



## **RSC Certificate in Teaching Shakespeare Case Study**

I have recently completed the Intermediate Level Teaching course offered by the RSC and found it to be a truly inspirational experience. The course is engaging and interactive, providing an enormous bank of ideas to take back to share with colleagues. The staff who lead the course are wonderful advocates for both Shakespeare and the teaching profession. Maria and Jacqui, who have delivered most of the Foundation and Intermediate Course, are infectiously enthusiastic; it is impossible not to be drawn into their love of all things Shakespearian!

As an English Coordinator and experienced teacher, I was excited by the prospect of attending the courses at the RSC but approached it with some trepidation. Professional Development offered to teachers can leave you with a sense of 'I already knew most of that!' feeling. What I was not expecting, was to be so utterly engaged and welcomed into what felt like a community. Bonds quickly developed amongst the group as we all realised that we were sharing something quite special.

The ideas were rolled out from the moment we walked into the room, with the group participating as students. For the majority of the course, Primary specialists mingled with Secondary English and Drama, providing excellent insight to the stage before or after, depending on your teaching level. Detailed packs followed each course, so no written notes were needed, other than to reflect on your own practice; a skill vitally important to teachers.

It is easy as a teacher, to fall into the trap of sticking with what you know. The rehearsal room strategies taught were new to me and I gradually developed my comfort levels and confidence as they were introduced by using specific plays as a focus. During the Intermediate course, one focus was to look at how to explore with children longer speeches, such as one by Emilia in Othello. This was done through several techniques including reading it using different emotional voices and being conducted as an orchestral piece!

Back in school, I have experimented with some of these techniques with a great deal of success. The idea of teaching Shakespeare to Year 3 seemed impossible before I began the course, but I found the children loved the techniques I used and there was no need to tackle a whole Shakespearian play, rather to engage them in short snippets. The skills learned were also transferable to other texts. I have successfully delivered sessions to classes across KS2 and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. Learning how to edit texts to keep the relevance but make them accessible for all, has been useful. It has been brilliant to see both higher and lower ability children engage so fully with activities, thus deepening their understanding of the language of Shakespeare and the plays themselves. I look forward to running INSET for my colleagues.

This really is a wonderful course that I cannot recommend highly enough. My understanding and love of Shakespeare has increased significantly, and as a consequence, my ability to share this with the children I teach, hopefully planting a small seed which can grow into a lifelong love of one of England's most famous playwrights!