads?' which is what I did.

*And did you think they'd got a grasp of what was required?*

Oh yes, because I've got 2 (boys with special needs) I've got 1 autistic boy and 1 boy who's not statemented but he's got very low ability and they ran

with it. They found out all sorts about how you could use toilet waste and recycle and, you know, they really got, for them that was fantastic and when they came to actually make the house and they had to do a presentation, a bit like a company presentation so they made a model, an actual model of a house and they found out all sorts about solar panels and wind turbines and how they could use plastic, recycle plastic and make wool and just really stuff. (Teacher, Kingstone)

These contexts generated a very wide variety of authentic tasks that took children far beyond the pen and paper activities so dominant in secondary schools. They interrogated data from information provided by the teacher or themselves; examined evidence; probed source material; inspected specifications, records, guidelines, regulations. Children offered, tested and contested theories; calculated and checked formulas; created artefacts; made recommendations and wrote, both in and out of role, for a very wide range of purposes. Underpinning all the tasks, the children talked, listened and conjectured, responding to the work of their teachers who had created resources and shaped tasks incorporating drama, film, model making, fieldwork, cooking, ICT and diverse other approaches.

#### **4.5 Coherence and depth**

Using contexts not only offered children a richer variety of ways of learning, it also became an organising tool for teachers. Faced with material from subject disciplines with which they were unfamiliar, it took time for the teachers to find the best way of structuring and sequencing activities to support learning and sustain children's journey from attraction to attention to concern. Here a teacher describes how she found an effective way to use 'The Arrival', a picture book by Shaun Tan. She had wanted to contextualise her scheme of work, which incorporated History, Geography, RE and Drama, within this story of a man forced to leave his home and find his way in an alien culture.

This arrival story, which is just working really, really well, because we hold on to a man, and we watch his story over the seven weeks. And the key things I've realised, the kind of secrets to making it work, are to focus on specific moments within the story. Don't try and do too much.

So we have five, they're pictures from the book actually, that we focus on and they drive everything else, these five moments. And out of these five moments come all of the History, Geography and RE that you need, and they're all tied to these five moments. So I really enjoyed discovering that, and having this epiphany that it's about moments.

I've had these two kind of strong realisations over this term. The one was about the moments, and that's like the secret structure in your enterprise, and the other one is about kids having ownership over it. And what I've been working on this term, very, very much, is how to give the students ownership over what they're exploring. Because if they're going to explore it for thirteen hours a week, they've got to really care about it. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

Kingstone teachers also welcomed this aspect. Teachers reported that their lessons had become more enjoyable because of their renewed delight in developing knowledge:

I don't see how you can teach geography without knowing about the history of the country you're looking at or about how you can teach the Bronte's for

example without knowing about the geography of the area that they were living in and it, I suppose without realising I've been, I've always thought that way 'cos I'm not the sort of person that's just very much 'my subject is the be all and end all'. I've always kind of looked at the bigger picture, but now it's like someone's given me a licence to say 'yes you're doing the right thing actually'. (Teacher, Kingstone)

For the Queensbridge teachers, the integration of the subjects within contexts provided rich opportunities for teaching and learning:

These kids can grab onto certain things and concepts, and they can fly with it. And I think that that can only be put through something like this enterprise. Because we would not have done that in history, you wouldn't be doing that in geography. And they are getting the idea of this bigger picture. And how things interlocked, which is a very important issue. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

The teacher leading the Enterprise using Mantle of the Expert explained how part of the geography curriculum had been incorporated into the bigger schema so that knowledge, skills and understanding had coherence for the learners:

They have done Google earth and they went on the computer and they each had a satellite image, which is part of what they have to do with Geography, and then they had to locate the gang territory . . . find areas of ambush . . . look at land usage. It's all necessary for the fiction to continue. And then they would come and cross reference with that map and do grid references and the next stage is, they can have groups, one of them is undercover and briefed outside and we found a new piece of evidence and they have to very quickly work out directions using that map in order for the undercover officer to get to Kelly's house before anything happens. So, again, there is a tension in that. So they're having to manipulate all the knowledge base in order to complete their jobs as WPU. . . we have to look at this in order to keep Kelly and her family safe. . . there is a need to know. The urgency is – she's in danger, right, so – who is on Taylor Road? Right – who's got the grid reference quick – so . . . you are all people in on it together rather than we (the teachers) are the people who know. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

As teachers became more confident about using drama, more of them turned to fictional contexts within which to embed learning. Some schemes of work have remained as 'real life' contexts where the children, as themselves, explore material. Sometimes these schemes of work incorporate simulations or very basic role play. Most teachers however, have drawn upon children's capacity for meaningful play, and used the 'Big Lie' of a fiction to examine truthful phenomena.

This allowed teachers and children to interrogate, safely, subject matter which would ordinarily only be dealt with by older students. This is because, using drama, the problems, the dilemmas, the students dealt with were as difficult as they agreed them to be. They were protected into experience, always aware that they were creating a fictional world but one which was truthful. So the worker in the tent-making factory could not agree to donate his tents to the Pakistan Earthquake Appeal (part of one of the Kingstone schemes of work) or the young woman phone the Crimestoppers hotline (part of one of the Queensbridge schemes of work), unless there was a shared agreement that this was 'reasonable' within the world the class was creating.

Together one class was asked to consider the implications for the tent maker's own livelihood; together the other class needed to acknowledge the potential danger the

young woman was placing her family in by her action. In one very moving piece of drama at Kingstone, a boy with severe learning difficulties was protected into the role of Bruno, the lead character in the novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, by both his teacher and his supportive peers. He was encouraged to track his thoughts in the role of Bruno, as he made first contact with the Jewish boy in the concentration camp. The teacher reported this as a most moving experience for her as he had begun the lesson reluctant to enter the classroom and had gradually through small role plays in pairs gained confidence to show his work to the whole group.

What children needed was a way to reflect on that new knowledge, so that they were able to understand it. Heathcote's praxis, 'action creates reflection, reflection leads to further action' (Heathcote 1989), with its emphasis on a succeeding task being born of reflection on its forerunner allows this to happen.

This meant that, at times, teachers were willing to follow a lead that emerged from the children during a lesson. Freed from the anxiety to cover breadth, given permission to plumb depth, they were confident about releasing control over the form of the lesson and they could respond to the creative drive of the children, allowing a lesson to develop in a way that the teacher may not have anticipated.

Every lesson doesn't have to be totally prescriptive. We don't say, right, we're going to do this in this lesson, this is all we're going to do. You know if the pupils think of something that wants to take them off (my) track then we're quite confident and happy to do that. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Children became co-constructors of their own learning, deepening their understanding of the material they were dealing with as they did so. In this way, they revealed to their teachers the extent of their readiness to handle demanding subject matter.

Understanding consists in grasping the place of an idea or fact in some more general structure of knowledge. . . Acquired knowledge is most useful to a learner, moreover, when it is 'discovered' through the learner's own cognitive efforts, for it is then related to and used in reference to what one has known before. Such acts of discovery are enormously facilitated by the structure of knowledge itself, for however complicated any domain of knowledge may be, it can be represented in ways that make it accessible through less complex elaborated processes. It was this conclusion that led me to propose that any subject could be taught to any child at any age in some form that was honest. (Bruner 1996 pp xi-xii).

#### **4.6 Dialogic learning**

Children, we now know, need to talk, and to experience a rich diet of spoken language, in order to think and to learn. Reading, writing and number may be the acknowledged curriculum 'basics', but talk is arguably the true foundation of learning. (Alexander 2004 p9)

Much has been written about the nature and quality of classroom talk that dominates in schools. (Alexander 2004, 2008, Black et al 1998, 2002, 2003, Saxton and Morgan 2006). The evidence reveals that teachers do most of the talking and that a great deal of the questioning curtails rather than enables dialogue in the classroom. That pattern was frequently broken in the two schools. Teachers were focussing on their pedagogical approach and adopting a much wider range of learning strategies. Those strategies, many of which were derived from drama methodology, emphasised

the value of collaborative and dialogic talk where ideas were developed within the group.

We've noticed in lessons that the pupils are gaining in confidence and the pupils are used to working together in groups, working in pairs, in small groups and as a large group, as a whole class. . . . they're quite willing to speak out and share their opinions whereas before, with, you know, with previous experience of year 7s they seem to be quite shy and perhaps unwilling to voice an opinion in case, you know, in case they feel silly about it or if anyone makes a comment about it whereas we think this way of teaching encourages pupils to say what they think and not be afraid of getting anything wrong. (Teacher, Kingstone)

When reflecting on the use of drama in the classroom and its effect on the quality of active listening, a teacher noted:

They're more willing to listen to each others' ideas and they get used to it quicker and because they see you, the teacher-in-role sometimes as well, they're quieter and more focussed.

She added,

. . . and it's certainly an opportunity where they can question more. And I like that. (Teacher, Kingstone)

It was not only increased confidence in speaking out that was a feature of this way of working; teachers encouraged sustained dialogue around emerging ideas.

Minute by minute lesson plans are not conducive to kids actually getting more out of your lesson. You need to be able to go, 'well interesting point. Let's explore that a bit further'. (Teacher, Kingstone)

They listen to each other very well and respond to one another. It's not, I never feel, that it's the teacher asking the questions for a discussion. I feel like they'll say, "Going back to what so-and-so just said". So there's a lot of work – acknowledging each other, facilitating each other's learning . . . it doesn't all come from the teacher. (Alison Lee, Queensbridge)

Much of the talk in the classroom emerged from the tasks the children were involved in and the teachers' fine-tuned ability to expand an opportunity so that dialogue could develop. There were times when teachers deliberately planned strategies overtly designed to promote dialogic learning. They would do this through their use of episodic drama, allowing children the opportunity to find a different voice for themselves within the group. Many differing, sometimes conflicting, viewpoints and experience could be 'inhabited' and, when later reflected upon by the group, be held up for scrutiny. Debra Kidd described a particular moment when a child was enabled to voice thinking that was at odds with his usual offerings. He was able to place this new strand of thought into the classroom for others to use dialogically *because* he was speaking in role.

There's another boy who's very, you know, he's characterised by very silly, immature behaviour and attention seeking and yet I've seen him in several lessons, and one particular lesson where we were looking at the Chipcot where he went into role as the little boy who was trying to protect a tree and his thoughts, and he is very, in his day-to-day interactions with other children,

he's very selfish and he's very demanding of attention and yet in role as this boy he was able to articulate the fact that he felt he'd failed, because he'd broken a promise, that he had let down the community and let down nature and his God and all this kind of thing. He was very articulate about the way that he spoke about that and demonstrated an empathy and an understanding of the responsibility of a community that he doesn't always show in his day-to-day interactions. (Debra Kidd, Kingstone)

A Queensbridge teacher explained how the episodic nature of the drama enabled the children to play with and voice multiple roles. In the overarching Mantle, where this group was framed as WPU, children needed to investigate the community where suspects and witnesses lived. They needed to create the people in that community so that later, as WPU, they could evaluate the potential threat from within it. This dialogic approach worked to deepen the complexity of the fictional world they were creating and interrogating.

They also played the gang members because we started to look at the gang and what it's like to be part of the gang. They played members of their families because we're looking at migration of people into Birmingham and a look at the generation gap between the gang members and their parents and grandparents. So they're having to look at ritual, religion and behaviour and manners and etiquette and all that kind of stuff . . . as WPU we're doing files on individual gang members . . . (using) drama to uncover key moments. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

Many teachers noted that the multiplicity of opportunities available to children to use and hear diverse 'voices' in a wide range of situations enabled children's oracy and, through that, their thinking to develop. A teacher from Kingstone encapsulated this

That, that's the main thing I think I've taken from it. The fact that they were, they were able to articulate their ideas in a, kind of, in a more detailed way than previous year seven classes that I've taught. (Teacher, Kingstone)

The impact on children's understanding was also noted by a Queensbridge teacher:

They're able to kind of explain their own thoughts and feelings. And to empathise with other people I think. That seems to have been a big thing. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

#### **4.7 Social aspects of learning**

This aspect of development, that is, the social relationships enabled by the new ways of working, were central to the teachers' sense of the achievement of the key learning objectives they had set themselves. It is worth looking at their responses in the context of their individual institutions to understand how the students' responded.

##### ***Queensbridge***

A teacher, who had begun her career at the school as a supply teacher but who is now one of the Enterprise team, confirmed that behaviour had improved because the students had more ownership of their learning.

Having come into it as a supply teacher I found the discipline very difficult and the children very disorientated and I think with the year 7s being in one class they have bonded better. Their behaviour is better. It's not wonderful but it is

better. And they seem to - what is the word - to have homed onto something and sort of taken it on as their own. And then when they go to the next one (Enterprise) they'll do that there. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

The close relationship between the Enterprise teacher, who was also their form teacher, and the class, also resulted in good behaviour. This established teacher-student relationship meant that issues of discipline could be dealt with more effectively.

Because it is their form group as well, you can walk past the rooms at the end of the day and the kids are in there that have been in trouble elsewhere or they have been late and so it is still that same teacher. And that's the clever bit. Because they don't get away with anything. And you go in, and you hear [the teacher] have a go at a child for being late in a way that really impacts on that child. It is so divorced from you going 'you were late, where were you?' Because she's entrenched in that child and their work. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

Some teachers thought it was significant that students became conditioned to these expectations of behaviour in their first year of secondary school:

They probably think it's just because they're in year seven and just from primary school, they probably think it's just the way it's done. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

Another teacher observed that this Enterprise approach fostered what he referred to as 'innocence' on the part of Year 7 pupils.

I think the lovely thing about it, is maintaining the Year 7's innocence. For example, at the end of Year 7, they are still willing to sing in assembly as a group. They haven't got that cynical; too cool to sing; they are still passionate about learning, which I really love. With the traditional method, they might not be so passionate about learning by the time they get to the end of the year. I think that is very powerful. That has come from the consistent message that as a group of teachers working so closely together we can give that. They are not exposed to anything else. This is what they think is normal, and coming from primary school working well in teams, why should we lose that? I think we've kept that really well. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

In addition to evidence in the form of the views of the teachers, Queensbridge provided statistical data about students' behaviour which supported their claims. The table below shows permanent and temporary exclusions from year 7 over the first year of the new curriculum model compared with, the year before its introduction.

Exclusions	2005-6 – traditional Y7 format			2006-7 – Y7 Enterprise format		
	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Permanent	0	0	2	0	0	0
Temporary	7	15	7	3	3	5

The vastly different figures may be accounted for by several factors including the school's introduction of a new Positive Behaviour Policy in September 2006 as well as the Enterprise model for the curriculum. But a more detailed analysis of the data suggests that it is the Enterprise model itself that had a significant impact on students' attitudes to their work in school.

Although teachers appreciated the new approach, there were times when spending more than half the week with one class could be problematic. Secondary school teachers have been used to a pattern of short encounters with students driven by coverage of content. Al Lee offered the teachers at Queensbridge a different model, based on managing extended periods of time and focusing on the quality of the relationship between child and teacher as the foundation for learning. She brought to the fore the child's experience of schooling.

There's nothing, nothing more powerful in the school than the relationship between teacher and student . . . when they go for, you know, one hour here, an hour somewhere else, really they're just passing through lots of different hands and you know it can be the case where teachers don't know students' names until January, because they've only seen them once a week for 14 weeks. You know, in between they've seen another hundred and something. (Alison Lee, Queensbridge)

Her work on Skills and Qualities in year one, which later became PLTS, offered teachers a framework for thinking about how to shape opportunities for learning in the domains of collaboration, creativity, problem solving, self managing and reflection. This complemented the changes in thinking about pedagogy and supported teachers as they trialled new ways of working.

### ***Kingstone***

Interviews with the Kingstone staff provided similar evidence of an increase in social learning, expressed most commonly as a perception that students had become more confidently engaged in lessons and had risen to the new challenges presented to them:

I think I've seen students become a lot more confident than they would have done in other situations because of that different student interaction and because we want them to get up and speak in front of their peers and in front of us. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Part of the reason given for this was the opportunity that they, as teachers, had been given to develop a topic in relation to student response, rather than by following a set programme of study. This freedom allowed them to use students' personal engagement to develop deeper learning. It was this that aided them in engaging students in more complex issues such as immigration and poverty which lay beyond their immediate experience. Debra Kidd, the creative partner, wrote of the work created for the novel 'Millions':

Many teachers talk of making learning 'relevant' to students, but there is a danger that this leads to a choice of topics, texts and situations which only reflect a child's own experience. The novel takes place on a council estate and you have lots of children living on a council estate for example. But children and human beings can relate and find relevance in all situations, if they are presented as universals. This was a key area for exploration in Millions (a children's novel). One of the themes in the novel raises the issue of charity and in particular the 'Water Aid' charity. Kingstone's students do not have to walk for five hours to get water. They are not prone to river blindness. How can they find relevance in this learning? How can they feel it rather than simply learn that water shortages exist? (Debra Kidd, Kingstone)

From other teachers' accounts it was clear that the students' voices were given central importance in thinking and planning the development of a unit. Again this is best summed up in the words of the drama worker, Debra Kidd, who consistently offered support to the team for developing their programmes of study in relation to the students' interests:

Being honest, it's very difficult but by building relationships with children, spending a longer time with them, helps you to do that by assessing the real journey that children are making and you're making as well. That's where the real learning can be assessed and it's the teacher contact time, compared with if you've got them once a fortnight, as a drama teacher would have had before. And yeah, the disadvantage is you might be teaching a subject in which you've never really had an interest, but if your teaching you've got to think about the bigger picture and about the children and about that. For example, I've not taught saints before or I've not taught RE and I've not taught history but it's about inspiring the kids and thinking that they've got to have a broader balanced curriculum. (Debra Kidd, Kingstone)

#### **4.8 Developing skills**

Queensbridge teachers expressed the view that the enterprise approach enabled them to focus on the development of skills: technical skills of, for example, literacy and numeracy, and cognitive skills of enquiry, analysis and evaluation as explained by a history specialist.

Well, for example, you know, if I say history, because I'm a history teacher. We would start off at 1066, and we end up at 1510 year eight. Now, I think that there are some interesting areas, because I'm a history teacher, but there are an awful lot of people in the school that would say what is the relevance to a school that is 50 to 80% Muslim? There is no relationship there and I think there's a valid point there. So, actually I think, so if we talking about skills you can almost do source analysis of stuff that happened yesterday. You don't have to look at sources at the Battle of Hastings to do source analysis. You know, and other area, for example, is to do the third discussion on the notion of bias. I mean, you can do a discussion on the notion of bias on a football match that happened last night. Any could probably do, and the kids could attach that idea and understand that far more easily than doing it on reports about the Battle of Hastings. You know, so, actually losing a lot of the history content doesn't bother me. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

A member of the Kingstone team emphasised the quality of language learning that had been enabled in role:

they are getting a really in-depth look at a particular topic, a particular area and when I look at their language they use, they did some news reports yesterday that we filmed and they were using this incredibly formal, structured, heightened language for the newsreaders that I wouldn't expect Year 7 to be able to do and all of them are using it, the kids with special needs, the kids who are high ability and I think, you know, there are so many instances of confidence developing, like Jamie standing up and facing the whole group yesterday. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Teachers in both schools commented on the quality of work and thinking produced by students. Here a Queensbridge teacher describes the creative process that led the students to produce writing of very high quality. She explained that the task of

writing the diary entry, in role, itself became an opportunity for reflection, an opportunity for 'thinking feelingly and feeling thoughtfully':

They felt what had happened, and the depth of the thought that was going into - it was stunning. Because they wanted to do it, because they love the drama they created, they really were interested in the character's dilemma. I think also that a lot of their own experience (is) coming into it because this is about . . . how a child might feel going against his traditions and wishes of the parents and grandparents. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

A teacher from Kingstone noted that new ways of teaching had enabled children to develop their skills in team working across a range of configurations and enabled them to develop the skill and the confidence to present their work to their peers

(Pupils) coming to the front and presenting work or assignments and projects that they've done, to the rest of the class and . . . maybe they're not at the stage yet where they would feel confident about coming to the front, individually, but they are quite happy to do that in small groups or in pairs and I think it's developing that confidence to get them to present their own work and explain their own work and justify what they've been doing. And I think it's giving them confidence and I think the way that we teach is geared towards that so we can help them to do that. (Teacher, Kingstone)

The Queensbridge teachers also reported that they had adopted a problem-solving approach, which encouraged independent learning, on both an individual and a group basis.

The children can think for themselves. And that to me is very, very important. And we try and develop their thinking skills. What I try and do is you know you don't just say here's a piece of paper, just do it. Let them work together, sometimes work on their own, and let them fathom things out, not just give them the paper and just do it. And I think they learn, they are, they are definitely learning. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

A teacher explained how she had used Heathcote's 'Levels of Meaning' - Action, Motivation, Investment, Model and Stance (AMIMS) – an analytical tool which was used to develop higher order thinking within the drama. (See Appendix.)

After the attack his sister, Fatima, did an appeal on Crimewatch, which I read out and they created, I was looking at dramatic action. And they created a moment of drama in which one of the gang members of the attack was watching the appeal, being confronted with the boy's sister - how they might feel when they were watching it. And they had to do it without words, find an object which can make meaning, and then do something with it which showed their character's response. And then they re-ran it with a parent or grandparent coming in again in silence, and they were working in a hugely detailed way, with professionalism and we then went on to do AMIMS, and to deconstruct what's behind an action. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

The teacher explained how the class had used AMIMS again the following day and the way it had enabled the students to reflect on their own lives and experience.

We went into looking at that boy who refuses to get married, and they used Dorothy's 'action motivation investment model and stance', to try and really

look at what that actually meant on the many different levels. And Jiab was talking about models in, like his father's got married to a white woman, and it is bringing in - there's just moments when their perception is way beyond their years. I think at this moment, like that, this is really working well. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

#### **4.9 Classrooms as communities of enthusiastic learners**

A Queensbridge teacher spoke for many teachers in both schools when she said:

. . . they are sort of immersed in the material and they want to write, they want to research, they want to do whatever . . . and the quality of the work they come up with, the content of the depth of thinking is far superior . . . (Teacher, Queensbridge)

Teachers commented on the opportunities that their newfound creativity in teaching allowed for the promotion of 'engaged learning'. The shift away from almost complete reliance on transmission teaching (itself encouraged by the content driven National Curriculum which the teachers were used to 'delivering') towards more collaborative learning and more frequent use of Heathcote's 'crucible' paradigm changed teachers' consciousness of what was possible and desirable. They are breaking away from the routine orthodoxy of the classroom where, Heathcote argues:

. . . the folded up position, using pens and paper still seems to be the pattern of how children spend much of their time in school. The tasks children carry out still seem to place stress on thinking as private individuals – silent for a lot of the time – and responding to the stimulus provided by the teacher. (Heathcote 1989)

Heathcote contends that this physically constrained, individualised pedagogical paradigm is not the one within which children best develop cognitively, socially and emotionally. Co-operative learning results in deeper participation, more opportunities for higher order thinking, more frequent generation of new ideas and solutions and greater transfer of what is learned in one situation to another.

Approaches in both centres, driven by learning rather than summative assessment, generated more student involvement, which encouraged a greater role for student voice and a more negotiated curriculum.

It's because we don't have this high-stakes test at the end of the year, the learning is driving what we are doing. If I say, right we are going to learn how to save the world they will say, 'right then teach us about global warming'. So they actually tell me what to teach. I had some students today who said, 'we learnt about leaves today so could we look at some under microscopes?' (Teacher, Queensbridge)

#### **4.10 Teacher-student relationships**

Another important feature of the work in both schools was that it enabled all of the teachers to establish closer relationships with students because they spent so much time with the same class, similar to the students' experience in their primary schools. This had benefits in terms of students' learning: for example, by providing a positive context in which criticisms could be made and accepted.

In some of the classrooms, teachers themselves worked inside the drama. When working in role alongside the students, the teacher would carry the responsibility to deepen and expand the complexity of the situation – always working against the first shallow or hasty response. At Kingstone, for example, a history teacher went in role as the Puritan owner of a piece of land on which an Elizabethan theatre had been constructed. He was interviewed by the students about his reasons for wanting the theatre closed down. The class showed real skill in questioning, bringing into play much of the knowledge they had studied in English lessons about the role of Shakespeare's plays. The teacher, working with a colleague from the team, developed his own understanding of the different learning which drama could enable as he used his answers to prompt the students into thinking more about the beliefs and personal commitments of that age, not simply about historical facts. With teacher-in-role, the 'social encounter' is very different from the traditional classroom and there is the opportunity to engender a very different discourse, and the learning made possible by it.

Heathcote draws from a model of classroom interactions described by Douglas Barnes (1976) to emphasise this aspect:

The pupil will always come into the school knowing things and able to do things. The teacher, because of the way schools are organised, is expected to be in control of the communication, and of course the teacher's control works at different strengths. The teacher can modify that control and give more freedoms, or may be rather poor at control, and not give much help. . . . we see the pupil's expectation about his role is bound to be a factor. What is expected or achieved in this classroom today with this particular person? A classroom is always a social encounter, and that social encounter will include the communications systems which occur. If you change the pupil's expectation because of the way you operate your paradigm, then you will change the communications system and you will change the social context. As soon as you change that, you offer the pupil other strategies for learning. (Heathcote 1989)

The pedagogy created by the teachers' focus on interactive learning (that is from learner to teacher, as well as the more conventional teacher to learner) enabled the 'personalisation' of learning, as identified by QCA as a key aspect for the organisation of the new secondary curriculum (QCA website, 2008)

In education, personalisation is the process of making what is taught and learnt and how it is taught and learnt match as closely as possible to the needs of the learner.

For teachers, it means observing learners closely, recognising their strengths and areas for further development and drawing on the full repertoire of skills and strategies to meet their needs.

For learners it means being engaged not just with the content of what is being taught but being involved with the learning process, understanding what they need to do to improve and taking responsibility for furthering their own progress.

#### **4.11 Teachers' professional learning and development**

It is one thing to invite a creative partner into a school to set up a project that stretches teachers and pupils for a limited time, energises them and is then expected to be returned to on occasion; quite another to commit a team of teachers from

different disciplines to a curriculum change that challenges the whole foundation of English secondary education – the integrity of discrete academic disciplines within which they themselves were inducted into the profession. It entails fundamental changes in teachers' thinking, their practices and their professional identities. All the teachers we interviewed spoke of the journeys of professional learning they had been on.

### **Kingstone**

The Cultural Studies project at Kingstone, as well as promoting risk taking amongst the pupils, also demanded greater risk and a considerable investment of time and personal commitment from a large number of staff. The pedagogy introduced by the creative partner as it began to take strong root in the school demanded serious career choices from staff, whose progression within the school system had hitherto been dependent, at least in the first stages, on subject specialism. The move from team teaching to individual responsibility for teaching a whole programme to a single class for a full year further required a very strong personal investment of time and professional development. As Matthew Milburn explained:

Some of the teachers feel slightly over-burdened, because it means they have to make a real commitment to Cultural Studies or to Curriculum for Confidence, so it inevitably eats a significant chunk of their timetable, which means that they've less time to teach what might be their real passion, which is Key Stage 4 I don't know, you know, Geography GCSE, for example, or what have you. So there's a balance to be struck, to be struck there and I think what we're seeing is the emergence of, kind of specialist Cultural Studies teachers, to an extent. (Head, Kingstone)

Many of the team were clear that this was a change they welcomed.

*To what extent and in what ways do you think your project has altered and changed your own pedagogy?*

I think the session lengths allow you to do far more group work and you are likely to develop things to a far greater depth. Since I've been teaching, as I said, thirty years, it was very much, 'this is what I'm going to teach on Monday'. You know this is what I'll teach next week and so on. [...] This is completely different. You've got that flexibility with Cultural Studies to bring in community work, like the Pearl of Africa's coming in and you've got that opportunity. You're not thinking 'Oh my God, I've got to do this because we've a test next week' and all that kind of thing. So it's fluid and it's flexible which is something that's very different to what I've been used to. (Teacher, Kingstone)

The teachers reported a growing confidence in the use of drama and a willingness to experiment within their own frameworks:

I think people have become more confident in using drama techniques, for example. I think they were quite reluctant at first, people didn't think they had the courage to get into role and use drama techniques and the actual classroom management of it, the desks and the chairs and the actual space but it's kind of second nature now to people when they're teaching. I don't know if still maybe a couple of teachers are still a bit reluctant, I think, but to most people, like I said, it's like second nature now and people feel at ease with being able to use it. (Teacher, Kingstone)

A case in point is this experienced drama teacher who joined the course in its second year:

I joined the team at the start of this year, in September and it was all new to me and I must admit I was a little apprehensive about it because, you know, obviously, I'd been used to teaching just Drama in Year 7 and suddenly being asked to be part of this was a little bit scary because it's taking you out of your comfort zone isn't it? But I have to say I've absolutely loved it, it's been a fabulous journey for me this year, it really has, so I started off with reservations at the start of the year and don't have any now at all... I think from a personal point of view, being a little bit precious as well over my subject because one of my job descriptions when I first came to teach here was to re-write the schemes of work for Drama at Key Stage 3, so that involved me sitting down and coming up with all these wonderful schemes of work for Year 7 Drama and of course then they became redundant because I had to scrap them and start again with Cultural Studies. So as a teacher I think you're sometimes a little bit precious aren't you, of the work that you put in and you're thinking, 'Oh, all these things that I would have liked to do,' but I soon realised that actually, you know, I could use a lot of that anyway in what we were doing and so, yes, I think my apprehensions were to do with that, with losing schemes of work that I'd written but as a result I got so many wonderful schemes of work that I wouldn't have using otherwise

*Do you think it actually added some weight in what they were doing, in that they were dealing with more pressing issues?*

That's it, more real-life issues. I think in Drama the schemes of work that existed, they were very much all make-believe type schemes, which are lovely and fun and there's room for that as well. Say, for example, I might have been doing a scheme of work on fairy tales and performance skills and the team building skills around fairy tales and we're now, you know, say, replace that with child labour, which is a much more relevant issue and it gets the children really thinking as well. Yes, it's worked just as well, it's been great.

*I think that impresses me, how deeply Year 7 can go into issues that we sometimes reserve for much older students, without jacking in the fantasy.*

Definitely, definitely and I think it's taught me that especially, because I just wouldn't have broached a subject like that. I don't think I would have expected them to respond to it in the way they had, so I'd have never given them an issue like that, I admit, to look at, I would never have thought of tackling something like that because I honestly wouldn't have thought they'd be ready for it, but they have impressed me so much with their mature response and, like you say, their deep understanding and thinking skills. (Teacher, Kingstone)

All the teachers interviewed felt that the programme had provided them with a special opportunity for professional development, made even more effective by the support of Debra Kidd in her role as creative partner. This creative partnership had enabled teachers with no prior experience of using drama in the classroom to develop confidence in this area. Here one young teacher explains how in-service professional development has been able to support his practice:

There's still a lot of room for improvement in the way that I've used drama but, I have definitely tried to push myself to use it and when I have done it's been successful, so it's coming. I'm looking forward to the days mid-way through July. We've some INSET on one Saturday where we're going to try and go back over the dramatic conventions and I'm looking forward to developing these. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Another young teacher explained how she had become more confident in her use of drama:

In the three years I've been teaching I haven't been a, particularly textbook type teacher and I've tried to develop ways of being quite creative but I think the biggest difference is the use of drama, particularly the teacher in role kind of drama. I've incorporated that quite a lot into other, other lessons now, other year groups. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Debra Kidd commented:

There are a small number of teachers now who are so skilled that they are beginning to mentor their peers and set up planning meetings with them. Some of the best lessons I've seen this term have been delivered by less confident staff who have made the time to plan with the more confident and it's great to see this building up independently of me. (Debra Kidd, Kingstone)

In addition to the support from Debra, teachers found support from their colleagues in the Cultural Studies team. Given the insight teachers were developing about the power of collegiate learning in their classrooms, it is no surprise that they found this a powerful way for their own professional learning to develop. The tradition in secondary schools has been, in most cases, that teachers work largely in isolation from their colleagues, meeting in departmental groups to discuss organisational rather than pedagogic matters. In Kingstone teachers worked together to focus on pedagogy, especially in this project's earlier phases, as this teacher illustrates, reflecting on the success of the first year's work:

I'm wondering if that's because of the input of the team, you know, that it's very supportive and I think that's why it really works you know. I can't, I don't think you could have a set-up like this, where there is not that team work. (Teacher, Kingstone)

However, subsequent expansion of the Cultural Studies team from 9 to 18 teachers created timetabling constraints which restricted the opportunity for all the Cultural Studies teachers to meet regularly together.

### **Queensbridge**

The 'Enterprise' curriculum model at Queensbridge also required significant changes in teachers' pedagogic understandings, perspectives and practices. The following comments were typical.

*To what extent does it differ from your normal national curriculum based lessons?*

Hugely wildly different. Incredibly different. I mean normal lessons are an hour so there is the starter, main activity, plenary and off you go. Even with an excellently planned lesson, by the time I see them again in two days time,

it is very hard for me to link anything together, but here, I see them every day at least two hours a day and we can link everything together. With this enterprise, we can follow on and plan targets. It is just so much more effective as a teaching method. [...]. It's hugely different, I mean so much more exciting to teach, so much more exciting for the children I hope, and they certainly feed that back. I feel much more energetic about teaching this than I do about teaching traditional classes. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

For some teachers this represented a challenging professional journey of transformation of their way of teaching. We asked one teacher who was involved in the project for the first time this academic year how teaching her Enterprise this time compared to the first time she had taught it.

Better in myself because I know more about what I want from the children whereas before I didn't realise what I wanted from them. More structured and I've become more confident and what I want from them and being a maths specialist you know it's been very difficult to me to revert to the English and I've had to learn so much. Because I was so rigid with the time. I was like, that hour, we can do this, this hour we can do that, and now through the enterprise I have realised the modules and realised that you don't have to do that you can use that time and sometimes even flows into the next two hours. As long as you do what you have plan to do by the end of the week.

*It's very interesting, the journey that you have been on. You must have changed as a teacher?*

Absolutely, completely I have to say I am inclined after 30 years of teaching I am quite chalk and talk because of the maths because I just felt... there is a lot of investigation in maths, and so on, but there's so much basic stuff that these kids have to know and I know it and I've got to teach it to them and I have had to get out of that whole mode of teaching. What I've found is that we can bring everything into one lesson and it will flow over into other lessons. (Teacher. Queensbridge)

The initial drama basis of the project provided a coherent methodology which is still influential.

The thing that was of most value to that was the teacher training and the explicit conversations that happened around it and as such that it undoubtedly given us a legacy. There is a heritage there that we are using now. (Head, Queensbridge)

Comments by several teachers supported this claim. Some teachers discussed 'Mantle of the Expert' training they had received at a course where Ondrie Mann from Kingstone had given a presentation.

*Have you had any support from anybody in trying this out?*

Oh yes we had lots of support. Yes.

*Specifically the Mantle of the Expert?*

Yes, we went on a drama course in[...] Nottingham. Yes, yes and I found the work that Ondrie does absolutely amazing. And like he said, it's not perfect,

it's not, and he said everyday I'm trying something new and, but he said, and what I learnt there I just was so excited about it. (Teacher. Queensbridge)

Drama methodology not only provided teachers with a new pedagogic perspective and repertoire of skills, it acted as a catalyst for teachers to try other forms of creative teaching. A crucial bridge from drama to a wider conception of creative teaching was provided by the advent of Personal Learning and Thinking Skills. They provided a language for creative teaching which was not restricted to that of drama. A drama teacher spoke about a new 'enterprise' pedagogy, born of drama but shaped by PLTS.

So it becomes a line of enquiry, and I think that's the, it's the Enterprise way of teaching and I think it had to be born out of something. So it was born out of drama. Because we wanted it to be creative, so it had to come out of drama and it did. And to have the confidence I think, here's the answer, to have the confidence to deliver an Enterprise to a group of students for thirteen hours a week, you have to have a bank of drama skills. But now you find people are going off and they're cooking with their kids. [...] We're off to Fox Hollies [nearby special school] with our kids, we're going off to the science place with our kids. To the museum in Liverpool with our kids, and all of that is bred out of a confidence which came from saying, 'How do we use drama to make our classrooms more creative?' But now it's not a drama pedagogy, it's a creative enterprise pedagogy, and...

*I was just thinking of the NACCE reports, so it's teaching for creativity, creative teaching, creative learning. So you're saying this is creative teaching which is teaching for creativity which leads to creative learning? I'm not trying to put words in your mouth, I'm just trying to get at something.*

Yes, I am, I am and I think a big step forwards in it, if you want to pin it down to something which means something, rather than just going 'Oh yes, we teach the Enterprises, it's really cool', is the PLTS skills, because they were new this year and our language has constantly, become about being reflective learners, creative thinkers, independent enquirers, [...] effective participators, self managers and team workers. [...] That's where the big difference has come in, with the PLTS skills, because that took us away from the language of drama. [...] And that, that was the big break I think, from the language of drama and that kind of fenced off area, and took us into our own area, which belonged to us. And that's probably where the shift came. You know, into a, into a new thing. New kind of teaching, new pedagogy, which is framed by them, but then when you look at creative thinker, and effective participator and team worker, that's all born out of drama. So we had to start there. That's not where we're finishing. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

As at Kingstone, support from drama specialists was complemented by the collaborative support of team members. Here a teacher comments on the journey she has made as part of the team

It came out in a meeting a couple of weeks ago, we were kind of, we were reflecting on what the Enterprise actually has become for us, and I think we all agreed that it, you have to have, moments. That things are bred out of them, and not a great big, you know, thing. So I've enjoyed that, and I've really enjoyed recently as well, now we are all a lot more confident, we've started to take it a step further and we needed this second year together to do that.

We'll all chat to each other about our frustrations now . . . we're happy to go, 'No it's still not right, and there are these elements that aren't right' You know I don't know where the point will be that we ever say that it's right, but I think we are at a point now where all of us can say, this is right for now, but it's going to carry on growing.

So that journey's been really exciting as well you know, and to hear people on the team saying, like describing activities that they're running now, you know, with such kind of flair and creativity is really special. When somebody turns round and describes one of their lessons to you and you think, that is absolutely amazing. Can you ever imagine planning a lesson like that three years ago? So, I think in terms of staff development there's been, you can see now such a change. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

When asked what she would change she, indirectly, revealed how important being part of a mutually supportive, risk-taking, team of colleagues had been for her professional development as she answered

I don't think there is much that I would change at all really, but perhaps that's because we've changed along the way and that's one of our strengths as a team, is that we can and we have. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

An hour a week has been allocated to the team for sharing thinking and practice, though it is unclear if the strong team ethos which the Queensbridge Year 7 Enterprise teachers have built is as evident in the extension of the new approach to Year 8.

We were interested in whether the initial drama-based impetus had become diluted, perhaps even lost, as the programme developed. It was the view of the headteacher and some of the teachers we interviewed, that there had been a movement away from the initial drama-based methodology to a broader 'active learning' approach, but that, as teachers gained more experience and confidence, there had been a return to making use of drama methods.

I just think that if you're tracking through what's happened then, to put it bluntly, or to use shorthand, a period of disillusionment or scepticism about Mantle and about the validity of a drama model would mean that you could track, in different teachers, differing degrees of movement away from something that looks like a complete Mantle of the Expert model. However, the thing that I would fight most strongly for would be a whole load of language that blurs a false distinction between drama in education and the arts and good classroom practice that's creative and that values children. [...] So we were particularly fortunate to have Maria's services because I think what happened was that even where people were beginning to say, 'Well, this drama in education thing involves too much setting up and too much teacher talk and it's too slow and it's then too easily wrecked by, you know, an instant that punctures the drama in a given situation', that nonetheless they were recognising that there was a change in the dynamic of didactic teacher, power-centre around the teacher, that the valuing of a child's voice, that children's experience had a place in crafting the learning, that the need for risk, that the opportunity to engage a child emotionally, albeit through music and film or video, rather than through a drama. That's some of what would have resonated with Gardner and multiple intelligence theory, or any number of other reference points that seek to make the classroom a more experiential

and a more complete, whole, place of learning for a child, that a lot of those things were happening and I think that those are essentially the qualities of drama in education, which is why I wouldn't want a simple kind of division or dichotomy between well actually that this science-based unit has actually become very conventionally science-orientated with a heavy knowledge base and assuming therefore that the pedagogy's been unaffected by the journey that we've been on. So, having giving that slight proviso, the simple answer to your question was 'yes', there are some teachers and some units of work that have been less wedded to Mantle and an arts basis for what they, or for how they teach than others, but as I said before, as a complete team, the team of teachers as they have grown and changed a little bit, has re-engaged explicitly more with Mantle and is more confidently seeking to work through role more. (Head, Queensbridge)

The view of the headteacher is that he would like to see drama remaining an influential component of the project pedagogy.

I'm hoping that drama techniques and conventions will become stronger in the pedagogy because without, if you simply say 'OK we've created a semi-primary model', there are lots of good things about the organisation that support transition that fit year 7s. It would be very easy to say they come and do five different projects and one of those projects has got quite a lot of drama in it and there's a strong emphasis on socialisation and collaboration and learning skills. That for me would feel something of a shortfall to what we originally set out with. (Head, Queensbridge)

#### **4.12 Summary of the new pedagogy**

The prominence of curriculum in English educational discourse has meant that we have tended to make pedagogy subsidiary to curriculum. My own preferred definition has it the other way round. Pedagogy is the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted, Curriculum is just one of its domains, albeit a central one. (Alexander 2008, p47)

When the headteachers at the two schools embarked upon this change, they too were concerned with something wider than curriculum. It was not, primarily, *what* was taught that concerned them but *how* teaching happened. They wanted to develop a pedagogy which served the interests and needs of the students in their schools.

Over the course of this project a pedagogy evolved where the act of teaching and its attendant discourse - the deliberate honing of teaching skills, the thousands of small decisions consciously made, the sharing and evaluating of practice - all contributed to profound changes in the quality of education available to students and to the professional development of the teachers who worked with them.

The pedagogy that evolved can be characterised by

- Teachers becoming aware of their ability to shape the nature and quality of the encounter between teacher and student and student and student. 'There is no end to the variety of engagements available to the inventive teacher' (Heathcote 1989)

- teachers understanding that learning contextualised in situations and events with human significance enables students to think feelingly and feel thoughtfully
- teachers recognising that thinking, acting and speaking from inside a situation enables new insight, knowledge and understanding to be socially constructed
- an understanding that it is the dilemmas inherent in the contexts selected by teachers which provide an intellectual coherence for students as they probe bodies of knowledge across a range of disciplines
- a shift in emphasis from acquisition of information to skill in seeking out and analysing information (e.g. from learning historical facts to thinking as a historian)
- an acknowledgement of the importance of talk and dialogue as the foundation for thought
- an understanding that active and collaborative work offering a rich diet of experience to students enhances learning

## 5. Students' learning

### 5.1 The importance of student voice

Jean Rudduck has argued that one source of data that has been consistently overlooked by those seeking ways of making effective change in schools has been the opinions of those most closely affected by change: that is the teachers and learners themselves. In particular, Rudduck's work has highlighted the benefits to be had by attending to student opinion, especially when this relates to their learning, their relationships with teachers and their identities in school (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004, p.2). In the previous section we have considered the ways in which teachers reported their work in relation to the new pedagogy, in this we look to the students for an insight into the effectiveness of the learning experiences the new courses provided for them. Their views were recorded over the course of the project, sometimes individually, sometimes in small groups. They were asked to talk about their perceptions of how their lessons developed and the parts they played in them and to comment on ongoing work in terms of their assessment of their achievement,

In the classroom the new approach had allowed the students to find their own voice, as Ondrie Mann, the team co-ordinator at Kingstone, explained:

The children are put in that position now where they feel that they're confident enough to tell us what's working and what's not working, but it's the fact that they've got the ability to spot that and so they're becoming more evaluative and reflective in what they're doing that's important. As teachers we are always doing power over kids. We sit them down and tell them that they're being lazy or they're not as involved as they should be or we ask closed questions so they can come up with the answer that we already know: 'Is that the right way to treat somebody do you think?', that kind of thing. You give them only rhetorical questions. But now they're getting the opportunity to do that to us and the fact that they're able to do that, I think we've got quite a healthy situation developing. (Ondrie Mann, Kingstone)

### 5.2 Social learning

Interviews with students in both schools supported teachers' accounts of the learning they understood to be taking place in relation to how they worked together both with each other and with their teacher. The students frequently commented on the positive relationships created by working in a range of groups, identifying this as an important feature of the new learning environment that was being established. Effective grouping had led to the creation of good relationships between them and their teachers as well as with their peers. At Kingstone, for example, there was a general feeling amongst students that Cultural Studies lessons were in some way special and their teachers more tolerant than most of those they had encountered previously or elsewhere in the school. The following is representative of opinions expressed by other students in the Kingstone group interviews:

I think we've got some good teachers (for Cultural Studies) because there are others here who you've just got to do what they say, but with Miss X and Mr Y they talk to us about what we're doing and we can then go off and find out stuff for ourselves. You're given something to think about and it's up to you what you do. (Teacher, Kingstone)

The openness that their teachers allowed in class created the necessary conditions for a better understanding of each other to be fostered:

I like it how it's all open, you know, and it's a lot more convenient. It's like a lot of lessons all pushed in together. You get to know everybody a lot better throughout your first year so they're not like dividing us. It involves a lot of drama and we've set up like little security companies and used cardboard cameras. It's really good teamwork and when we pull it all together you feel proud of your group. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Students at Queensbridge also described their teachers as being very open to them and their opinions. Here a group in a lower ability set were recalling their first Enterprise, which had occurred nine months earlier, in which they had used drama to explore the question, 'What is loyalty?' The students had worked in role as members of a Witness Protection Unit (WPU) for some of the time. One student is speaking:

And we were all like adults and Ms Mills treated us like adults and even when we were not in the role, she still treated us like adults.

*And did you like that?*

Yeah because most teachers treat us like kids, like we don't know nothing yet we know a lot of things and Ms feels like she respected that. [*All nod in agreement*] And when we're not in the role or nothing, it was like she still respected us.

The Enterprise model had allowed for the development of mutual respect based on knowing each other better which had a positive effect on the students' ability to work together. Two students from 7S, the lowest ability group, composed of 17 children all of whom had Statements of Special Needs, illustrated the link between the teacher-student relationship and students' engagement with learning. This exchange occurred half way through an hour-long interview about the 'Who makes us think?' Enterprise and followed a detailed and lengthy description given by the children of their activity.

*What would you say made this so good?*

Christine: That chart. And she like lets us talk.

Lorraine: And she listens to us.

*Tell me more about that, give me an example.*

Christine: You know how some teachers say, 'Put your hand up', well if you say something and you haven't put your hand up, she doesn't shout at you. She gives you a smile and tells you to put your hand up. But she doesn't shout at you.

Lorraine: But if you get a 2 or a 4 yeah, then she shouts at you. Because she's not pleased, because she wants you to go up, to go higher.

*To go higher?*

[*Together*]: Yeah.

*And she knows that you can?*

[*Together*]: Yeah.

These students' comments underline the important role played by the teachers in taking into account the pupils' expectation about their role in relation to that of the teacher. Again, it is Heathcote's work which illuminates how the change in patterns of communication supports this. Addressing the 1989 NATD conference she had argued:

The pupil will always come into the school knowing things and able to do things. The teacher, because of the way schools are organised, is expected to be in control of the communication, and of course the teacher's control works at different strengths. The teacher can modify that control and give more freedoms, or may be rather poor at control, and not give much help. ... If you change the pupil's expectation, because of the way you operate your paradigm, then you will change the communications system and you will change the social context. As soon as you change that, you offer the pupil other strategies for learning. (Heathcote 1989. See also Appendix)

The students' accounts of their learning in both schools confirmed that teachers were taking care to incorporate their students' prior knowledge in the development of the curriculum and in turn the students gained confidence in themselves and others, thereby creating a virtuous circle of trust and high expectation.

### **5.3 Curriculum: content knowledge and skills**

We also asked what the students had found most compelling in the content of the curriculum and the learning that was associated with the topics they had chosen as most engaging or thought provoking. At Kingstone, the students were asked to bring a sample of their writing which they considered represented their best achievement in the subject. Their choices revealed a creative variety and provided an insight into the scope of the curriculum work they had undertaken within the Cultural Studies course. Students in this school are taught in mixed ability groups and all the students interviewed, including one lower ability boy, Andrew, talked with enthusiasm of some aspect of lessons they had experienced. Surprisingly each interviewee had selected a different feature of the year's work to present, explaining both thoughtfully and critically what had caught their attention. Andrew, who was described by his teacher as having a tendency to be disruptive and disaffected, selected the issue of cruelty to animals as a topic he had thought most about. The work that had led to him thinking about this had had as a central theme commitment and had explored a range of people holding strong opinions.

I picked people who work for animal rights, like for the chickens (as my role model). What they do is, they put 'em in for fighting and put like a steel pole on the end of their foot so that they'd cause more damage to chickens, which, that isn't very kind. My next one's banned, and I'm glad it is, because they used to have a tamed bear and then what they did is, once they'd like chained it proper, got the bear so that it was all angry and all that, they sent two or one dog out to the bear and the bear would just kill it, which isn't very nice to the dog or the bear.

He could recall clearly the lesson from which his own interest had sprung:

One day we did about Chipcot people and how they felt about their beliefs, like. There were these trees and there was this boy who really loved this tree and chief said that this opposite tribe were coming and they were going to cut down the trees so they could build a temple and the people didn't want that to happen 'cos they really loved these trees 'cos they liked nature and they didn't want to hurt anything whatsoever. So, they ended up hugging the trees and then the other tribe came and they said, "If you don't move we'll end up killing you as well," and they didn't move, they wanted to stay and there were that little boy who were still there and he could hear people getting killed because they wouldn't move because they felt so strongly about the trees and then they ended up getting rid of 'em like. So not just did they kill the trees, they killed the people as well just to get to the trees, because them people had such a strong belief in 'em and they didn't want anything to happen to them.

Jane, a student in the same group with a stronger academic profile, shows a more complex understanding when describing what for her had been a key issue.

Well I'm standing up for whales, because they can't speak for themselves and the Japanese want to start hunting them again so I'm standing up for whales. You need to stand up for what you think is right. I've done a report on biodegradable plastics and recycling.

*They get into the ocean don't they so can they get sucked into whales and choke them?*

Yes, and in the next seven years all the sites the landfill sites in Great Britain will be full.

*Was that part of your biodegradable report?*

It was, it was because so far this year we had to do about things we felt strongly about, so I wrote about recycling and how bags, plastic carrier bags, if they get to the sea, to a turtle look just like a giant fish and they eat them and it fills their stomach and doesn't digest so they think they're full and they starve to death. I wrote about that and had I written a newspaper report earlier this month, or last month, about biodegradable plastics, so I looked it out again and extended it.

Despite the difference in their language – Jane a fluent and confident speaker, Andrew more hesitant and limited in his vocabulary - both show that they had committed themselves to finding out more about a particular topic by producing work which was related to the world outside the school and its curriculum. Jane's response also illustrates shows how redrafting had become embedded in her learning process as she adapts and extends an earlier piece of work which expresses ideas about something she feels strongly about- the death of turtles and the connection with plastic bag disposal. Similarly, Anne, a girl of lower ability, who has described herself as 'not, like, really confident enough' described how she had found her voice in role-play as a mother separated from her child in the Pakistani earthquake. She describes how this given role shapes her response:

I'm Jasminder in the play, so I've got quite a big part and a few scenes.

*What happens to Jasminder?*

She's talking to neighbours while they're going shopping and she gets a phone call saying that her daughter's ill. So she has to go and there's an earthquake and I get stuck in the earthquake but I'm only injured and I go to the funeral 'cos the dad dies.

*Oh, that's really sad. Do you feel that when you're doing it?*

Yes, 'cos like you have to act it out, you can't laugh or giggle, you have to be really serious.

*Do you find that hard?*

No.

This is a surprising answer from a girl who lacks confidence and appears quite hesitant in talking to the interviewer.

Each of these three students has found an individual path into exploring a personal response to important cultural issues, fusing their own interests with ideas introduced to them in class and with support of teachers in role who have helped them identify new ways of thinking.

The Queensbridge teachers also provided strong evidence of pupils who had been able to work more confidently in the Enterprise model and shown an intellectual maturity not always evident in more traditional ways of working:

We were just talking about Imran and saying he's a bit scatty, like he doesn't follow instructions first time, because they just don't go in and he is the type of child that always needs to be looking at you and watching you talk otherwise he just switches off. I was saying that I didn't think he would really cope so well in the more traditional curriculum model because he would have to find his own way, here there and everywhere he would get distracted on the way, and the other day we were discussing a debate, should people be allowed to wear religious dress and jewellery, and he was so eloquent and I mean he really was on a different level to the others in terms of the maturity of what he was saying and he was talking very, very clearly about how the media feeds terrorism and how now we all think that anybody in a hijab is a terrorist and why that is. And being more - I would have expected most of them to have gone a bit more black-and-white about it - a little bit more informed but he really was very, very fair about the whole thing and being a Pakistani boy himself I was really interested to kind of pick that apart with him and he just led the whole discussion, he was well away in his element. He was well away. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

Imran was asked about what he had been doing in his Enterprise:

We have been thinking about religious stuff such as religions and the culture of England and the typical stereotypes of English people, like they wear smart suits and talk really posh. We were doing that on the first day and we were just trying to think of what kind of culture and the culture of England. So we were writing down what we were doing and what we thought of England and typical English people.

Imran was then invited to show his written work and talk the interviewer through it.

*And now we're getting to 'should people be allowed to wear clothing and jewellery to express their faith?'*

I think yes, you know, because we live in England and people say that it is a multicultural area and people are allowed to express their feelings and their religions and slowly and slowly the government are stopping people from wearing their religious stuff and they keep saying it's a multicultural area. But then they can start saying to themselves 'Are you sure it's a multicultural area because I'm not getting to do my religion?' And I told Miss that as well.

*Why do you think the government is doing that?*

I know there is a reason behind it, because people are saying that they are getting intimidated and scared of people wearing someone walks out of nowhere, and everything is all black, and you can only see their eyes just staring at you and I said to myself I would feel scared and I kept asking about my table if scared'. [Note here how he is using the group here to test his hypothesis.] I think that is a reason why they're doing it, not that they're being racist or anything discriminating against anyone, for the sake of the public.

*Right but, you don't agree?*

I do agree a bit, but not all the time, because when we're working on our human rights miss told us that some people have two rights just like Islam because the Koran gives you rights and in England you have colour rights as well, and like the two like mix that you can sometimes choose one right.

Imran's explanation provides a good example of what Heathcote has called the 'crucible paradigm' where 'we are stirring things around together' and the teacher is absolved from the responsibility to be the holder of all knowledge. Information, experience and insight, from any member of the group, (the 'we' rather than 'them') can lead to a shared deeper understanding. It draws on what Bruner (1996) describes as the 'distributed intelligence' of all participants in the classroom. The gist of this is to do with entering a community in whose extended intelligence you share. It is that subtle 'sharing' that constitutes distributed intelligence. There were many more examples in both projects of pupils providing information from their own, or their family's experience: in this Queensbridge example they share a deeper cultural knowledge of Islamic faith, at Kingstone pupils brought in family experiences of the war in Kosovo and the Miners' Strike.

#### **5.4 Thinking for themselves**

Increased independence of thought was identified in Kingstone students' written work, which demonstrated the ability to write for a range of purposes and audiences with enthusiasm and focus. One writing task, for example, asked students, after exploring the process of canonisation which is a key theme in the novel, *Millions*, to provide a letter of application for sainthood presenting to a council of judges a biography with evidence of the key requirements for such a title (mortification, holy devotion, sacrifice and evidence of the execution of two miracles). One child who was described by her teacher as of average ability began her application dramatically:

My story begins before I can remember. My mother and father couldn't afford me as they were young and beautiful and a baby would suck the youth right out of them. So I grew up in a children's home.

In the next example, Rachel proudly presents a collage of work developed in the unit called Plots and Protests

Well, I've chosen my letter home for black civil rights, which is the first one. Then behind it I've put like a protest poem that I wrote. *(Reads)*

Monday to Friday's is long enough long enough;  
We ought to be doing other stuff,  
Say no, say no, say no,  
Saturday's are for sleeping and we're all weeping,  
Say no, say no, say no.  
We're all at wits end about us coming to school at the weekend,  
Say no, say no, say no.  
Refuse to come, however fun they make it, refuse to take it,  
Say no, no, say no.  
Saturday school sucks, drop your book and looks,  
Say no, say no, say no.

Another reason that many of the Kingstone students gave for the success of the Cultural Studies course was that they had found a direct relevance to their own lives and families. Here a less articulate boy talks about a theme also emerging from the Plots and Protests work, based on the 1984/5 miners' strike

I enjoyed work ont' miners' strike 'cos it were good when we got into role, it were real interesting.

*What role did you have?*

A miner.

*A miner? Have you got any personal connections to mining?*

Yes my granddad used to be a miner.

*Did you talk to him about his experience?*

He's died, that's why I liked what we did about it, 'cos my granddad used to be a miner.

A boy whose family had fled to England from Kosovo when he was eight, talked first about how he thought Cultural Studies helped young people learn about the world situation. He went on to explain how he had been helped to think more deeply about his own family's situation:

*What pieces of work are you best pleased with this year?*

I think it would be, I'm not quite sure which, I'm not sure what I did, but I wrote here about Karma and Karma's like the balance of the good things that you do with the bad things that you do. I think the topic was Hinduism.

*Hinduism, yes and you say that it helped you learn a lot about yourself?*

Well, I just wrote that I believe in Karma because I think that it's actually guided me through all my life. I mean, I try to do good but everyone has like their bad moments and I think I got repaid because I got out of the war and if

not I would have died instead. So that's why I try to be good so I may have a better life.

This is the most striking example of personal experience shared in class, but other Kingstone pupils reported researching and sharing aspects of their own identity, discussing an important role model and having been prompted to think about the importance of education more seriously because their research on child labour had raised issues related to lack of schooling. Similar kinds of personal engagements had sprung from the work in Queensbridge. Here a boy describes how a particular aspect of the work he had been doing on identity had caught his interest:

It's basically, the home, where is your home? What's your area, what's around your home? Do you know what's really going on around the world? And that was kind of basically like connecting it altogether, and then we were doing a flags of all around the world, we did many flags... They are not treating black people fairly some time ago. And I think this connects all around the world, like the world everywhere is kind of like our home. It's kind of like the place to be everywhere and I think that's what it's all connecting towards.

*What did you like doing most?*

Making the flags, because it was really nice referring back to Pakistan once in a while and remembering a lot about them, because I don't usually visit a lot now because I have visited it this year, and I really miss it and I can express my feelings on a piece of paper and write down everything I know about it and tell like people I have pride and faith in my home country, but I live in England, I was born in England but I can show that I am from two cultural places and I can come back and mix them together to make one human race kind of. Pakistan is a separate place at the world England is a separate place in the world. But there is no reason why them two countries can't connect. Many people can connect them such as me; my own culture's Pakistan but I live in England and make the best of both countries and that's what I really like.

## **5.5 Working with challenging curriculum content**

Challenging fixed beliefs and developing more thoughtful responses to complex issues was a key element of both projects. At Kingstone, Tracy, a girl who had said she had found a particular topic difficult to study, revealed how despite this the discussions had enabled her to think harder about the issues involved:

*You said you were studying civil rights and you didn't like it?*

It were upsetting to find out what white people treat black people like and it showed you differences between some towns in America where black people live and where white people live 'cos white people have all these big new houses and stuff and black people were living in this, like, horrible town and there were all segregated between, and there were like black people in one area and white people in other and you weren't allowed to mix with black and white.

*Do you think it's important to know things like that?*

Yes, I do, because if you've got to find out what happens in the world somehow and sometime, but it were a bit upsetting.

*Why do you think it affected you like that particularly?*

Because I didn't really know what it were like before. I knew that, obviously, like racism and bits like that happen but I didn't know it was as bad as what it was and like not, in places here, in England.

The seriousness of the curriculum content selected in both schools allowed their students to project themselves into the experience of others to gain deeper insight and empathy for their cultures. At Queensbridge, during the first year, work in the Humanities Enterprise was based on the big question 'What makes us feel safe in the world?' and much of the work was focused on the Middle East, as very many of the children are familiar with current events there. The teacher reported that they were as likely to garner news from Al Jazeera as any of the UK terrestrial channels. This scheme of work took the class on a journey from a bomb blast in contemporary Jerusalem to the crusades, to the centuries of contested claims on Jerusalem, through the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel. By the second year, the teacher had narrowed the scheme down to a study of the Holocaust in order to move from breadth to depth with his classes. The children were tasked with discovering the fate of Sarah Goldberg and her story took them into the holocaust. This is an excerpt from a piece of writing describing a Jewish wedding in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Nazi occupation. The young writer shows an understanding of, and empathy with, a culture that is often misunderstood by fellow students:

We must remember conditions in the ghetto for future generations, if I do not live to see the end of this dreadful conflict. People must know the terrible situation us Jews found ourselves in. the marriage of my brother was one highlight in an otherwise awful experience.

It started when my brother asked his wife to marry him. She said yes and the wedding was on, but because we were in the ghetto it wasn't easy. They were making a list of what they needed. The first item was wine and being 13 I had to get it.

... It was only two days before the wedding and most people were chipping in on helping with the wedding. Some people volunteered to make a dress for the bride and a gown for the groom. Someone even tried to bribe the guard for two rings. He got shot.

Today is the eve of the wedding. We have managed to get hold of food. It wasn't much because food is scarce. My brother was finally ready. His nerves were getting to him because he could hear the SS marching.

The use of drama (ritual, thought-tracking, followed by writing in role) had enabled the writer to incorporate earlier knowledge gained of life in the Warsaw ghetto with new information about traditional religious practice (Judaism) and to forge a shared and deeper understanding of human behaviour.

Tony, described as being often very poorly motivated, reported finding some of the work they were currently doing 'boring', particularly the historical work based on the murder of Thomas a Becket. But he too had been drawn into fuller engagement by taking part in a role play based on a similar theme that enabled him to make connections between the two situations:

Er, this one's good that we're doing now.

*What is it about?*

Er, Joseph, Jacob.

*Joseph and . . . ?*

No, Jacob and his twelve sons.

*And his twelve sons? But Joseph is one of them isn't he?*

Yes.

*What are you doing then, are you acting apart in it?*

Yes we're like doing plays and like, a group of us will be farmers, I mean like being veg pickers and that and then the other group camels. We're doing opinions, what we feel like when Joseph's not doing anything. .

*Why is he not working, do you think?*

'Cos he's too busy day-dreaming.

*And what's going to happen to him?*

They're going to chuck him down a well and murder him.

*And so is it a bit like Thomas a Becket?*

Yes.

*Somebody who they don't like?*

But this is more exciting.

Tony then gives a clear reason why cultural studies lessons enable him to take part in lessons willingly:

I'd say it's good fun and I like it because it's fun 'cos you like get to talk to your friends and that but you get to work as well and you get to like become people and that and none of your mates laugh when you're doing it, so you don't feel right embarrassed.

It was clear that a role-playing element allows pupils to find their own way into topics is helping boys like Tony to enjoy participating fully in lessons by encouraging them to make connections between different kinds of experience and situations. From the murder of Becket his class moved on to read the children's novel, *Millions*, which led to a consideration of how saints were canonised. The creation of links has enabled to see connections even though some work has been less interesting to him. The teachers also gained a sense of achievement from their pupils' ability to engage with difficult and challenging ideas:

Yes, with 7L in particular, we've had hours of discussion - and this is a class that couldn't listen well at all, it was one of their weaknesses - actually listening to each other. I had a double lesson with them for two hours and they just did not want to stop discussing [issues of immigration and racism]. They got so deeply into it, yet you couldn't believe that it was 11 and 12 year olds talking about political issues, such political hot potatoes of our times and

are discussing it with fairness and are listening to each other's opinions. Following on from that we had another lesson when we brought a couple more issues into it and we continued to discuss it and they'd been getting opinions from home and getting and discussing those as well and I really think that by themselves they've actually come to an opinion where they feel that they can understand now why people come over from Poland or why people from countries that are dangerous and unsafe want to live in Britain and have actually started to appreciate more what they've got, you know, in terms of whatever, the country that they live in, how lucky they are. But the big thing for me is that they are able to look at someone's case in another country and really understand that that person is doing what everybody wants to do and that's look after their children and make sure the children are safe and provide for the children, which, you know, the kids said themselves, is something that all parents want. (Teacher, Kingstone)

The teachers suggested that it was unhelpful to attribute conventional 'levels' to the kind of understandings generated by their teaching. The common definitions of 'competence, excellence and failure' in teaching does not map onto most of encounters we have recorded here. More helpful is Alexander's (2004) notion of 'the discourse which informs and justifies the act of teaching, and the learning to which that teaching is directed'. Alexander characterises three particular domains of teaching:

Culture: the web of values, ideas, institutions and processes which inform, shape and explain a society's views of education, teaching and learning, and which throw up a complex burden of choices and dilemmas for those whose job it is to translate these into a practical pedagogy;

Self: what it is to be a person, an individual relating to others and to the wider society, and how through education and other early experiences selfhood is acquired;

History: the indispensable tool for making sense of both education's present state and its future possibilities and potential. (p12)

Much of the evidence gathered from the students points very clearly to their locating learning in these domains. Some students did however take issue with the methods of learning they were experiencing, but these students were very much in the minority. For example, one boy supported his father's views about the inappropriate nature of group work for this age group.

My dad said we shouldn't be doing group work at our age because it never tends to work out and in some ways he's right. If you are put with some friends you talk about what happened last night.

However, the other three members of his interview group strongly challenged this view and the boy himself admitted he thought he had done worthwhile work in groups in class.

The interviews with students at Queensbridge also provided evidence of the intellectual quality of the learning. Charlotte spoke of the challenging questions and independent learning that had taken place. She described work in which she had been seeking evidence to make a case, 'being a detective' and looking for 'bias in reporting'.

*How does the work you have been doing so far in year seven compare to the work that you did in your last school?*

It's harder, because we have to think more. Most of the time when we were in year six and other classes we would just go to the teacher and ask them for help - but now you just have to sit in silence and work it out and you have to think more because of the questions. We are asked and we are given a set time to work and you have to go through it, read it over again, but when we were in year six if we got stuck on a question we would go up teacher and ask them for help and they would help us figure it out. And then when we're here we just have to figure it out ourselves.

*Do you like that?*

Well, it makes us think more. So it's helping us in a way, so yes.

Salma spoke of how learning about the media had developed her skills of critical thinking:

It makes us think about what we watch on TV and think about what's on. Before we didn't understand about the media, but now we know a lot about the media. It's interesting because it makes you think about the media and like how it like changes people's ideas.

The intention was that the project would benefit the whole range of students, including being intellectually challenging for the more able pupils.

I think pupils in my have been stretched. I think all too often kids come from primary to secondary school and do nothing for three years basically, you know, certainly, the smart kids. Whereas you know, certainly the smart kids in my class have been pushed. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

It also provided valuable and accessible learning experiences for pupils who had significant learning difficulties, as these comments from students with special needs demonstrate:

Steven: We've done like anti-bullying, and how bullying causes like you can call people and when you get bullied and taken the mick out of you and they can commit suicide to themselves.

*Really?*

Steven: Yeah 'cos like being bullied so much over the years and they haven't told the parents and teachers. They're holding it all inside of them and then we read a little short story of a girl when she was in year 5 she was being bullied and she started secondary school in year 7 and these 2 older girls came over to her to her and pushed her and called her names and she told her headteacher.

Joseph: It was all about like bullying. One person had to act like as the person being bullied and two people had to be the bullies.

## **5.6 Issues of gender**

Another striking aspect of both courses was that boys and girls were equally clear about the benefits of the work they were currently doing. In both schools they were able to specify some element of their studies which they had enjoyed and

demonstrated an enhanced understanding of serious and challenging issues. They talked about these topics thoughtfully and in mixed sex groups because the use of more active learning methods and a focus on their own experience helped both boys and girls to make particular connections to the world outside of the classroom and become more involved.

At Kingstone, the power of the course to motivate both boys and girls was evident in students' ability to discuss a range of work that had involved them and to present a number of different ways of recording and presenting this work. This is a sample of the topics chosen by 9 students to bring or discuss in their interviews:

Topic Chosen	Presentation
Martin Luther King	A speech from an American senator's viewpoint speaking in the Senate
Rights and Responsibilities	Rosa Parks sitting on a bus - re-enactment of bus scene
Plots and Protests	Drama about Chipcot people's rights and respect for environment.
Millions	Giving a speech in primary schools about Water Aid - representing this as a cause for concern
Role Models People I admire	PowerPoint on Only Fools and Horses- David Jason a brilliant 'comedian'
Museum of British History	Model of the Titanic, details of its structure, story of the voyage.
Guy Fawkes: Plots and Protests	Television news presentation with a reporter talking to King James and Guy Fawkes
Eco-friendly transport	Plans and research report to make transport more eco-friendly car
Creating your own museum	Created a layout-on a big A5 paper a train which took you to a historic theatre presentation.

What was also noteworthy was that their choices did not seem heavily influenced by gender differences and in discussing their work in groups they were tolerant of each other, both boys and girls participating equally.

Queensbridge reported a similar experience although the context in which this sharing happened was very different because of a pronounced gender imbalance in the school population, with boys greatly outnumbering the girls. This, as one of the teachers explained, often works to make the girls unconfident and much less willing to take an active part in lessons.

What is surprising to me is that gender never seems an issue in the Enterprise lessons. It surprised me because in Queensbridge the ratio of boys to girls is 4 to 1 and often it is a concern for us that girls' voices are not heard. If you observe a class at work you see most girls keeping their heads down to avoid drawing attention to themselves. However when you enter a Y7 Enterprise group that no longer seems to be the case. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

She explained that this was, as we had ourselves noted earlier, because all pupils felt equally comfortable in the classroom and in the roles ascribed to them in discussion. She drew attention to this section of a Queensbridge transcript of a joint interview where Aleena, Maynaz and Taheera from 7U, the second set, offered their comments on the class atmosphere, following a lesson observation:

*The thing I noticed about that room this morning is that there's quite a lot of laughter in that room.*

Taheera: He (the teacher) makes jokes.

*I thought that at first but then I noticed that you guys are quite good at making jokes as well, aren't you? There seems to be quite a nice atmosphere.*

Aleena: We've got this thing in our class where, like, everyone gets on. If someone says something to someone else, they'll laugh about it. Even if it's quite rude, they laugh about it, they don't find it offensive.

*I noticed that, there was a moment with the blinds [referring to part of the banter observed earlier in the classroom]. There was no cruelty in the laughter. I got the impression, you tell me if I'm right or wrong here, that it felt like a safe place to be, you could have a laugh.*

All: Yes

This feeling of safety, which varied in degree from group to group, clearly had emboldened the girls so that they felt confident in the classroom.

Aleena: And we learnt everything about each other and, like, you can do anything in your class and they won't be mean and laugh at you.

*So now you feel you could do anything in front of your class?*

Aleena: Yeah and they'll understand how you feel. They're very understanding.

Elaine Millard has described in relation to the development of literacy learning how gender differences can be overcome by the teacher attending to the learners' own interests and opinions and by emphasising the importance of what the student brings to the classroom (Millard 2005, 2006). The new courses in both schools carefully planned for this to happen in their classrooms. As a consequence, both boys and girls felt equally secure in participating fully.

### **5.7 Differentiated levels of response**

It has already been recorded that the Queensbridge teachers felt the course allowed all students to achieve at their own level. From pupil statements at Kingstone it could be seen that within their mixed ability setting there were many opportunities for differentiated levels of both engagement and understanding to take place so that the least able could participate but the more able could be challenged to go further in their thinking. Some of the students, for example were operating on the level of simple actions, or skill learning:

- We do little plays
- We were just doing little plays to see if it works
- We like to go in the computer work and do PowerPoint and Moviemaker.

Some were more able to elaborate their participation in activities and give more detailed and explanatory accounts of the themes and content of their work:

- We were taking little abstracts from the book and re-enacting it to get the main idea
- Josette said what you usually say to introduce me and said I was reporting from the palace and that I was talking to King James.
- In the book we read about Damion finding the money and hiding it and he stashed it in a den and we re-enacted that.

Some had already become more analytical and evaluative about their learning:

- When we read it for the whole time we read it a bit too much but when we read it in groups we could go at our own pace.
- Reading in groups builds your confidence. Sometimes reading in class the teacher chose people to catch them out and that was too slow.
- We ask ourselves when we practice something is this going to work for the class
- Matthew was an excellent Guy Fawkes and scared Angela (the interviewer) because he became a bit hostile in his replies.
- We listened and talked about Martin Luther King's speech - I thought it came from the soul and said about people's rights. We took a clip for our presentation.

It was evident that students were creating for themselves new communities of practice where they begin to evolve rules of engagement, defining and evaluating what is and what is not an acceptable response to the work set. They are very clear about acceptable and unacceptable responses and approved action to remove a class member who was not responding appropriately. 'It's really sad because they are missing out on their opportunities for learning.' (Student, Kingstone, Y7). This was because a sense of personal responsibility for learning had been engendered by the relationships between pupils and teachers.

At Queensbridge, the placing of power in students' hands early on in the course had had a transformative effect on the Special Needs group students. The teacher guided the process by introducing a series of dilemmas for explorers and an imaginary population named Hulians; half human, half alien. Because the students understood they were developing a fiction it liberated them from the more usual need to find the 'right' answer and they were able to address genuinely complex questions without fear, such as sorting out a case of bullying among the Hulians.

Leon: But the green ones are sad.

Suzanne: They're getting bullied.

Leon: 'Cos they wasn't allowed to pop out.

*Who was bullying them?*

Leon: The yellow Hulians. We had to sort out the fight.

*You had to sort out the fight? How did you do that?*

Leon: I had to knock them out [wide grin]. No I didn't. I invented a new game.

Again, because the teacher could get to know them so well, she was able to allow them more responsibility for organising their learning than had been theirs before. One example of this was when they worked in groups.

Suzanne: Sometimes Miss would sort it out and sometimes we got to pick.

And later they were explaining a particular group activity.

Leon: And we was messing around and Miss said, 'it's not going to work with just three of you, is it? Can Ben and Junaid join you?'

Suzanne: Yeah she asked you, she didn't just...

*I'm getting the feeling that you think you did some of your best work in that.*  
[They nod vigorously]

Leon: We did more work than in the others.

*So you did more work, and you worked harder, and you did your best and it's the one you liked most. Isn't that interesting?*

It is hard to imagine that these children could have faced the problem-sorting challenges, the interrogation of concepts such as obedience, the many writing tasks, for example writing a letter of application to be one of the space explorers, without this new model of curriculum.

At Kingstone the pupils when interviewed spoke about their work with confidence and maturity. One boy talked of having his 'mind opened up to the planet ' by the course:

We talked about immigration and we set up asylum seekers station where we role played - everybody in groups of four asking questions about people's reasons for coming. We set up a business too and we made up rules for employment and everybody had a clock in clock out and that opened my mind to how businesses work and financial things that interest me.

They recognised had dealt with very challenging topics such as extreme child poverty which some explained could be upsetting:

The picture that upset me most was a picture of a baby left in a field next to a vulture and she was dying. Vulture was waiting just to get it. We researched the person who took the photo and discussed his professional responsibility. We thought he should have tried to help.

One of the other girls in the group, after explaining that she had been most upset by such aspects of the work on child labour and was particularly saddened by some photographs she had seen nevertheless thought it was important to know about such things.

It's like the world, it's going on now and you feel good you've discussed something serious and have an understanding.

These short accounts provide strong evidence of the ways the students became serious about their learning whilst also developing the social skills necessary to work with each other and their teachers. The effectiveness of these skills in promoting learning was also recognised by Ofsted in its inspection of the school in September 2007.

The innovative skills-based curriculum in Years 7 and 8 (is) proving highly effective in developing knowledge, understanding and skills that will contribute much to pupils' future economic well-being. The quality of teaching observed was generally good and, in some instances, outstanding. For example, within some Year 7 and 8 lessons, highly inclusive and active learning approaches were used that resulted in pupils making excellent progress.

Similarly, the Ofsted Report for Kingstone School in June 2007 had also emphasised the high quality of the students' attitudes to learning and of the personal relationships in the school:

The Kingstone School is a good school with some significant strengths. The headteacher has a well-articulated vision and a clear sense of direction which inform all the work of the school. The school's values are shared by staff, governors and pupils. This leads to positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. As a result pupils work well together and show a good understanding of others. They learn a great deal and not just about subjects. They learn to develop their confidence, to explore their own skills and capabilities and to have empathy for others. This has led to outstanding personal development and well-being of pupils.

The report concluded further that 'the performing arts status has had a significant impact on many areas of the school's provision, notably in the outstanding personal development of pupils. Practice in performing arts subjects is being used to improve teaching and extend creativity.' Both schools then had already made significant progress in creating opportunities for the social, emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) which were being promoted as part of the curriculum development led by Mick Waters (DCFS, 2007).

### **5.8 A question of creative learning**

Teachers in both schools were beginning to reconceptualise the learning taking place in terms of encouraging student engagement and creativity rather than reaching levels and targets. Here, for example, is a teacher at Kingstone explaining what she sees as creativity in teaching and learning.

I think it's anything that causes a spark within the class. I mean recently they've decided to do a performance of the Husker pit disaster, which was the local disaster in Silkstone in 1838 and I just gave them the lure which was the birth certificate of a child that was found and they decided they want to take it part by part of the day and do a whole performance of it. So I think creativity is anything which they actually offer to you, rather than you are offering to them. I've just facilitated it, I haven't taught them it, they've found everything out. (Teacher, Kingstone)

The projects have at their centre a commitment to allowing the children involved a say in what went on in their classrooms and had provided multiple opportunities for them to evaluate their own experience of the new way of learning. The following features of the learning, which we have abstracted from the accounts of the work the students have presented to us, may be considered as having enabled both creative and personalised responses:

- Children asking each other and their teachers difficult questions as well as dealing with the big questions within the separate elements of each course.

- Using the different groups they worked in to test out their own ideas and develop a shared understanding.
- The exercise of student choice which led to personalised responses to the core themes.
- A willingness to work beyond the set boundaries of a task to make a strong addition to the work achieved in class (as exemplified in one group of Y8 students encountered at Kingstone who had arranged to meet before school to work out their 'hot seat' presentation on the serious issue of abortion and the morning after pill).
- More emphasis on affective learning which created empathy for a whole range of people and their dilemmas by putting themselves in the shoes of others.
- Increasing confidence and ability to evaluate and learn from their own work and that of their peers.

## 6. The role of assessment

### 6.1 The new vision of assessment of learning

We have noted that the initial vision of a new approach to teaching and learning came from the two headteachers. They also recognised that it required new ways of assessing learning. In Matthew's view,

... the biggest block to creative learning I think in the curriculum remains the assessment regime, and what we're doing with Creative Partnerships now is saying, 'Let's look afresh at what we mean by assessment'... (Head, Kingstone)

In an interview in 2008 Tim Boyes echoed Matthew's view that National Curriculum based assessment was ill-suited to capturing drama-based learning.

*Is there an issue of how the sort of work that is going on in projects like this can be assessed? Teachers are used to assessing things, they've got a set of tools to assess normal work, now they're having to deal with something that in many ways is quite different, richer, more complex, perhaps more oral in some ways and so on, does that pose an assessment issue?*

Yes, massive assessment issues. And there, I mean, I laugh because last week [name] and I were discussing, you know, how difficult we find issues around assessment in drama and how resentful we are of how some of the shoe-horning of somewhat contrived National Curriculum based assessment models there are into the subject, ... But I think, you know, on a different level, one of the other reference points for this work certainly that's come through our Creative Partnerships network is the work of Reggio Emilio, and the sense that teachers need a huge amount of quality reflective time framing quite rigorous questions and seeking insights into what's really going on for young learners in creative processes that I think is a massive challenge for us if we're going to do both things of helping teachers and children recognise what serious learning is going on in this environment. (Head, Queensbridge)

He continued:

I spend more time talking to my staff about my ambition that we completely disregard Key Stage 3 assessments from the National Curriculum and I enjoyed having a visit from the Head of Policy from Number 10 just before the summer holiday and from Christine Gilbert actually, all in one week, coincidentally, and both conceded quite readily that our curriculum was moving in the way that all sorts of people would want to see it moving, in a way that was laudable, and that assessment vehicles within the National Curriculum were completely inappropriate and out of step. ... I wished I'd had a little dictaphone on because when I said to Christine Gilbert, 'My ambition is that we disregard Key Stage 3 SATs and if I'm by statute obliged to subject children to them I will give them one day's preparation in a strange and representative day, where they can have an hour and a half on each subject and then they'll tell them it doesn't matter and sit the test the next day', she agreed with me. (Head, Queensbridge)

## 6.2 Relating the new teaching and learning to National Curriculum subject-based levels

However, in the early Implementation phase of the projects the key concern of the teachers teaching the new curriculum and using innovative teaching methods was whether they were also satisfying the requirements of the National Curriculum. They recognised that the school, and they themselves, would be evaluated by SATs and GCSE results and Ofsted inspections, and they needed to develop the confidence that the new approach they were trying out would not put these at risk.

The dominance of the external assessment regime in the early phase of the projects meant that the pressing concern of teachers was how to relate the new teaching and learning to the existing subject-based assessment criteria. The effect of this was to have been to downplay teacher assessment (TA). As Hall and Harding note,

It is not surprising that the high stakes nature of this assessment agenda, with its published performance tables, its target setting based on national test results, its assumption that standards can be objectively measured ... that TA, which is dependent on teacher judgement, is not prioritized. (Hall and Harding, 2002, p12)

In particular, many teachers tended to conceptualise assessment within a framework of National Curriculum levels (despite the recommendation from the QCA that 'a single piece of work will not cover all the expectations set out in a level description' and that National Curriculum levels were originally designed for use at the end of the Key Stage). This was more marked at Queensbridge than at Kingstone because of the different subject areas which the projects comprised in Y7. Kingstone had excluded the core subjects of English, Maths, and Science from the Cultural Studies Course. This meant that they were able to set aside, to some extent, the assessment issue, whilst concentrating on what to include in each unit of work, and what its pedagogy would entail. By excluding the curricular 'heavyweights', which have a summative assessment regime attached to them in the form of SATs and ongoing teacher assessments, and occupy centre-stage in published league-tables and high-stakes views of assessment, the team was able to focus more closely on the types of learning which they were looking to foster. At Queensbridge there was a more complex picture, in that both core and foundation subjects were included in the Enterprise.

A further complication was posed by the cross-curricular nature of the new programmes. The National Curriculum levels were designed to be operationalised from within a single subject paradigm; for example geography levels are meant for use within the context of a geography lesson. Subject specialist teachers found it difficult to assess learning in subjects, and against levels, with which they were not familiar. Again, this was more of an issue at Queensbridge, because each cross-curricular Enterprise was taught by a single teacher. Working in a way which blurred or removed subject boundaries meant that then having to think their way back inside them in order to provide a level was problematic.

...their knowledge is really still difficult for us to measure I think, we still, I don't think, haven't quite got our heads around each other's subject areas. So I really, really struggled to assess my science last enterprise, and was way too high in my marks, and the class that I just got their drama marks are very, very high, and I wouldn't be giving them marks like that, and that's a test of... using national curriculum levels, they have the levels. ...so what am I doing, RE, history, geography, drama, science, I'm levelling mine in, and on each

report at the end of term I level them in each of those things according to the national curriculum level, and they take that level to the next enterprise, and the next enterprise builds on that level if it touches that subject, because of course not every enterprise touches every subject. I think that where we've struggled with that is not knowing each other's levels or the expectations of the kids enough. ... I think there's a lot of score in the levels in that you have a dialogue then, as soon as you're talking about 'right you're level 2' or 'you're level 3 what's your target' and I think those are important to target setting, and you and the kids have a shared understanding of what a level 3 is, and without a level descriptor you haven't got that, so I think it's important to do that... (Teacher, Queensbridge)

It was less of an issue at Kingstone because the first version of Cultural Studies involved small teams of teachers with different specialisms working together with each class and thus able to share their understandings and work towards the generic descriptors together.

However, it is significant that both schools took the same vital step in the early Implementation phase to resolve teachers' concerns by produced a matrix linking the content of the Enterprise and Cultural Studies units to National Curriculum subjects and levels. This acted as a bridge between the new approach and the existing assessment framework.

[Assessment] has been formalised, however I still think that different members of staff probably have different interpretations of it. Now one of the massive advances is the work that Ondrie [the course co-ordinator] in particular has done in terms of paring down all of the National Curriculum's assessment guidance into one very, very concise set of instructions about the meaning of level 3, level 4, level 5, level 6 and so on and the creation of this generic, as I say, very concise model of levelling that we can all use. (Teacher, Kingstone)

A very similar operation was carried out Queensbridge by the project coordinator, Al Lee, enabling teachers to reassure themselves that students were making similar progress to, or better progress than, that which they would have achieved in more traditional subject-specific lessons.

In terms of content knowledge, we baseline all our students when they come in. They have the test when they go out, a traditional test if you like, and I can see that their content knowledge is at least as good, if not better than it would have been normally. So I can be quite clear with my head of department, that actually all of the content they would normally get in Year 7, they are still getting and at least to the same level, if not to a higher level. (Queensbridge Teacher)

Being able to demonstrate that the new approach satisfied external assessment demands was the necessary precondition for its continuing implementation in both schools.

The reason why we are confidently pushing ahead with a lot of what we're doing and quite happy to be rebellious, is because we are publicly doing very well by public measure and public measuring includes GCSEs and contextual value-added and average point scores and all of those things. I take those all very seriously, they are undoubtedly the ticket, the exam results, good exam results are the ticket for, the surest ticket for many kids out of poverty and out

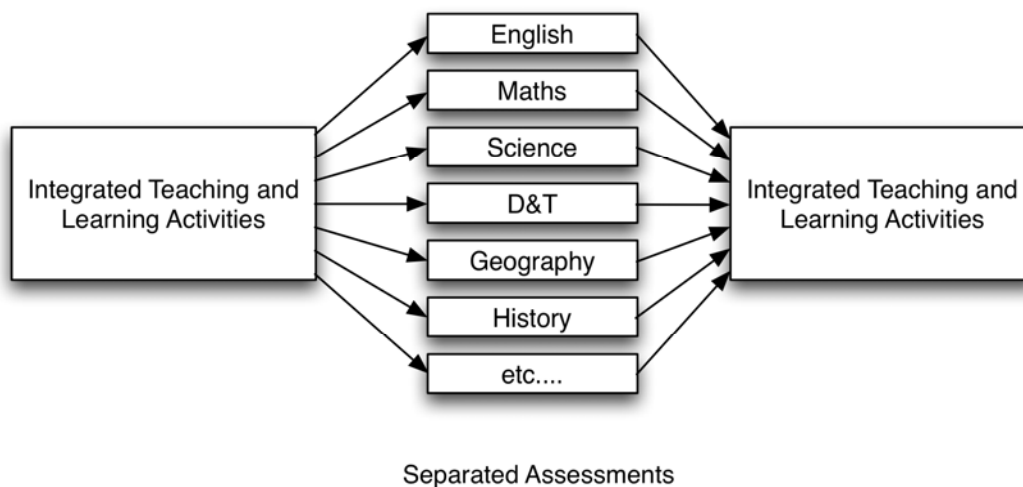
of a cycle of under-achievement or resistance to education. When children have the sweet taste of success things start happening for them. So I am very keen to get kids to that end point. [...] A little statistic that I'm pleased with, a year ago [we] had 7 A stars at GCSE and this summer we had 68, last year we had 70 grade A's and this year we had about 138 grade A's and that has come about through rigorous setting and really stretching kids. (Head, Queensbridge)

It valorised the teaching and learning, and it also gave confidence to the teachers to begin to complement externally-driven forms of assessment with their own forms of assessment. They recognised that there were problems with simply relying on National Curriculum subject based assessment.

The first problem was that the use of National Curriculum levels produced a conflation in the minds of many teachers of assessment and grading. The effect of this was that in the early Implementation stage assessment and leveling were often coupled together in teachers' interview responses.

The second problem was that it was based on a separation of teaching and learning on the one hand and assessment on the other. While the teaching and learning was based on breaking down the boundaries between subjects the assessment was based on disaggregating the subject content and restoring subject boundaries, as the following diagram indicates.

Figure 1: Differentiated teaching, learning, and assessment activities



The third problem was that the reliance on the use of National Curriculum levels failed to capture much of the learning which was taking place in the new programmes. Teachers recognised this early on.

You know you set a piece of work and you can strictly say it's got to be done in three weeks and then there's a grade at the end. Now this is what I'm learning, how to assess when it's not something that's concrete that I'm used to. Do you know what I mean? I mean have I explained myself? (Teacher, Kingstone)

They realised that new forms of assessment were needed.

### 6.3 The development of new forms of assessment

...the standard assessment is 'sit down in silence by yourself and answer these questions', which is I guess what schools around the country use, but if we're going to be teaching the students in groups and pairs and asking them to develop group skills and research skills than perhaps we need a different way of assessing. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

Sfard (1998) makes a useful distinction between different types of learning. She offers two metaphors for learning, the acquisitive, and the participatory, and she describes how neither alone is sufficient. Using Sfard's metaphors, it was clear that teachers used the acquisition metaphor to discuss assessment of achievement in National Curriculum level terms, whereas participation was considered separately from this. As new pedagogies became more secure, then so did realising the limitations of assessment based solely upon the acquisition of knowledge.

In the end, I guess, the school is assessed in how it performed in high-stakes nationwide assessments. So we do have to still prepare students for that, but within the year, we have been able to be much more creative with our assessments. [...] As a teacher, I feel very much empowered and freed up to be creative with my assessment, and I have been given time to do it which has been a useful thing. If I hadn't it would have been very difficult. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

In the following extracts from interviews with teachers at the two schools we can track the process of development of new ideas and practices concerning assessment.

As we've done more and more modules we have got more and more ideas about how we could assess. With every group I have at least done a basic National Curriculum test, just for my own satisfaction of knowing where they are going. I also run a whole lot of assessments for learning based activities. I assess them via speeches, movie presentations, group projects, independent projects, board games; there are really creative ways in which they can show what they have learnt. It also culminates in a report, which is teacher assessed against all these skills and also NC skills, against all the NC standards. So we have got much more creative with the assessment as we have gone along, but we are still able to link it to the NC. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

At Queensbridge another new assessment strategy was the use of comment-only marking, where grades are not given. We know from the work of the Assessment Reform Group (e.g. Wiliam et al., 2004; Black et al., 2006) that comment-only marking can enhance learner engagement, and diminish the disengagement that comes from achieving poor grades. The importance of comment only marking was recognised by this teacher:

I mean is it right that we give them a level, or is it more productive that they get a comment or, I think that's all starting to come into play and I think it is important that kids get, I know I respond better to praise, that to be told, oh well that would be in this bracket, you know I'd much prefer someone to say, well done that's really good. So I suppose that the same would work for children and I think sometimes comments is much more important than actually realising that they're at a level six. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

This observation also reveals departure from thinking that National Curriculum levels are the main modality for assessment, again showing how thinking on assessment developed over time.

I also think that the types of assessment project that people are doing do differ. People are doing, you know, they're generating their own assessment projects. They do, depending on which direction their learning's gone off in really, the teachers will, obviously mould their assessment to fit the learning that's being done and as a result of that people are doing different, assessment tasks with different assessment criteria and stuff and so there may be a little bit of a lack of consistency; not everybody's doing the same thing. (Teacher, Kingstone)

Well I've assessed it as I've been going round and sort of saying, 'right you've found that out, what about this?' I think in this instance it's their knowledge they've gained themselves that is the assessable, sort of, marker rather than a written piece. I didn't want them to do a written piece. So I think the assessment is not particularly on the drama side, because I'm not a drama teacher, but they've all gained confidence and because they know all about the Husker pit they're able to create their own script. So I think that is a written assessable piece because you can see where they've thought about bringing in History and even the costumes and everything are all going to be authentic. So I think assessment in that sort of setting would be through oral assessment. (Teacher, Kingstone)

This teacher wants to capture both the product of learning and the process which led up to it, and recognises that a written-work based methodology needs to be complemented by oral methods of assessment.

At Kingstone teachers were also planning to introduce portfolio assessment, but taking this into the digital realm by the use of e-portfolios:

So it's an e-portfolio for the 21st century, that's really what I think is the key with the assessment. Well for me at the moment, we talk about an e-portfolio, we talk about the need for an e-portfolio but we've got to get those building blocks in place. It has to, we have to make some decisions here and then once we've made those decisions we have to manage those decisions so that everybody knows. So, you know, if we could say, within Cultural Studies, The e portfolio means this, this is what it is, it can be done in this, this and this way. This is how we name files, this is, this is the information that the children need to know before they can develop their e-portfolio, but everything is clear. You'd know it was working if you could say to me now, 'What is an e-portfolio at Kingstone School?' and I would say, 'This, this and this,' and you could ask a pupil as well, 'What is an e portfolio?' and they would say the same thing because we're all singing from that same hymn sheet. We're not at the moment, we've got this idea, that idea's out there, we need an e-portfolio, we know what it is, but we've got to get a standard, I think that's a journey we've got to take. (Teacher, Kingstone)

The main issue under discussion in the last year covered by our research at Kingstone was concerned with developing ways that any evidence collected could be used to make informed judgments about individual progress, and how that could be shared between teacher child and parent.

#### **6.4 Assessment of Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) and the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)**

In addition to new forms of assessment such as oral, portfolio, and comment-only marking, the QCA's Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) provided a framework in both schools for conceptualising and assessing achievement which was not defined in terms of subject knowledge (QCA 2007). In addition, the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) approach was in use at Kingstone. They both enabled teachers to assess social learning as well as cognitive learning. Personal Learning and Thinking Skills comprise the following dimensions of student capabilities: as independent enquirers, reflective learners, self-managers, creative thinkers, team workers, effective participants. This is a typical account of how teachers used them.

I say to them, not every lesson because sometimes they don't really want to know, but sometimes I say, 'right now, for today, I want you to particularly work on the skill. And let's see what we can find out, and you know, or put yourself into that situation so now you are going to become a creative thinker', or 'right I want you and you and you to work together, and you've got to decide on what roles you're going to take in the group, who's going to feedback'. So there they're going to be a team worker, and sometimes I look at children and I see they're not prepared to work in groups, some of them are not prepared to work in groups and I think, maybe I think the Primary School, also they do work in groups so, they're better at working in groups, but you still always get a child who's not happy to work in a group at all. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

PLTS have the advantage of not being subject to the pressures of external measurement in ways that subject-related levels are. However, the problem teachers faced with PLTS was how to operationalise them in terms of assessment in the absence of established procedures. We will focus on one school, Queensbridge, as an example of the process of development of policy and practice by teachers in resolving this problem. The two interview extracts below illustrate the concern which teachers had.

It's so hard to measure! You've got to split that up between knowledge and skills and competencies. In terms of skills and competencies there is real evidence when you compare previous year 7s and this year 7 in terms of their independent working skills, and skills for life, group work and things like that, because right from the start they've had this way of thinking. It's easy to see although not easy to measure. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

So now we're looking in particular at the skills I think, and one of those skills is reflective learning, and how do you assess that, is a question we've talked about a lot, so how do you tell whether your student is actually thinking about their learning and improving on it, or are they just writing some target to keep their teacher happy? That's still a challenge, that's still difficult. And I try to use a whole lot of different ways to get at that. I still don't know if I effectively assess reflective learning. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

The school addressed the issue by creating their own assessment sheets which enabled teachers to record, as well as National Curriculum levels, teachers' assessment of PLTS. The head of Queensbridge spoke about the experience which primary schools have of assessing personal qualities and development. The member

of staff given responsibility for devising the record sheets was the Y7 Enterprise coordinator, AI, who was able to draw on her experience as a primary teacher.

So handing ownership for the Year 7 curriculum ... to a primary school teacher was the key there, and what that's about is the fact that AI, that it's an exceptional primary practitioner who I think has got a very secure and well developed understanding of assessment and who was dealing in personal learning and thinking skills before QCA knew what to call them and who has been really engaged with what assessment needed to look like. When, in the year where every child in Year 7 went through a half term project ... we had a very uncomfortable year because we were asking them to assess and we were asking them to record things, to take photographs, to ... in a way that they could understand but in a way that ... was burdensome, awkward and time-consuming. So we never managed to get... to assess the personal development, soft skills or, certainly not the National Curriculum formal kind of assessment that we would have wanted. When the whole project moved over to AI's ownership, if you like, there was no tension with that at all. So she will show you the assessment sheets that are on A3 that the Enterprise team use, that very quickly there was clarity about a cycle of five parents' evenings a year, that meant that there was going to be a continual flow of information back to parents which would include National Curriculum levels that would be moderated in weekly meetings by the team of teachers, that included comments around the personal qualities and thinking skills, that included teacher comment, and for me that had everything. (Head, Queensbridge)

What AI did was to produce a set of levels for each PLTS objective, which enabled teachers to locate each student's current level of attainment in simple quantitative terms but while still justifying the assessment in qualitative terms, which could then be the basis of a report to parents, as this teacher explains.

It's very hard to quantitatively... it's much more of a qualitative assessment.

*Is that a problem?*

I don't think it has to be, we just had a parents' evening last night, and we have to report on all these skills. And I've got to use a scale from one to five, which is a quantitative sort of thing, to talk about reflective learning. And I think we're moving now, with parents, beyond this number, into a well, you're coming in five times a year now, and we can actually talk to you about this skill, and so even with the parents we're moving beyond a quantitative into a qualitative discussion of, here's an example of what your student was doing, here's how we'd like them to learn. Yes so I don't think it's an issue that it's qualitative rather than quantitative as long as we can still get the rigour into the qualitative analysis. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

This model of assessment of PLTS provided a language shared by teachers and students. It was the basis both for summative assessment and for dialogue with students, enabling self-assessment and providing the basis for formative assessment.

I can develop a whole lot of learning skills; can they confidently collaborate, can they problem solve, can they be self organisers, can they research and assimilate all the information? In each module, we assess against those skills. So if I write a report, which I'm currently doing for each child, we have got five key skills we want them to learn and I make a series of comments about how

they are going off those skills. Everything that we do is based on those skills. So in every activity that we run we are all the time looking for those skills and the kids are well aware of the skills, and we talk using the language of those skills. At the end of every week we do a self-assessment to look at how they have gone this week with those skills. So I think that is a huge advantage that we can offer above the traditional schooling. (Teacher, Queensbridge)

## 6.5 Summative and formative assessment

A marked shift was discernible as work in the two schools progressed. Over time a move away from concerns with what might be termed *assessment-as-grading* towards something which could be more readily categorised as formative assessment took place. We will illustrate this process of change with extracts from interviews with teachers at Kingstone. A typical example of the ways in which teachers are conceptualising the role of assessment can be seen in the comments of this teacher, who begins by talking about giving feedback to students, and then goes on to say how that is more important than National Curriculum levels:

I feedback on a regular basis with all of my classes, but I will also allow opportunities where they will feedback to me about what they've done and then afterwards we'll talk about how well they've done in terms of assessment. I wouldn't say that I get a chart out and I say 'well you're here and you're here', that's not really the assessment for me, it's more about the process that the kids go through and realising that they've gone through that process and that it's not just a case of A,B,C,D and 'oh we're here'. It's constantly getting the kids to think, 'well hang on a minute, we've started off at this point, then we went to this point, and ah, that's how we've got to this point'. For me that's much more of an assessment and a rewarding process than actually sitting there at the end and going, 'well, you've got a level one' or 'you've got a level six'. 'Cos the kids will go, 'Oh, have I done better than her?', or 'is a one good?', or 'is a six good?'... (Teacher, Kingstone)

The outcome of this practice of dialogic assessment is that students have developed a culture of critical appraisal, the basis of assessment for learning, as can be seen in this comment from Ondrie Mann:

I would feel confident that anyone could walk into the classroom and say to the kids 'what are you doing?' and the kids would be able to tell them exactly what they were doing, and why they were doing it, and they'd be able to tell them exactly what their group needed to do to get it to another level, maybe not at any particular moment, because assessment for learning is a key thing and not in a bloodstone way, it's a key thing if they perform. There's a culture now where there's not a round of applause at the end of a performance, there might be a spontaneous applause if they see something good, but if it's not good, what they see it's 'how can we help these and how can we learn from what we've just seen?' so there's a culture developing where your first draft is not going to be perfection, let's have a look at your first draft, we have a look and the kids get to do it in stages, they get chance to reflect, they get chance to do it again, ... we're getting them to spot what they thing they need to do, the teachers are mainly a guide...(Ondrie Mann, Kingstone)

We have mentioned assessment by means of an e-portfolio at Kingstone. A stand-alone portfolio can be little more than a collection of files, a point that the teachers recognised early on. The strength of a portfolio comes from interrogation of the data that it contains, and here the headteacher had a clear view as to how this could be a

process of both summative and formative assessment carried out in a dialogue between student, teacher and parent:

The idea in our heads, I think, and we need to make it real, is for a child during their Cultural Studies course, to collect together evidence which might form part of a new portfolio. So it might be digital images, it might be sound, you know, files, it might be that they've done an extended piece of writing they're particularly proud of. It might be some kind of project type work, but that there would be a date set aside where they would present, 'What I've learnt this year, areas where I think I've excelled, areas where I feel I need to develop,' and prior to that kind of assessment point, they've prepared a formal extended piece of writing which might take the form of a project, but I think, you know, quite clearly, there needs to be writing in there ... Now the child obviously will choose the format they wanted to work with, but we might say, there's got to be an extended piece of writing within that. They would submit that prior to the assessment point, they would then, that would be shared with some of their peers from the class, their parents and at least one teacher who's involved with the course and then they come to a viva as you would have in higher education, where they would, of course, present, probably, 'this is what I've learnt', 'these are the things I think I've excelled in' and so on. Then there would be a cross-examination, or a discussion around, 'Have you really?' and 'How could you have been more co-operative?' and that, of course, is assessment for learning ... largely because you've got some of their peers saying, 'Well actually I think there were times when you stopped me from getting on with my work because, you know, you wanted to cap about all the time, or because we were doing this and we were doing that,' and then if the parents are there as well, of course, it brings them into, 'So what do I need to move on from where I am now?' (Head, Kingstone)

There has been considerable progress in translating this ambitious vision of the assessment process into practice, as these comments by a teacher illustrate.

But they're numbers, so, you know, I'll tell a parent tonight, your child is a level 5C, what does that really mean? What is this music thing that's going on? It'd probably take me, you know, hours to really educate the parent on what that system means. It's great for me, the numbers work for me because they give me a quick reference but when I see a number, that number triggers off a lot of things in my head, I hear things, I can recall the experiences with that pupil, I know the journey they've taken. Wouldn't it be wonderful though if I could sit down with a parent and use e-portfolio so that we can listen to that composition, we can listen to that performance. You know, we can play that performance compared to that performance, and this is the progress that's been made. That's how we need to move forward, we need to have that e portfolio.

*Is it happening though, because on Tuesday I was sitting with kids and I said, 'If I ask you for evidence of the work you've done this year in Cultural Studies, what would you bring me?' and most of them referred to rather formal assessment, is it happening, are they beginning to collect their own evidence?*

It's beginning to happen but what I think, everybody has to have a clear understanding of what this is about, pupils, teachers, parents. This e-portfolio, I know for example that last term, [one Year 7 class], as I took them through a term of work they have an e-portfolio, I can guarantee that it's there with all

the children. ... What we've got to do is, we've got to learn and the children have got to learn how to keep a meticulous e-portfolio. (Teacher, Kingstone)

The portfolio used in this way has become for the teachers and pupils a vehicle for discussions concerning assessment, and what can be done to take learning forwards. It can be a powerful tool when used to develop learning, in the way in which Matthew Millburn articulates above. This was recognised by many of the students who, in discussions about their recorded work with the interviewer, would talk about the content elements of their portfolios and of ways in which they were judging their own success.

## 6.6 The assessment of the learning process and of creative learning

The changes in policies and practices concerning assessment which we have traced in both schools combine several processes of development:

- A movement from assessment solely or largely in terms of National Curriculum subjects and levels to the employment of a repertoire of forms of assessment.
- A movement from assessment of cognitive learning to assessment of cognitive and social learning.
- A movement from summative assessment to summative-plus-formative assessment.
- A movement from a focus on assessment on learning outcomes to an assessment of both the outcomes of learning and of the learning process itself.

In this section we want to explore in more detail how teachers in the two schools assessed process of learning. As Sefton-Green has observed,

When teachers evaluate there is a tendency to conflate attention to a student's product with the desire to record the student's *learning*. (Sefton-Green 2000, p217. Italics in original)

Teachers in the two schools had developed their understanding of the need to focus on the learning process itself as well as on outcomes. This teacher's comment is typical:

You know it's the process, it's the how we get there is more important than what we have when we get there. And I really like that, I think that's a fantastic way to approach it now. How does that tie into league tables or to graphs, that not everyone understands and things. How that works, I don't know, it challenges it probably...I think the spirit of the subject in classrooms is exciting in that way but it does ask questions about formal assessment procedures. (Teacher, Kingstone)

The need to differentiate between process and product is a key issue in assessing creativity in students' learning, as Fautley and Savage explain:

..the process-product dichotomy becomes something to which you will need to give some consideration. If the most important thing is the outcome, then you need not be overly concerned with how the pupils work, and instead can concentrate solely on the ideas they produce. However, doing this negates the value of groups which may have worked really well together, come up

with some truly creative solutions, yet been hampered by issues of implementation potentially beyond their control. ... If the product is the thing that matters, then any form of assessment will be based on appropriateness, usability, and relevance. ... However, when the process of creative thinking, and of, say, fostering teamwork skills to work at a creative task, is the reason for doing a project, then it is the process of doing which is itself has become the focus. ... When a creative task is being undertaken where learning lies in doing, then assessment needs to be focussed onto the activity, onto what is going on... (Fautley and Savage, 2007, p75)

Creative thinking is one of the domains of PLTS, and in that sense is something teachers have to assess, and therefore promote in their teaching. But in a much wider sense creative learning is at the centre of the aims of the Cultural Studies and the Enterprise programmes in the two schools, and of the support given to them by Creative Partnerships. Creative Partnerships defines creative learning as follows:

Creative learning is simply any learning that develops our capacity to be creative. It equips young people with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in today's world, nurturing ways of thinking and working that encourage imagination, independence, tolerance of ambiguity and risk, openness, the raising of aspirations. (Creative Partnerships, 2005, para 2)

Creative learning needs to be distinguished from two other related concepts: 'creative teaching' and 'teaching for creativity'. The National Advisory Committee for Creative and Cultural Education report *All our Futures* (NACCCE, 1999) defines creative teaching as 'using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting and effective' (p89). It defines teaching for creativity as forms of teaching that are intended to develop young people's own creative thinking or behaviour – what might be called providing the facilitating conditions for creative learning.

Furthermore, the concept of creative learning is itself not unproblematic. Craft *et al.* note a 'lack of shared understanding around what it could be deemed to mean' (Craft *et al.*, 2007, p137). According to the QCA, creative learning involves pupils in the following:

- questioning and challenging
- making connections and seeing relationships
- envisaging what might be
- exploring ideas, keeping options open
- reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes. (QCA, 2004, p10)

Similar taxonomies of pupil behaviours, as well as characteristics which can be regarded as evidence of creative learning, can be found in, amongst others, Burnard *et al* (2006), Craft (2005), Cochrane and Cockett (2007), Cropley (2001) and Jeffrey (2006). The exercise of the imagination coupled with critical reflection seem to be at the heart of the concept. Spendlove *et al* (cited in Craft *et al.*, 2006) define creative learning as being that which

...develops our capacity for imaginative activity, leading to outcomes which are judged by appropriate observers to be original and of value.

Building on this definition, Anna Craft and her co-authors develop their definition of creative learning:

Creative learning can be viewed as significant imaginative achievement as evidenced in the creation of new knowledge as determined by the imaginative insight of the person or persons responsible and judged by appropriate observers to be both original and of value as situated in different domain contexts. (Craft *et al.*, 2006, para. 5.1.3)

Our research provides ample evidence for the prevalence of both creative teaching and teaching for creativity as a result of the projects in the two schools. The chapter on students' responses to the programmes contains convincing evidence of creative learning on their part. The question we address here is to what extent the schools were successful in assessing creative learning. We have shown that they had adopted creative forms of assessment, but assessing learning creatively is not the same thing as assessing creative learning.

To investigate this further we draw on some interview data from Queensbridge. We asked the headteacher specifically what creative learning meant to him.

I think things that challenge convention and that are unusual and involve risk, that involve coming at things in unusual ways. It's all very sloppy language though. I don't feel very confident with answering your questions.

*That's very interesting. So what would you expect to find, looking in a classroom for is there actually creative learning going on? What should we be looking for?*

Trying to be realistic, then I think open questions are a good place to start, and being rigorous about the quality of questioning, and then the space given to children to then follow things through and to work independently. You can't get away from that sense of needing to create space because children are remarkable in their capacity to wrong-foot us and to do something that we didn't expect.

*I'd say creating space is a facilitating condition, if you like.*

Yes it is, yes yes.

*So the question is, creating space for them to do what?*

Um... to give them the space to generate their own answers and pursue their own lines. [...] I still feel very un-smart on that one. (Head, Queensbridge)

Tim's answer here contains two main ideas. One refers to creative teaching – creating space for creative learning – rather than to creative learning itself. The other refers to students generating their own, and often unpredictable, meanings. The latter is certainly a core element of creative learning. But what is also significant here is Tim's acknowledgement that he finds it difficult to articulate what he means by creative learning.

Teachers also found it difficult to explain the concept. We will quote just one as illustration.

It is difficult to get at. It's more than just the tasks they're doing. It's how are they engaging, with what you want them to learn? And - and that could be different for so many different students and, it's about breaking down traditional constraints that they've had in schools about how we learn and

what we normally do. And what we are able to do, and what the resources are there to do. And that's a learning process for teachers and students, because often teachers don't realise what, all the different creative ways you can engage kids. So that's, that's something I'm constantly learning about. I continue to have sort of crazy ideas and go 'can we do that, could we try this, can we?', and then you take that on to someone above you to get permission, and it's breaking down their ideas, so it's, it's a constant process of sort of pushing the boundaries on what's possible. To get to creative, but at the core of it, it's got to be, is this going to engage the students? Is this something that is going to actually going to get their brains ticking and firing?

*OK, I wonder if we could push this any further in terms of, when you say, 'get their brains ticking', but, brains can tick in all sorts of different ways, so again, what's distinctive about creative learning, that is different from other sorts of learning, or other sorts of things kids do?*

I don't know, it's difficult to answer. What is it that makes creative learning distinctive from other forms of learning? I think it's just, I think it's a level of engagement, it's a, it's a desire to learn, it's shifting from having to learn ... (Teacher, Queensbridge)

This teacher identifies a key facilitating condition of creative learning – engagement and desire to learn – rather than processes of creative learning themselves. And again there is an acknowledgement of how difficult it is to articulate an understanding, a difficulty other teachers shared.

The explanation for the problem lies in the dominance of what we can call for short the 'standards agenda' during the past twenty years. Just as the dominance of the National Curriculum and the external testing regime had tended to marginalise the sort of curriculum and pedagogy which the two headteachers envisioned, so the language and concepts which it provided teachers with were not ones which foregrounded creativity in children's learning. And of course for younger teachers the 'standards agenda' had provided the context for their entire initial teacher education and teaching careers. It is not therefore surprising that teachers found the concept of creative learning difficult to articulate.

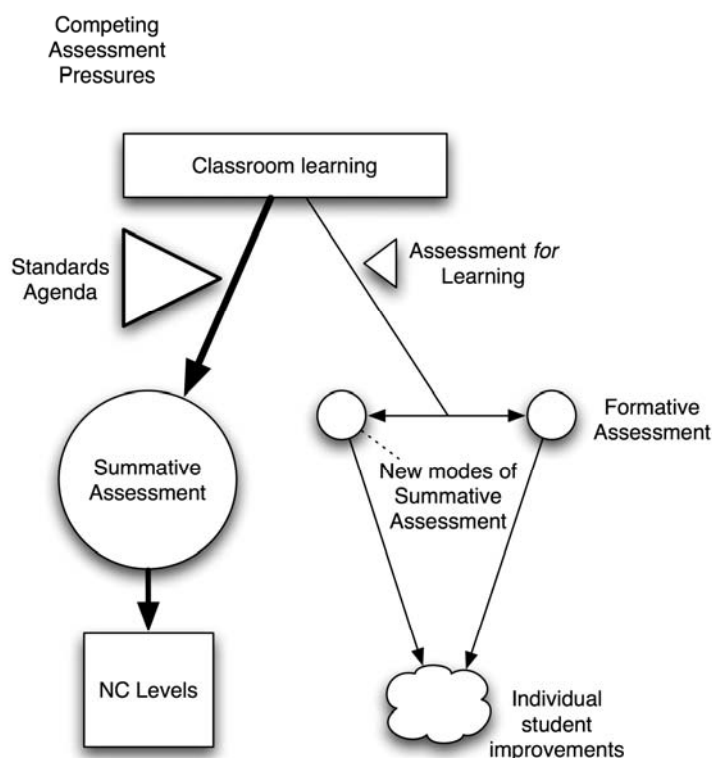
That does not mean that they were not able to identify it when it occurred, but it seems likely that a problem of talking about creative learning does indicate some difficulty, some imprecision, in assessing it. This has implications for the quality of both summative and formative assessment dialogues with students and parents. It also has implications for collaborative professional development, since sharing knowledge and good practice generally entails articulating it in language. One of the key tasks of the next stage of development at both schools would seem to be to enhance and enrich teachers' understandings of creative learning and ability to articulate them.

## **6.7 The pull and push of assessment**

From this investigation of assessment a number of strands have emerged. The issue of language, which we have discussed above, forms a key backdrop. Teachers in the two schools felt the need to address the compelling assessment demands of the standards agenda, including what were perceived as the requirements of Ofsted, while at the same time becoming increasingly aware of its inability to capture the learning which they knew was taking place in the project classrooms. They were

attempting to come to terms with the competing pressures of, on the one hand, the strong 'pull' of National Curriculum assessment levels, and on the other the much weaker 'push' of authentic summative assessment and assessment *for* learning, which will not necessarily result in a National Curriculum level, but will result in improved learning for the individual student.

Figure 2: The Pull and Push of assessment



We have tracked the process of development of teachers' thinking and practice from a position where outputs in the form of National Curriculum levels are the only ones which have currency to a position where outputs *not* measured by National Curriculum levels are also seen as being worthwhile and important.

A parallel development has taken place from a position in the early stages of the project where the default position of teachers regarding assessment was to want to assess by means of written work, even when creative learning had taken place, as the primary assessment modality, to the employment of a range of assessment methods.

A third strand of development has been the transition from largely summative forms of assessment to a combination of summative and formative assessment. Developments in the ways in which learning is conceptualised now means that new ways need to be found of assessing more than content recall:

...during the twentieth century our understanding of how learning occurs has developed apace. It is no longer seen as a private activity dependent largely, if not wholly, on an individual's possession of innate and generally stable characteristics such as general intelligence. Interactions between people, and mediating tools such as language, are now seen to have a crucial role in learning. Thus the assessment of learning outcomes needs to take more

account of the social as well as individual processes through which learning occurs. This requires expansion of perspectives on learning and assessment that take more account of insights from the disciplines of social-psychology, sociology and anthropology. (James, 2006, p48)

James is referring to the assessment of *learning outcomes*. An issue for schools coming new to this work will be to undertake the conceptual journey which the teachers in both schools have made, where over time a decoupling has taken place between the notions of *assessment* and that of *grading*. What this is likely to mean in practice is that there is not an automatic linkage between summative assessment and formative assessment. It was noted that at the outset there seemed to be a ready corollary in the minds of some teachers between the two, but that as time progressed they became gradually disentangled, until in the latter stages teachers were able to get to grips with assessment *for* learning. The journeys in assessment thinking made by the teachers in both schools took place over time, and it will not be possible to simply graft on attitudes to assessment to teachers and schools new to these ways of thinking. As Black *et al.* observe:

...changes in formative assessment practice, far from being just a set of useful tactical changes in classroom learning, have turned out to be far more significant and far more radical in their effects (Black *et al.*, 2003a p.5)

What is also needed is for the system within which schools operate to bear in mind the observation by Gipps that 'Assessment is not an exact science and we must stop presenting it as such' (Gipps, 1994, p167). The implications of this are that external systems of valorisation need to recognise a variety of alternatives to summative assessment in the forms in which it currently exists. Hopefully the recent announcement (October 2008) that SATs testing at Key Stage 3 is to be discontinued will help with this. But in addition schools need to be able to rely on teacher assessments, pupil self-assessments and peer-assessments to provide data which helps take learning forward, and not allow themselves to become obsessed by measurement. There is an old country saying to the effect that 'the pig doesn't get fatter by being weighed more often', and, in the same vein, learning does not improve by being tested for more frequently.

A key role in this will be the part played by QCA (and Ofsted, perhaps?) in recognising the distinctiveness of achievements which pupils in the two schools evidence. The QCA offers support to schools to work in innovative and non-traditional ways of organising the timetable:

Although the National Curriculum is specified in separate subjects, schools are not required to teach the subjects separately or to use their given titles. One subject can be combined with another, a subject can be woven into the teaching of other subjects, or it can be taught in separate lessons. (QCA, 2002. p.6)

Having recognised this, what would also be helpful is for the QCA to disentangle subject-specific levelling in the interim stages of years 7 and 8, as the teachers in the two schools have observed how this is not always a straightforward matter. It is to be hoped that the Assessing Pupil Performance (APP) work currently being undertaken by the QCA and the DCSF will provide some guidance on how this could be achieved.

## 6.8 Points for consideration

What addressing the role of assessment seems likely to do is to force schools to ask difficult questions, including:

- What are the uses of assessment?
- Who is assessment for?
  - Pupils?
  - Parents?
  - Teachers?
  - Senior Leadership?
  - Local Authority Statisticians?
- Why does assessment take the form it does?
- How can it be more integrated within teaching?

These are key questions for schools to address, and ones which have come to the fore in thinking in the two schools, and the answers to them are likely to have an effect on the ways in which teachers in *all* schools think about the issue of assessment. For the work being looked at in the two schools here, there is clear evidence that quality learning experiences are taking place. It is also the case that the primary function of assessment for learning needs to be to improve learning, and this needs to be considered separately from levelling. Other uses of assessment, including statistical monitoring need to be dealt with separately. Teachers need to feel that they can reclaim some of the high ground by increasing the part that teacher assessment can play. This will also go some way towards meeting concerns with regard to the different purposes of formative and summative assessment:

Some have argued that formative and summative assessments are so different in their purpose that they have to be kept apart, and such arguments are strengthened by experience of the harmful influence that narrow 'high-stakes' summative tests can have on teaching. However, it is unrealistic to expect teachers and pupils to practice such separation, so the challenge is to achieve a more positive relationship between the two. (Black et al., 2003b)

This is a useful point for the teachers in these schools, and one which will help develop systems of assessment. Addressing the uses and purposes will then enable teachers to produce assessment data which is fit for purpose, and is not trying to meet the requirements of too many separate functions.

From our analysis of the responses of teachers to questions on assessment, a number of points for consideration have emerged. These include:

- Decoupling assessment from grading
- Re-asserting the primacy of teacher assessment
- Integrating assessment within teaching and learning
- Considering the uses and purposes of assessment
- Thinking about whether terminal tasks and written work should be the sole means of assessment
- How a portfolio approach to assessment might be managed, and what will be done with the contents of the portfolio (whether e-portfolio or paper based).
- How teachers can know about the quality of *learning* which is taking place, as opposed to the quality of attainment
- How social skills can be assessed
- How PLTS can be assessed

- Does assessment of social skills and PLTS differ in kind from assessment of knowledge in NC subjects?
- Official sanctioning (QCA, Ofsted) that alternative forms of assessment to NC assessment levels in single subjects is possible before end of key stage statements.

## 7. The process of change at Kingstone and Queensbridge

### 7.1 The conditions for reform

The conditions for effective curricular and pedagogic reform have been the subject of much recent writing in education. Michael Fullan (2001) perhaps the theorist most associated with the analysis and management of educational change, has identified the conditions for sustained development which can be summarised as:

- the central role of the headteacher in developing capacity for change in schools
- a focus on the culture of classrooms
- an emphasis on shared values and well developed relationships
- creation of communities of learning
- attending to students' voice – the creation of an 'atmosphere of hope' in which students expect to be able to achieve
- creation of space and time to share and sustain key ideas
- continuing teacher professional education
- the involvement of parents

These features are evident in the processes of change which have taken place at Kingstone and Queensbridge, and have made significant contributions to the development of the current courses. To enumerate these:

- The headteacher provides strong leadership, and a compelling vision
- the senior manager, advanced teachers and the course co-ordinator share this vision and work to implement it in a collegiate way
- the original team feel a strong sense of ownership of the course and its development
- the course has been built on existing strengths and rethought the learning process
- there is a learning community of shared practice and enquiry with high trust and interdependence
- the students are part of a community of learners who are able to evaluate their own and their peers' learning. Their voices are heard.

To them we can add:

- The role of drama in providing a coherent, theoretically-informed and practical pedagogy which acted as the initial motor of change and the catalyst for the adoption by teachers of a broader 'active learning' approach.
- The role of key external agents of change providing models of, and consultancy and support for, the new pedagogic approach

The introduction of the new approach would not have taken place without the vision of the headteachers and their ability to translate it into practice. They exemplify the idea of learner-centred leadership which is at the centre of current debates in education. For example, MacBeath and his colleagues propose the following set of principles about leadership for learning:

- Leadership for learning practice involves maintaining a focus on learning as an activity.

- Leadership for practice involves creating conditions favourable for learning as an activity.
- Leadership for learning practice involves creating a dialogue about LfL.
- Leadership for learning practice involves the sharing of leadership.
- Leadership for learning practice involves fostering a shared sense of accountability. (MacBeath et al. 2006, p. 1 See also the the NCSL website, 2008).

All of these principles are demonstrated in practice in Kingstone and Queensbridge. One element in implementing learner-centred leadership is distributed leadership: the ability to delegate power and create a collegiate team taking on leadership roles: we see this in both schools in terms of the roles of the programme coordinators and of the drama teachers. Another key element is personalised learning:

For school leaders, it means constantly thinking about routines and the organisation of learning for all pupils so that their welfare and their progress can be mutually supportive. (QCA website, 2008)

Clearly the new approach has achieved considerable success in both schools in terms of transforming teaching and transforming learning. We have recorded these in the sections on Curriculum and Pedagogy, Students' Learning, and Assessment. However it is also important to recognise the limits of the processes of change which have taken place. There are two principal, and related, limits.

One is external to the new approach: the constraints imposed by the subject-based National Curriculum and the associated assessment regime. These are objective, in the sense of being beyond the control of the schools. But they are also subjective, in the sense of structuring the professional formation, identities and perspectives of teachers. The new approach requires teachers to question and reshape their professional outlooks and identities, moving from, to put it simplistically, teachers of subjects to teachers of children.

We can distinguish between the structural and organisational aspect of the new approach and the pedagogic aspect. The pressure of the National Curriculum and assessment impacts differently on each. Beyond Y7 the pressure of subjects, particularly the core subjects, has greatly restricted the thematic cross-curricular aspect. But it is still possible for teachers to employ the new pedagogic approach beyond Y7 within existing subject contexts. Inevitably this is a very uneven process: some teachers are committed to it, others resist it. Even within the team of teachers involved in the new approach there is unevenness of understanding. Matthew spoke of 'the emergence of kind of specialist Cultural Studies teachers'. But clearly this is an uneven development, as he went on to say:

Invariably there are going to be differences in those who grasp that pedagogy, understand it as I think you have to have a theoretical understanding before you can do it practically, those who understand that and can progress further and do it properly. I think there are teachers after three years who are really coming to grips with that theory and really coming to grips with what it takes to move that on. To be frank, there are others who think they understand what it's all about but their knowledge is still very thin actually and if you scrape beneath the surface, they're really delivering a curriculum, not listening to the children in the way that you'd hope, although it's tokenistic and there are those who, as I say, are teaching Cultural Studies in name only. (Head, Kingstone)

The solution, as both heads acknowledge, lies in processes of professional learning: the sharing of knowledge and practice and the resulting generation of new knowledge and practice.

I will stick to the view that wherever we've not shifted people it's because we've not given them enough time and where we've given them enough time they've shifted. (Head, Queensbridge)

This is the second principal limitation, in both schools, of the spread and deepening of the new approach. Our interviews with teachers have found a continuing commitment and appetite for collaborative change within the team. But they also record a widespread feeling that the opportunities for continuous, sustained team collaboration are too limited. There is a reliance on the role of the programme coordinators and that of the external drama workers to develop staff understanding and expertise, and while this is necessary and highly valued by teachers it cannot be a substitute for their own professional development through self-managed collaboration. Nevertheless within both schools there is evidence of the emergence of committed groups of practitioners who wish to continue to work in such forms of collaboration and to share the knowledge they have gained with teachers coming fresh to the course. In this way, they are developing what Laver and Wenger (1991) have termed 'communities of practice'. That is a form of professional knowledge getting which depends on newcomers not simply replicating practices which have been formalised and prepackaged for them, however good the resources selected, but by being given opportunities of working with the more experienced practitioners in contexts where knowledge is created jointly and learning fostered together. Wenger (1998) further suggests that:

Communities of practice develop around things that matter to people. As a result their practices reflect the members own understanding of what is important. (Wenger, 1998, p2)

These courses mattered to the teachers involved. Our interviewees often spoke passionately about the importance of the work they were engaged in and were concerned to support each others' practice despite the frustrations of limited time and space. The shared vision in both schools was to develop their own curriculum, certainly informed by the work of those we have named as change agents, but not simply following their models. As Fullan reminds us

Acquiring meaning, of course, is an individual act but its real value for student learning is when shared meaning is achieved across a group of people in concert (Fullan, 2001, p30)

Fullan here is referring to students' learning but his understanding can be applied equally to the learning processes involved in teacher development in these schools. It is new meaning related to pedagogy they are developing, not just sharing techniques or exchanging subject content.

Research into educational change suggests that, together with a positive vision and ethos created by the informed leadership of the headteacher, a vital element in the embedding of significant and sustainable development of innovative reforms is a commitment to continuing professional development and collaborative work to establish shared meanings. In part this was achieved through the role of experts - the key external and internal change agents we have referred to - sharing their knowledge and practice with less experienced teachers. But a decisive feature of the

Institutionalised phase of the change process is that the continuing professional learning becomes the collective responsibility of the teaching team itself. In Michael Fielding and his co-authors' empirically-based study of *Factors Influencing the Transfer of Good Practice* (Fielding *et al* 2005) the authors speak of 'Joint Practice Development', a term which

...validates the existing practice of teachers who are trying to learn new ways of working and acknowledges the effort of those who are trying to support them. It also underscores the necessity of mutual engagement which lies at the heart of the complex task of opening up and sharing practices with others. (Fielding *et al* 2005, p72)

This is particularly applicable to professional learning for creativity in teaching and learning because there is no blueprint to be followed, in the sense that, in contrast, the National Curriculum provides a pre-programmed model. We can draw here on work carried out in the framework of third generation activity theory, as developed by Engeström and his co-thinkers, the focus of which is on innovative professional learning across institutional boundaries. We can conceptualise the development of creativity in teaching and learning across boundaries within schools (between classrooms, departments, year groups and subjects) as instances of interacting activity systems. Engeström terms this kind of learning 'radical exploration':

Radical exploration is learning what is not yet there. It is creation of new knowledge and new practices for a newly emerging activity, that is, learning embedded in and constitutive of a qualitative transformation of the entire activity system.' (Engeström, 2004, p.4, quoted in Warrington *et al* 2004, p29)

How can this type of learning most effectively take place? Fielding and his co-authors distinguish two components of 'joint practice development': Experiential Learning and Reflective Learning. Experiential Learning includes teachers jointly planning, observing each other, and working alongside one another in the classroom. Reflective Learning entails analytical discussion. Both dimensions are necessary if professional learning is to be 'deep' rather than 'surface', because teachers need to understand the theoretical basis of the new approach in order to generate new practices to fit their own purposes and contexts, as Cordingley and Bell (2007) argue in their paper *Transferring learning and taking innovation to scale*.

Transfer of learning in the form of practice involves both a change in practitioners' knowledge and normal practice and an understanding of the underpinning rationale. Without such understanding teachers and leaders struggle to adapt approaches to specific needs and contexts; take up remains superficial and practitioners are condemned forever to using something in the form in which they first encountered it. (Cordingley and Bell 2007, p4)

## **7.2 The generalisability of the approach at Kingstone and Queensbridge: what can other schools take from it?**

It is our view that the new approach to curriculum and pedagogy at the two schools has been a real success. It represents a genuinely innovative way forward for secondary schools, while still meeting the requirements of the 'standards agenda', the National Curriculum and attainment outcomes. The question it raises for the school system as a whole is what other schools can learn from their experiences. To what extent are they generalisable, not in the sense of simply being replicable, but in the sense of other schools being able to apply the educational principles –

pedagogic, curricular, organisational, managerial, and professional developmental – underpinning the particular experiences of the two schools to their own situations to generate new innovative practice appropriate to their needs.

Of course there are many secondary schools – it is difficult to gain an idea of how many – which are already independently employing elements of the approach to the curriculum at Queensbridge and Kingstone. There is nothing unique about organising the curriculum on the basis of cross-curricular themes and issues which are drawn from ‘real life’ and which relate to students’ experiences and interests, while also using them as vehicles for teaching the technical and social skills for learning; nor about promoting active learning and being attentive to student voice; nor about organising the timetable to allow more extensive blocks and frequency of sessions, enabling the development of relationships between teachers and students.

What however is distinctive about the two schools is the systematic way in which they have combined not just some but all of these elements. Few schools have departed so radically from the subject-based curriculum model which has been traditional in English secondary education and which has been for the past two decades fostered by the National Curriculum and the ‘standards agenda’. The reason why the two schools have had the confidence to do so is that drama in education methodology has provided them with a coherent alternative pedagogic perspective.

Ironically, it has been the marginal status of drama in the National Curriculum for the past two decades which has protected it from colonisation by the ‘standards agenda’, and enabled it to pursue its own course of development, under the aegis of a number of outstanding contemporary drama educationists (some directly connected with our two schools, such as Dorothy Heathcote and Jonothan Neelands). Drama offers an alternative pedagogic model which has both a developed theoretical basis and a track record of successful practice. While it offers to teachers the particular techniques of drama, it can claim to exemplify in the contemporary context a broader tradition of progressive education deriving from Vygotsky and Bruner (a tradition perhaps only finding comparable expression today, again contesting the dominant paradigm, in early years education). However, the attraction of drama methodology for the teachers in our two schools is not primarily because of its theoretical pedagogic basis but because they have found that it works in practice, both in bringing new life to teachers’ own experiences of teaching and in inspiring students’ learning, including that of lower-achieving and less-engaged pupils.

### **7.3 Is drama the only viable alternative pedagogy?**

For our two schools drama provided the technology and the rationale for the new approach. This raises an important question for the generalisability of the new approach to other schools: whether drama is the only possible basis for it. The answer of both headteachers is no. Tim saw drama as the particular catalyst he had chosen for a broader conception of education which was not the sole property of, or restricted to, the domain of drama.

Going right back to the principles of what I think matter most about drama in education, as an ex-drama teacher, I am not at all precious about drama. I’m passionate about the importance of relationships in classrooms, the importance of children bringing their experience of classrooms, the need for teachers to take risks and work differently and for there to be rigour and for the learning to make sense to young people and for them to be thoroughly engaged by the learning and because those were the principles coming out in those early days that I knew I wanted to be central in the curriculum, that’s

what I've been more engaged with than the Year 7 project, of itself, and so if you were to ask a teacher who's not involved in Year 7 at all, what the five 'R's are they would tell you that they are, relevance, responsibility, rigour, risk and most of all, relationships, and those five 'R's that grew out of the Enterprise have become the core of our curriculum values, our curriculum policy in Queensbridge. (Head, Queensbridge)

Matthew gave a similar response.

It happens that I worked with the pedagogical style and the understanding I have, which is obviously drama based. I suspect there would be other practitioners, you know, great geographers who'd say, 'well there is another way of doing this'. And I suspect there will be English practitioners who would say there is another way of doing this, about finding the voice within the writer or... I'm sure there are other routes in. [...] This is a specialist school that has performing arts, so this is a school that's attracted teachers who I think have got that kind of interest in creativity and active learning in particular. Other schools will find other ways of doing it. And what I am not in any way trying to advocate here is that people try and duplicate what's happened here, because I don't think that's the way it can work. You have to work from, just as you would work with a class, you have to work from what you've got. (Head, Kingstone)

For those schools, likely to be the majority, which do not choose to or cannot draw on the drama expertise that our two schools could, the question is: what other comparable pedagogic perspectives can they draw on to generate their new approaches, and what sorts of expertise do they need to develop?

We are at something of a turning point in secondary education in England. The dominant curriculum model of the past two decades is increasingly being questioned and in some ways dismantled. In particular, the review of the KS3 curriculum by the QCA, and the abandonment of SATs at the end of KS3, open up exciting new opportunities for schools. The question is, how will teachers take advantage of them? Three factors need to be borne in mind. One is that teachers are mindful that they are still regulated and evaluated by student progress and attainment measures. The other is that the majority of teachers' professional identities have been formed during twenty years of the 'standards agenda', and for younger teachers that has governed their initial training too. These teachers have been largely cut off from and are unaware of previous traditions of progressive education which were still alive in some schools in the 1980s. The third factor is that there is no obvious comprehensive alternative paradigm, available both in theory and in practice, to which teachers can turn. There are elements of an alternative certainly – among them drama, assessment for learning, dialogic teaching, the RSA Open Minds curriculum – but each school and each teacher needs to identify and assemble them into the construction of a new vision and model. Many schools are now engaged in this uncertain process. Examples of schools which are further down that road and can demonstrate its benefits in concrete practice are crucial way markers, showing other schools, other teachers, that change is possible, that teachers can work in new ways, and that students can learn more effectively. Kingstone and Queensbridge are two such schools.

#### **7.4 The additionality which Creative Partnerships offered**

In both schools the new approach was dependent on funding and support from Creative Partnerships, both local - Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Creative

Partnership and Birmingham Creative Partnership – and national. Creative Partnerships enabled the schools to make use of external colleagues with specific intellectual resources and professional skills, as drama workers and as consultants, who were in tune with the headteachers' visions and who acted as catalysts, advisers and critical friends for the schools to develop their new pedagogic practices. Furthermore, the extended time-scale of Creative Partnerships' support continued during the Implementation, Institutionalisation and Extension phases of the projects, allowed the work not only to be embedded in the Y7 curriculum but also to be taken on into Y8.

Creative Partnership's support enabled:

- Informed discussions of how best to develop creative teaching and learning.
- Increased capacity for curriculum change through the support of experienced drama practitioners who worked alongside staff, acting both as models of practice and as critical and supportive friends.
- A commitment to continuing professional development through internal staff development meetings and attendance at the conferences of the National Association for the Teaching of Drama.
- A commitment to researching the effectiveness of the programme with the support of researchers.
- The creation of a pedagogical approach to learning in which creativity was not seen as an add-on or supplementary experience but an integral and central theme of the daily life of the school.
- A review of assessment processes and a movement towards more child-centred and learning-centred approach.
- The capacity to network with other schools, including local primary and special schools.

For the teachers, the main benefit of the support given to them arose from the new pleasure and confidence experienced in the classroom. All the teachers interviewed felt that the course had provided them with a special opportunity for collaborative, professional development, made even more effective by Debbie Kidd in her role of the creative partner. The creative partnership had enabled teachers with no prior experience of using drama in the classroom to develop confidence in this area and fired them with the desire to question their own practice and improve.

### **7.5 Is the new approach dependent on external change agents?**

A fundamental question in relation to the generalisability of the new approach is whether it could have been implemented without the support which Creative Partnerships provided, and specifically without an external person as a key agent of change, particularly in the initial Implementation stage. Could the dynamic for the new approach have come solely from within the school staff? In Matthew's view,

I think what Debra brings is the external practitioner view. I think if you'd looked at it, the simple answer is probably you need somebody coming from outside who has that level of, it's the mixture of wisdom, experience and interpersonal skills to handle people, to be able to, you know, and credibility as well, and so in that sense Debra's a rare breed. Having said that I'm aware of other practitioners who would do, not the same job but a similar job and I'm not saying that she's the only person and as I say, different schools would tackle this issue in different ways so they would need a different type of...  
(Head, Kingstone)

Matthew continued by stating that the role could be played by a member of a school staff, such as an Advanced Skills Teacher.

### **7.6 How can the experiences at Kingstone and Queensbridge be shared with other schools?**

In the new Creative Partnerships policy context, there is an expectation that leading 'schools of creativity' will act as agents of change for other schools through collaboration. Outside the Creative Partnerships context opportunities for schools to access funding for external change agents are less available and therefore the need to construct effective networks between schools for them to learn from each other becomes even more important. Collaborative networks linking schools is a key theme of current thinking in the field of leadership and management for school improvement. For example, David Hopkins, until recently director of the National College for School Leadership, argues in his recent book *Every school a great school* (Hopkins 2007) that

Networks can provide a means of facilitating local innovation and change as well as contributing to large-scale reform. They offer the potential for 'reinventing' local support for schools by promoting different forms of collaboration, linkages and multifunctional partnerships. (p132)

For Hopkins 'the key purpose of networks is to create and disseminate knowledge to support educational improvement and innovation' (p131). However, recent research suggests that the establishment of effective networks of collaboration for 'creativity' between schools is not unproblematic (Fautley and Hatcher 2008). The ability of schools like Kingstone and Queensbridge to contribute to system change depends largely on the extent to which existing networks among schools, currently largely dominated by the 'standards agenda', are hospitable to their input in terms of creativity in teaching and learning, and the extent to which new networks can be constructed for that purpose.

## Appendix

### **Drama for Learning: a brief account of the pedagogy introduced to the teachers at Kingstone and Queensbridge Schools**

#### **1. The foundations of Heathcote's practice:**

1.1 The Drama for Learning pedagogic model which has informed the thinking in both schools has been developing in the UK for over 50 years since Dorothy Heathcote was first appointed to a post in educational Drama at the University of Durham. Largely an autodidact, curious, intelligent and determined, it was these qualities that she brought to her teaching. By 1967, when HMI John Allen was reporting on Drama in Education, her work's distinctive quality was noted:

Some teachers make a distinction between improvisation and improvised play-making. The latter has led to some of the most interesting work that we have seen. Close questioning of the pupils by the teacher has led to deep involvement or sense of relevance so that a new dimension has been added to apparently threadbare scenes. 'All right you are on an island,' says a teacher in the north, 'how did you get there? Who are you? Are you alone or with anyone?' This teacher and her students from an institute have conducted projects lasting a whole week in which the boys and girls in the school have investigated with great profundity such subjects as birth, marriage, death, in all their personal, social, anthropological, and artistic aspects. (Quoted in Bolton 1998, p.173)

This was echoed twenty years later by a teacher educator very familiar with her work across a wide range of formal and informal educational settings.

She (Heathcote) sees drama as the means of rooting all the school curriculum back in a human context where it sprang from, so that knowledge is not an abstract, isolated subject – based discipline, but is based in human action, interaction, commitment and responsibility. (Quoted in Bolton 1998, p.177)

1.2 It is this sociological and moral dimension which distinguishes Heathcote's work from much of the educational drama practice that had preceded her. Where much of the earlier emphasis had been on the child's freedom of expression and individual development, for Heathcote the emphasis shifted to empowering the child as part of a social group committed to enquiry and shared understanding. She was interested in enabling children to come to understand the complexity of cause and consequence through an insider's exploration of a dramatic moment. Drama offers children the chance to:

. . . stay in their own mindset but inhabit unfamiliar places and contexts for action. Behaviour is selected to be relevant to the circumstances the group has contracted to explore. This is what happens when children play. This is what Bottom and his companions undertake when they make a play for purpose . . . I want the real child to stay present as a self-spectator to what she is contributing, sustaining and enjoying the power of making, in the act of behaving within the context. (Heathcote, 2007, P.9)

1.3 Heathcote has always recognised the teacher's responsibility to plan the framework within which matter of significance can be dealt with in such a way as to scaffold the child's acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding. Sharing Freire's concern, she sees the teacher's responsibility as being 'to enfranchise children within the drama worlds we've made together' (Heathcote 1989, p.23).

Like Freire she eschews the 'domesticating' or 'authoritarian' model of the teacher and has spent her working life finding the ways in which teachers may become 'liberating educators', turning philosophy into pedagogical practice. All her strategies for teachers are designed to this end.

Education always has a directive nature we can't deny; the teacher has a plan, a programme, a goal for the study, but there is a directed liberating educator on the one hand, and the directed domesticating on the other. Here is the central issue. In the liberating classroom, these differences are not the antagonistic ones they are in the authoritarian classroom. The liberating difference is a tension which the teacher tries to overcome by a democratic attitude to his or her directedness. The directed nature of a liberating course is not properly in the educator, but in the practice of education itself. (Freire 1986, p.172)

As Heathcote herself says, in the collegiate classroom she aims to create, where teacher and pupil learn together,

Frequently I use the power of the subject . . . I say, 'It demands this of us' – not 'I demand this of you.' (Heathcote 1984a, p.19)

1.4 Heathcote's work is associated with Teacher-in-Role, where the function is that of dramatist signalling, by selective use of action and language, the imaginative world within which the class works. In the early stages, power and control are with the teacher; as the children are inducted into the way of working, the power shifts.

One of the principles of art-making Heathcote understood from the beginning was that you cannot give children power, blithely saying 'Over to you to do as you like with'. . . That moment of taking over from the teacher-dramatist can only occur when the pupils are ready to interpret committedly, imaginatively and rationally in the light of what has gone before. (Bolton, 1998, p.185)

It is at this point that genuinely creative learning can happen and the 'uncommon and appropriate' (Barron, 1955) may be brought into being and 'imaginative activity (be) fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value' (NACCCE 1999).

## **2. The characteristics of Drama for Learning:**

### **2.1**

Drama is such a normal thing . . . All it demands is that children shall think from within a dilemma instead of talking about the dilemma. (Heathcote 1984b, p.119)

There are some teachers in both schools who are using Mantle of the Expert, a system for organising the curriculum within a fictional context. Others are developing their drama practice with a view to doing that in the future. At present most use some

drama methods as part of a wider range of active learning strategies. All are aware of drama's characteristics:

- Activity is social and collaborative – meaning and significance is openly negotiated.
- It fuses the affective and the cognitive – it works within a fiction where there is always something at stake for the people in the story.
- It requires inquiry into values – implications and consequences of action are scrutinised from inside a dilemma and from differing standpoints.
- It exploits the human capacity for liminality – so that we can bring our own knowledge and experience into focus.
- It uses the critical dramatic elements of tension and constraint.
- It operates in the urgency of 'now' time.

2.2 Mantle of the Expert offers an imagined context within which the learning happens. Information from a wide variety of sources is interrogated. It's an active, urgent, purposeful view of learning in which knowledge is to be operated on, not merely to be taken in.

Mantle of the Expert is . . . never a dummy run. It is rooted in deep play, concentrated sustaining of responsibility and tangible outcomes of high quality. (Heathcote, 2007, p.16)

Heathcote is very clear that the name of 'expert' is won by the children rather than endowed by the teacher. It is in the accomplishing of ever more complex and inter-related tasks that they develop expertise and thus win the right to the name. It is never 'given' at the outset of the work though the teacher and children may come to recognize and acknowledge their growing expertise as the work develops. It's important to make this explicit because in the DfES Drama Objectives Bank KS3 document) Mantle of the Expert is defined thus: *The major feature of this convention is that the pupils are in role as characters with specialist knowledge relevant to the situation they find themselves in*. (DfES 2003, p.90) This erroneous and reductive definition is wrong on two counts. Firstly, MoE is not a drama convention but a whole system for organizing a curriculum. Secondly, it implies that students are expert merely by being labeled as such.

### 3. Cognition through Drama:

3.1 Heathcote argues that demonstrating behaviour in social encounters enables socially negotiated learning where the human capacity for sign making and signal reading is invoked. In contrast to most schooling, this offers the possibility of

learning together as minds meeting minds and ideas being bounced about . . . in the social worlds made for purpose by teacher planning. (Heathcote 2007, pp. 9-10)

3.2 Gavin Bolton, her colleague for many years, asserts that

. . . the essential nature of her work is bound up with her assumption that dramatic action, by its nature, is subordinated to meaning. Such a notion goes back to 1933 when Vygotsky first made the following comment about child make-believe play. He writes: 'In play a child deals with things as having meaning'. He suggests that whereas in 'real life' action is prioritised over meaning, the opposite occurs in make-believe. It seems to me that everything

Dorothy Heathcote said about her work in those early attempts at explanation stemmed from this assumption ... that dramatic action was to do with attending to meaning, or rather meanings, to be negotiated with her class and leading to action ... as early as 1930, Susan Isaacs drew attention to a cognitive and hypothesising function of child make-believe play, but Heathcote, more than a generation later, seems to have been the first to take up this theoretical position. (Bolton 1998, p.176)

Heathcote suggests that teachers use readily available objects to assist children to move into the fictional world. Large sheets of paper, a few 'fat felts' and some lengths of fabric may be tools enough to begin creating a fictional world together. In this, she was, again, using the make-believe of the child to further his cognitive development. Vygotsky writes of the 'pivot' an object which can be used in place of a real thing, to function as that real thing in play, allowing the child to separate meaning from an actual object or action. Drama, using pivotal objects, can effect the child's process of conceptualising, of moving from the concrete to abstract thought.

Thought is separated from the thing because a piece of wood begins to play the role of a doll, a stick becomes a horse; action according to rules begins to be defined from thought rather than things themselves . . . the child cannot yet tear the thought from the thing. He must have a pivot in another thing . . . to think of the horse, he must define his action by this horse in the stick or pivot . . . this is the transitional character of play. This is what makes it a middle link between the purely situational connectedness of childhood and thinking that is removed from the real situation. (Vygotsky 1978, 69-71)

3.3 Recognising that learning and thinking are always situated in a cultural setting, Heathcote seeks to create an encounter where the child is enfranchised and enabled to understand phenomena. As co-creators of a fictional world, students journey from attraction to attention to concern, exploring and explaining to each other the complexity of what they encounter. Her praxis, which she describes as, 'action creates reflection, reflection leads to further action' (Heathcote, 1989) is central to learning. The learning objectives for the next action are always born of collaborative reflection and it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that they are identified (by her and/or the students) as they emerge from that process. This is a rigorous process and one where it is not possible, nor desirable, for the teacher alone to identify all objectives long in advance.

3.4 Work is structured to offer pupils, the co-playwrights, a sequence of ever more complex problems. Because dramatic tension is at the core of the process, there is always something of significance at stake for the participants in the fictional world they have created. And because drama operates in 'now and imminent' time there is urgency, requiring responsibility of the participants as they use the test of 'reasonableness' when offering or testing solutions or ways of accommodating the dilemmas they face.

3.5 Drama harnesses the power of affective learning as well as reason. Drama teachers talk of 'thinking feelingly and feeling thoughtfully' to describe the concept. Kieran Egan reminds us that learning is not simple in our species:

The human mind does not simply store facts discretely when it learns . . . when we learn even the simplest fact – that Vasco de Gama set off from Lisbon to sail around Africa in 1497 or that spiders have eight legs – we do not simply lodge these as discrete data in our brains. When learned, they mix in with the complex of shifting emotions, memories, intentions and so on that

constitute our mental lives. Facts about spiders will gain an affective colouring connected with our feelings about insects in general and spiders in particular. Vasco de Gama's voyages may trigger images of ships off alien coasts and a sense of adventure. Whether and how we learn and retain these particular facts is affected by the complex of meaning-structures we already have in place, which in turn are affected by our emotions, intentions and so on. (Egan 1992, p.50)

3.6 The implications for pedagogy are significant. Drama acknowledges this and many years ago Dorothy Heathcote drew an analogy with using a kaleidoscope. Even a small external intervention has the power to disturb the apparently fixed pattern and transform what we can re-cognise. Drama enables creative learning to happen, where children make novel connections with existing knowledge, envisage possibilities and anticipate and name problems and challenges as well as deal with them. Egan goes on to argue that

All those procedures of teaching, testing and curriculum that see education as a process of accumulating knowledge and skills uninvolved with emotions, intentions and human meaning, will tend to be inadequate to do more than create conventional thinkers. (Egan 1992, p.51)

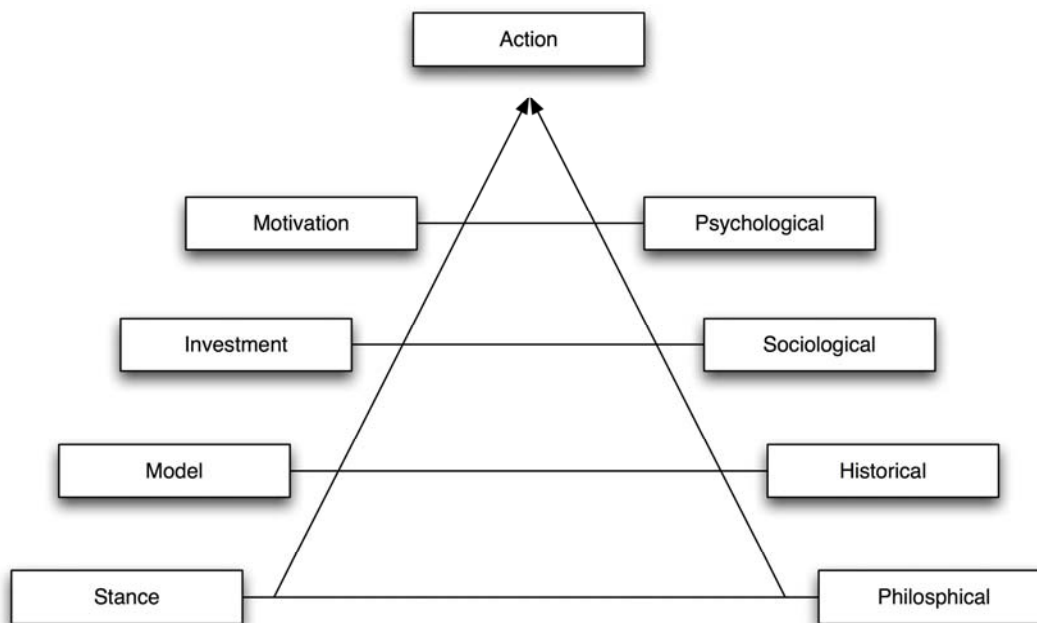
3.7 Students are always conscious that they are the co-creators of the context within which they are working. The pupils are always self-spectators, simultaneously in and outside the fictional world they are creating, agreeing to the shared meaning of a sign, for example, the piece of paper on which is drawn the outline of an eye, fixed to a classroom wall to indicate the iris-scanning security device at the office door. It is this liminality that makes Heathcote's drama so pedagogically powerful. It is a stepping stone to meta-cognition.

3.8 The other liberating feature of drama pedagogy is its ability to manipulate time. The structure is episodic rather than narrative, flashbacks and fast forwards are possible, real time can be slowed down to delve into meaning. Importantly, students do not need to enact everything in the fictional world. There are many more devices available in Heathcote's thirty three conventions which enable sign, in a wide variety of guises, to be available for exploration. As well as the more commonly used enactive strategies which bring role into the classroom, iconic and symbolic devices may do this too.

They exploit the use of signing and significance in a very special way because most of them shift the way in which contact with role and 'immediate time' works. Most drama that moves forward at seeming-life- rate is too swift for classes to become absorbed in and committed to. The conventions offered here all slow down time and enable classes to get a grip on decisions and their own thinking about matters. (Heathcote 1984c, p. 166)

3.9 Heathcote's AMIMS tool enables the students to deconstruct an action to probe its meaning. Later, they may use the same tool to imbue their own precisely constructed dramatic action with meaning. Importantly they do this collaboratively, moving beyond any one individual's culturally constructed understanding to a shared knowledge. Between them, they are able to make explicit the distributed intelligence held within the class.

## Heathcote AMIMS



At the top, the iceberg above the waterline, is the dramatic Action visible to all watching. The teacher or student identifies an action (e.g. putting headphones in ears when Fatima begins her appeal) which has arisen within the drama. We analyse this action, by this role, according to the following levels of meaning. The first is immediate Motivation – what has made this person, in this moment, do this? This she identifies as the psychological level of meaning. The next is Investment – what is at stake for this person and those to whom s/he is bound (family, colleagues, ancestors etc.)? This is the sociological level. The next is Model – what are the wider cultural values of the world this role inhabits which offer him/her an example of how to behave in these circumstances. This is the historical level. The deepest level is Stance – what is the ‘world view’ of the individual that underpins his/her relationship to the world – the philosophical level. Children relish using this tool. They are accomplished readers of the world around them and are often able to sum up Stance, in particular, in pithy phrases. “He thinks the world owes him a living.” “She thinks that Paradise is not for this life.”

Having used it once students are keen to do so again, not only in analysing a sign but in creating their own sign and imbuing it with meaning.

3.10 Externalising phenomena, placing events and experience in a drama’s fictional context, allows for a public and shared probing of those phenomena which promotes a questioning mind frame. It can do more:

Externalizing, in a word, rescues cognitive activity from implicitness, making it more public, negotiable, and “solidary.” At the same time, it makes it more accessible to subsequent reflection and meta-cognition. Probably the greatest

milestone in the history of externalization was literacy, putting thought and memory “out there” on clay tablets or paper. (Bruner 1996, pp.24-25)

Few of us would dispute literacy’s claim to function in this way. Perhaps it is now time to acknowledge that another symbol system - oral language - is crucial to learning.

Children, we now know, need to talk, and to experience a rich diet of spoken language, in order to think and to learn. Reading, writing and number may be acknowledged curriculum ‘basics’, but talk is arguably the true foundation of learning. (Alexander 2004, p.9)

Drama offers access to that ‘rich diet’ and the mental tools to digest it.

#### **4. The nature of the encounter in drama and the implications for pedagogy:**

4.1 Heathcote’s work to unpick the nature of the social encounters in the classroom led to her focus on how the teacher sees the pupil. This view of the child, or class, will determine how the teacher operates. Her work on the paradigms teachers operate has become one of the most useful tools available to educators questioning their pedagogy. Codified in 1984, in collaboration with Patricia Encisco, one of her MA students, the following chart gives some examples of the more commonly found paradigms.

Paradigms regarding views of children  
Not in order of value or preference

Child as flower	- given enough time and care . . .
Child as candle	- you can rely on me to keep you lit up
Child as echo	- no, do it the way I’ve said/shown you . . .
.	.
Child as friend	- if I’m nice to you, will you . . .
Child as adversary	- the trouble with you (lot, class etc.) is . . .
.	.
Child as clay	- in time you’ll turn into the class I want . . .
.	.
Child as crucible	- you and me have to keep stirring everything around
Child as machine	- by October they should all be able to . . .
.	.
Child as vessel	- we did the towns yesterday, today we’re going to do Indian crops . . .

NB paradigm in this context is employed as: an epistemological viewpoint which as an organising principle governs perception . . . determines what we shall see and shall not see. (Heathcote, 1989)

4.2 She argues that the significance of these is twofold. Children will very quickly, albeit unconsciously, recognise how the teacher views them and will behave so as to reflect that back to the teacher. It thus becomes a reinforcing mechanism within which teacher and learner come to know and fix the rules governing the ‘social context’ box at the heart of Barnes’ diagram (fig 1). For example, a child may very quickly learn that the questions a teacher asks are designed to elicit a right or wrong answer rather than discursive thought. However, if a teacher comes to recognise the opportunities and limitations contained within his or her dominant paradigm, then he or she may deliberately choose to operate another. Each has different implications

for the strategies for learning pupils may use and that in turn shapes the kind of learning that is possible. However, she warns that this is no 'magic bullet'; the pupil, too, must learn new ways of thinking and behaving in a new paradigm. Do not be surprised at the cynicism of the 15 year old who finds it hard to believe that a teacher would ask a question to which he or she does not already know the answer.

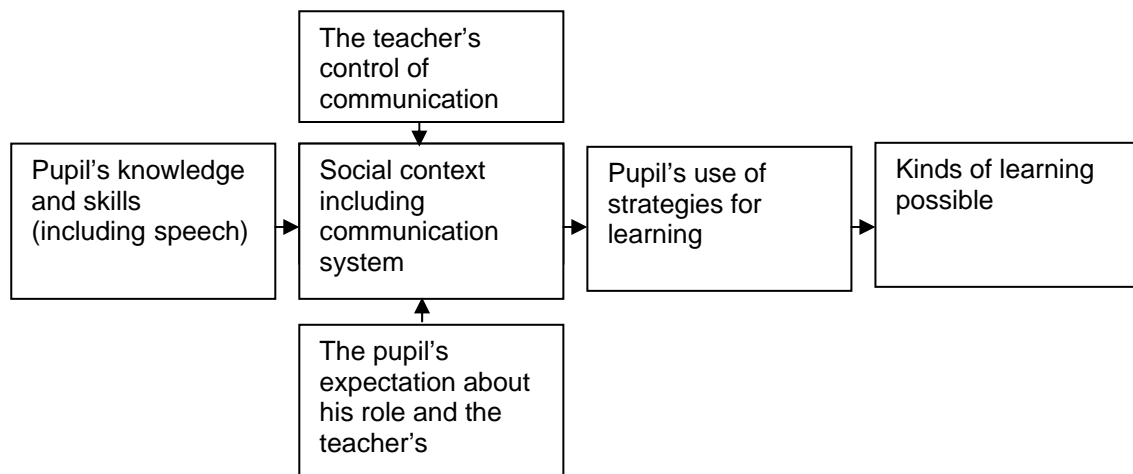
Heathcote's practice is predicated upon the understanding that

...the child does not enter the life of his or her group as a private and autistic sport of primary processes, but rather as a participant in a larger public process in which public meanings are negotiated. (Bruner 1990 p.13)

4.3 As well as the teacher's responsibility for bringing material to the encounter in the classroom, Heathcote has always seen it as the teacher's responsibility to take account of what the child brings with him or her.

I consider it important that the pre-knowledge children have, the pre-understandings, the pre-attitudes they bring, I have to somehow discover. (Heathcote, 1989, p. 30)

She uses Barnes' model to clarify the mechanism of the social encounter in the classroom and describes it thus:



The pupil will always come into the school knowing things and able to do things. The teacher, because of the way schools are organised, is expected to be in control of the communication, and of course the teacher's control works at different strengths. The teacher can modify that control and give more freedoms, or may be rather poor at control, and not give much help. At the very bottom of that column we see the pupil's expectation about his role is bound to be a factor. What is expected or achieved in this classroom today with this particular person? A classroom is always a social encounter, and that social encounter will include the communications systems which occur. If you change the pupil's expectation because of the way you operate your paradigm, then you will change the communications system and you will change the social context. As soon as you change that, you offer the pupil other strategies for learning. We learn strategies very early in our lives (to see what the adults are up to, where they keep the sweets and biscuits, and so on). The pupils' strategies for learning are very highly developed. If we can then change and widen the range of pupil's strategies for learning, we can

then change the kinds of learning that may become available to them. If our communication system in the main demands that our classes of pupils are folded into desks – listening – writing – then it follows that the pupils’ strategies for learning will develop from those ways. This affects the kind of learning they then find possible. For example, if you mostly have to learn by thinking things over for yourself, you cannot possibly learn how to learn through argument. The social context of the communications system has to change before you can learn through argument. (Heathcote 1989, p. 32)

‘Thinking things over for yourself’ can be a valuable way of making meaning. What Heathcote is arguing is that it should not be the only way open to children for to do that narrows what children are able to learn.

4.4 The imperative is to explore in order to explain in Heathcote’s work. This is what makes it different from the project work model with which it is often confused. At the centre of Heathcote’s approach is the drive for teacher and pupils to work alongside each other to explore a particular facet of the human condition and the responsibility we have, as learners, to explain to each other (and in the case of Mantle of the Expert, our client) what we have understood.

It is useful to look at the diagram Heathcote uses, again based on work by Barnes (1976) and modified by John Carroll (1984), one of her former students.

	Predominant teacher role	Pupils’ role in communication	Predominant form of communication
TRANSMISSION TEACHING	Assess (judging) →	Presenting →	Final draft
ENQUIRY METHOD	Reply (understanding) →	Sharing →	exploratory
DRAMA FRAMEWORK	Participate (contributing) →	Co-operating →	explanatory

Heathcote explains it thus:

Now in the drama framework, the teacher contributes and participates, the children co-operate with the participating teacher as well as they can, and they all end up explaining the world to one another. What you have then is a classroom working as a laboratory. If, after exploring, we do not keep explaining to each other, we cannot really own our own knowledge. So if we explore, and then explain, we will automatically be drawing upon our final draft work, the best we can explain, in the best way, at this given time. This recognises that we may explain differently tomorrow because we shall perhaps participate differently tomorrow. This is the crucible paradigm, where we are stirring our knowledge, together. (Heathcote, 1989, p. 31)

4.5 This reveals three characteristics of Heathcote’s thinking. Knowledge is ‘unfinished’ and always subject to new information which may alter our understanding. Secondly, that drama enables multiple voices and narratives, a dialogic approach, so that yesterday’s certainties can be re-examined in the light of another viewpoint. Thirdly, that it is within the compass of any member of the group, not the teacher alone, to introduce the new information or new insight which may

deepen our shared knowledge or, as in the kaleidoscope, re-arrange the components so that we see the pattern differently.

4.6 Iona Towler Evans uses Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert in her work with children and their teachers. Her example of the discourse possible within the 'social encounter' is illuminating.

Mantle of the Expert will demand that teachers and children 'truly converse', that their conversations are a genuine exchange of ideas where children grow to take responsibility for the work and learn to teach each other. Through these conversations, which may seem casual, the teacher will have carefully fed in useful information but without teacher telling. The spreading of responsibility is an important feature of Mantle of the Expert, where the teacher is always planning ways of discouraging teacher dependency but encouraging an investment from the children in what seems like real work carrying a real responsibility and commitment. The children enter the functional roles of people who run an enterprise. . . . Within this context the teacher will also adopt a functional role but will always adopt a collegiate relationship with the children, so instead of saying something like this,

"You see, when horses have too much spring grass they could get colic, so we'll have to make sure we keep them off the grass", s/he may say something like:

"Has anyone seen the vet's report on Molly? Was it colic? I know she'd been on that Spring grass a good while. What did the vet say when she came?"

The teacher in us will want them to understand the first explanation so we will tend to tell it like a teacher. The second example demonstrates a way of talking which gives the same information but allows the children to make the connections. (Towler Evans 1999)

The higher mental functions are called into play as the child makes sense of the adult collaborator's words within the fictional context they have created together. The child's socially constructed learning is at the heart of this encounter between teacher and child.

4.7 Heathcote is aware of the often unspoken norms and values that operate in schools. After her short lived retirement in the 1980s, she is working with children and their teachers again including recent Creative Partnership sponsored projects in the East Midlands. She sees the inside of many schools and two years ago, she produced another set of paradigms to help teachers analyse the institutions they are part of.

School as hospital	- we will fix you for life.
School as community	- we will help you join in life by building a close copy.
School as church	- there is so much to understand about the doctrine of knowledge
School as prison	- we will keep every one safe by locking you in
Schools as military	
Establishment	- 'discipline-discipline-discipline.'
School as sports team	- so many things to win and be best at.
School as garden	- we will help you grow into the best specimen there is!

School as factory	- its all about the results you know - whatever we believe in - SATs and GCSE's are what really count in the end.
School as home	- we will create a place where you want to be- to learn through living together.
School as sieve	- we have to sort out all those that will succeed and those that don't - that's why we set and band every one according to how good they are.
School as mirror	- we will ask you what you are interested in, what you need and then plan what we will do. (Heathcote 2006)

When teachers plan for the social encounter they want to enable in their classroom, they cannot do it in a vacuum. The child moves from encounter to encounter throughout the day. S/he cannot help but bring the expectations and behaviours from those others into the drama classroom too. If the teacher's working paradigm is at odds with the dominant paradigm governing the school there will be a dislocation for the child. The teacher must be adept recognizing this and aiding the child into full involvement.

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