EVIDENCE INFORMED TEACHING

New research supports the effectiveness of rehearsal room approaches to teaching Shakespeare

PLUS

How primary and secondary schools have seen their results improve since using rehearsal room approaches

Save the date for our tour of First Encounters with Shakespeare: The Comedy of Errors

Professional Development opportunities and events and workshops for young people
We recently commissioned research from the University of Warwick to assess the impact of our teaching approaches and our school partnerships on young people, schools and their wider communities. The research involved 100 schools nationwide who form part of our Associate Schools’ Programme, a unique long-term collaboration between the RSC, regional theatres and schools nationally. The evidence is compelling and suggests that our approaches accelerate the development of language skills, confidence, empathy and critical thinking on every young person’s life. But you might be surprised about the impact Shakespeare can have on language in your classroom and on your students. We work with thousands of young people, teachers and partner theatres each year, who experience the extraordinary power of Shakespeare’s language in their school and local community. I hope that the content of this edition of Education News convinces you to be one of them.

Jacqui O’Hanlon
Director of Education

Company we’re passionate about the impact Shakespeare can have on every young person’s life. But you might be surprised about the kinds of impact these plays and a pedagogy born out of our rehearsal rooms can have in your classroom and on your students. We believe that the younger children are exposed to Shakespeare’s language, the better. We know that Shakespeare’s language is challenging but through the Associate Schools programme we consistently see children of all ages and abilities rising to and thriving on that challenge.

For more information about RSC Education work, research or case studies visit: rsc.org.uk/education

For more evidence about the impact of arts learning in schools, visit the Cultural Learning Alliance website: culturallearningalliance.org.uk/evidence
CASE STUDY: EASTBURY COMMUNITY SCHOOL, BARKING, ESSEX

How pupils in East London have become inspired by Shakespeare.

Teachers at Eastbury Community School describe the usual response from pupils when they were told they are to study Shakespeare as similar to that of Sir Lenny Henry before he took on the role of Othello:

‘I’m slightly allergic to Shakespeare... at school we didn’t know you were supposed to stand up and act it out... it just felt like some ancient language that we didn’t really understand...’

What a difference a year made. For after being part of the RSC’s Learning and Performance Network, the teaching of Shakespeare in this East London school was so transformed that students have been known to willingly stay in class during break time to discuss the character relationships in Othello. The change in attitude can be felt amongst both staff and pupils – as one English teacher puts it, ‘I have fallen in love with drama and Shakespeare’s plays all over again.’

Through their work with the RSC, teachers from Eastbury and a host of Associate Schools enjoyed two INSET days where they learned how to integrate rehearsal room approaches into their teaching of Shakespeare and bring rehearsal room approaches to the classroom. Meanwhile pupils enjoyed a number of theatre trips (including to London’s Barbican to see Harry IV Part II) and several live broadcasts from Stratford upon Avon, considered to be highlights of the school year.

This new approach to Shakespeare has invigorated the school, as Anita Ark, Head of English, explains. ‘Our classrooms have been injected with fresh energy that values active learning as a real tool for progression and development, whilst our lead teachers have been able to develop strong leadership skills and become practitioners who can lead by example. There’s a real sense of excitement about Shakespeare this year, with new vibrant displays popping up in corridors and theatre trips being celebrated in the school newsletter.’

She continues, ‘As teachers we are often consumed in thinking about progress. The truth is, if we focus on ensuring our staff are equipped to deliver imaginative, creative and enjoyable learning experiences then our students will make the progress we hope for them.’

This progress is best described in breakthrough moments with individual pupils, for example the disengaged Year 10 pupil who was encouraged to engage with the text and then took on the task of memorising a line, allowing the pupil to make progress that had previously been unattainable. When another Year 10 pupil was asked to support his opinion with evidence he surprised himself with a direct quotation from the play, which he had memorised as a by-product of the participatory lessons. A gifted Year 13 student was able to recall quotes for a closed-book examination, an area where previously she had struggled to prove her ability. And those students who stayed behind to discuss Othello during breaktime – they were a low ability group previously unattainable. The school has recently seen a breakdown of results for the English Literature GCSE we can see that our school outperformed other centres on the Shakespeare section – hugely! This is a real testament to our work with the RSC, especially as this particular cohort were the first to experience rehearsal room pedagogy and the various other RSC enrichment activities.

‘As teachers we are often consumed in thinking about progress. The truth is, if we focus on ensuring our staff are equipped to deliver imaginative, creative and enjoyable learning experiences then our students will make the progress we hope for them.’
If you ask Anita Jefferies, Head Teacher at Archibald Primary School in Middlesbrough, what prompted the school to enter into a long-term programme of work with the Royal Shakespeare Company, her answer is very clear, ‘We felt there was a gap that wasn’t engaging the children in their learning, we looked to how we could impact, enrich and engage children with the curriculum.’

Sitting within one of the most economically deprived parts of Middlesbrough, many of Archibald’s pupils are eligible for free school meals, have Special Educational Needs (SEN) or English as an Additional Language (EAL). But the biggest problem affecting pupils’ learning was a lack of engagement, as Anita explains: ‘There was a disconnect between the curriculum and how invested the children were in the learning process.’

Archibald joined the RSC’s Learning and Performance Network with the aim of adopting an ‘all school’ approach – in other words, making Shakespeare accessible to teachers as well as pupils. After three years they moved to being a Lead Associate School and now advocate strongly for RSC teaching techniques. Teachers at Archibald learned how to transfer methods usually found in a professional rehearsal room to the classroom, giving teachers new confidence and freedom to try radical approaches. The children push the desks to one side and enjoy a multi-sensory experience, tapping into a child’s natural impulse to move about, play, role-play, invent rhymes and make-up songs. Children are encouraged to experience the plays through their bodies, as well as their brains, which lays down an emotional and cognitive ‘blue print’ that the children can then call upon to help with their reading and writing.

Emma, Reception teacher (four to five year olds), used this practical approach to prepare her pupils to be part of a whole school performance of The Tempest. The class was asked to immerse themselves into the atmosphere of the island and the ensuing storm. By asking the children to close their eyes and to describe the storm and what it might feel like to be on the ship, with wizards, magic and potions, the characters and story came to life for these very young children. When it came to the day of the performance children in the class stood confidently, speaking aloud the words of the mariners, ‘All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost!’

The RSC approach continues to be a source of inspiration and enrichment for pupil learning. ‘Children often struggle because they don’t have authentic experiences... they haven’t got the insight, the language or speech, so when they are asked to write creatively, for example, they have very little to draw upon’, explains Year 4 teacher Lisa. The new teaching methods have liberated children’s vocabulary and given them new motivation for reading and writing.

A Middlesbrough School has seen its KS2 SATs results leap to 94%, and Shakespeare is at the heart of it.

A testament to the quality of teaching at Archibald are the schools Key Stage 2 SATs results in writing, achieving 94% against a Middlesbrough average of 68% and a national average of 74%. A result that Anita and her staff firmly attribute to their work with the RSC.

The programme of work continues with the school and Headteacher Anita hopes to encourage other schools in the area to follow their lead: ‘On hearing about our SATs results in English a number of schools in the area have been in touch to find out more about our classroom model. Hopefully we can now expand the circle of schools that we work with as part of the RSC Associate Schools programme and share our practice and expertise.’
Imagine arriving somewhere new, only to find that everyone there already seems to know who you are.

When Antipholus arrives in Ephesus in search of his family, he gets a little more than he bargained for. Strangers say hello as if they've known him for years, people give him expensive jewellery and a rather odd woman seems to think she's his wife.

And mistaken identity aimed at 7 to 13 year olds, © Errors is a twin-tastic 90 minutes of comic confusion between the RSC, our Regional Theatre Partners and Associate Schools.

First Encounters with Shakespeare: The Comedy of Errors is the multiaward winning musical from the Royal Shakespeare Company inspired by the beloved book by the incomparable Roald Dahl. Winner of over 85 international awards, including 16 for Best Musical, Matilda continues to delight audiences in London and will visit Birmingham Hippodrome, Manchester Palace Theatre, Cardiff Wales Millennium Centre this year before heading to Theatre Royal Plymouth, Bradford Alhambra Theatre, Edinburgh Playhouse, The Bristol Hippodrome, Southampton Mayflower and Norwich Theatre Royal in 2019.

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Save the date!
Warwickshire and West Midlands
19-27 October
Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, plus performances in schools in Birmingham and Nuneaton
Warwickshire and Northamptonshire
29 October – 3 November
The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon, plus performances in schools across Northamptonshire
Blackpool
5 – 10 November
Blackpool Grand plus performances in local schools
Kent
19 – 24 November
Performances in schools across the county
North Yorkshire
26 November – 1 December
York Theatre Royal plus performances in local schools
West Yorkshire
3 – 8 December
Performances in schools across the county

Touring to Schools
October – December 2018

Roald Dahl’s Matilda
Cambridge Theatre, London, and UK & Ireland Tour

Student Workshops & Teacher Professional Development

Improving Literacy Through Matilda The Musical
The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London WC2H 9NP
This new and exciting two-day course for KS2 teachers explores ways of extending writing within the primary classroom.
Our approaches have a proven impact on reluctant and lower ability writers, developing their imagination and use of descriptive language, inspiring them to write with confidence and enjoyment.
Day one focuses on extending pupils’ writing skills followed by an evening performance at the Cambridge Theatre London.
Day two focuses on using rehearsal and performance approaches from the production as a way to engage pupils, exploring narrative structures and developing characters and dialogue.
Booking is open for the following dates:
• Friday 9 & Saturday 10 November 2018
10am – 4pm each day
• Friday 15 & Saturday 16 March 2019
10am – 4pm each day
• Friday 7 & Saturday 8 June 2019
10am – 4pm each day

From 12 September 2018, Tuesday – Friday evening performances at Matilda The Musical will start at 7pm. Saturday evening performances remain at 7.30pm.

How to Book:
£100 Newly Qualified Teachers
£260 RSC Education Members
£275 Non-Members
£400 non-UK Teachers
To register your interest please email education@rsc.org.uk
STUDYING MACBETH
This day-long course for GCSE and A Level students offers the opportunity to explore the structure, language and form of Macbeth and investigate the interpretive choices available to actors and directors.
IDEAL FOR: KS4 & KS5
VENUE: The Clore Learning Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon
DATE: 18 September 2018, 10am-4pm
COST: £30 per student (RSC Education Members), £35 per student (Non-Members) including ticket to the evening performance.

VICE-PRINCIPAL CONFERENCE: TARTUFFE
Students can take part in a practical and academic investigation of Tartuffe with this one-day course designed to explore the language, structure and interpretive choices made in this production.
IDEAL FOR: KS5
VENUE: Swan Theatre and The Clore Learning Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon
DATE: Tartuffe - 19 November 2018, 10am-4pm
COST: £30 per student (RSC Education Members), £35 per student (Non-Members) including ticket to the evening performance.

FREE SCHOOLS' BROADCAST: ROMEO AND JULIET
Bring the RSC into your classroom with this free broadcast of our current production of Romeo and Juliet. Watched by tens of thousands of students across the country, our free Schools' Broadcasts include live introductions and activities for young people to help them engage with the production, plus a Q&A with members of the acting company and creative teams.
IDEAL FOR: KS4 and 5 Drama and BTEC students
VENUE: Royal Shakespeare Theatre and The Clore Learning Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon
DATE: 20 September 2018, 10am-4.30pm
COST: £30 per student (RSC Education Members), £35 per student (Non-Members) including ticket to the evening performance of Romeo and Juliet.

INSIGHT SESSIONS
In these interactive pre-show sessions, students are invited to join members of the acting company and creative teams in the theatre to explore how the production was brought to life on stage.
IDEAL FOR: KS 2-5
VENUE: Royal Shakespeare Theatre or Swan Theatre
DATE: 10 October 2018 – Tartuffe
8 November 2018 – Troilus and Cressida
14 November 2018 – Tartuffe
Insight sessions take place from 10.15-11.15am.
COST: £3 per student (RSC Education Members), £4 per student (Non-Members)

RSC CERTIFICATE IN TEACHING SHAKESPEARE
Find out about our suite of courses to develop your knowledge, confidence and skills in using rehearsal rooms approaches to bring Shakespeare to life in the classroom at rsc.org.uk/education
The Associate Schools programme is our partnership programme with regional theatres and schools across England.

It is built around the principle of schools working in local partnerships to develop communities of practice inspired by Shakespeare’s work. We aim for each local partnership to consist of a Lead Associate School who in turn recruits a number of Associate Schools. In many cases these local partnerships include a regional theatre as well as the Royal Shakespeare Company. Schools that are interested in becoming a Lead school need to demonstrate a commitment to the teaching of Shakespeare at all levels of the school, including governors and senior leadership. They also recruit and coordinate a cluster of up to ten Associate Schools in their area. The programme aims to enrich the teaching, learning and performance of Shakespeare’s work nationally.

The Associate Schools programme is open to any state-maintained primary, secondary and special schools in England, particularly those serving areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

**OUR LEAD ASSOCIATE SCHOOLS**

ARCHIBALD PRIMARY SCHOOL, MIDDLESBROUGH
BRADFORD COLLEGE, BRADFORD
CANTERBURY ACADEMY, KENT
ASFORDBY CAPTAIN’S CLOSE PRIMARY, MELTON MOWBRAY
CROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL, DURHAM
EASTBURY COMMUNITY SCHOOL, BARKING
KING ETHELBERT SCHOOL, KENT
LINGS PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTHAMPTON
OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION, BLACKPOOL
LAUNCESTON COLLEGE, CORNWALL
ST MARY’S COLLEGE, HULL
NELSON MANDELA PRIMARY SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM
PRIMARY 6 PARTNERSHIP (P6P), NOTTINGHAM
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, NEWCASTLE
ST PAUL’S COE PRIMARY SCHOOL, NUNEATON
SPRINGHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE
TREVIGLAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CORNWALL
UXBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL, MIDDLESEX
WELCOME HILLS SCHOOL, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
YORK HIGH SCHOOL, YORK

**OUR REGIONAL THEATRE PARTNERS**

To find out more about the RSC Associate Schools Programme visit rsc.org.uk/associateschools or email associate.schools@rsc.org.uk