

APPRAISAL OF OUR T.I.E. WORK THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF THE
STRENGTHS OF 'CARELESS TALK' AND 'PAST CARING'

THEATRE (The art of the drama)
ATMOSPHERE (What went towards creating this)
ROLE (The childrens participation and empowerment in the drama)
DEVICES AND CONVENTIONS (Technique and structure)
FACILITATION
TONE

Theatre

What resides in this area of our T.I.E. work and what it makes possible

Emotional strength) Allowing for observation of and reflection on the extremes
Emotional challenge) of human behaviour.
Truth of characters) Allowing for the perception/Recognition of contradiction
and complexities in people's relationships and lives.
Universal emotions Allows the children to recognise their own feelings -
the roots, the consequences.

Showing characters behaving differently depending on the circumstances.

Bringing out feelings the children (we) have already acquired and behaviour that usually goes unquestioned (eg. patriotism, teasing) and using situations that acknowledges the appeal of these feelings and behaviour but that allows them to look at themselves (ourselves)

The capacity that theatre has to move in time (i.e. conventions such as flashback, forward, stopping action) places the observers, the children, in a privileged position, allows them to understand a situation more fully, increases the tension in their need to know, to see 'what happens next'. It empowers them.

The truth of the theatre that is seen makes possible the suggestion of 'other' worlds outside the action, which nevertheless have effect upon and/or resonance for the action.
E.G. Liverpool, Billy's mam, Lizzie's dad, the barn in France, the gate etc. etc.

The action of the theatre reveals a story through the day, mysteries are uncovered, themes become apparent, resonances are felt.

Powerful visual images are unforgettable.

What the children say of what they have seen can be incorporated into the drama by the actors.

Through making clear that our theatre is artifice, something that we are making but that is also true to life leads to an appreciation by the children of the art of theatre not as a thing on a pedestal but as a process and an activity which has a usefulness.

They realise (i.e. make real for themselves) and therefore appreciate what theatre is for.

Atmosphere

The elements that go towards creating this.

Lights	Areas being lit, candles on the cake, lighted candle on the table.
Sound	Tapes of Churchill, Princess Elizabeth, news bulletins, music, the sounds of the children playing outside the barn.
Texture	The choice of objects - the watch, the gun. Objects that have associative meanings as well as use and contextual relevance - shrapnell, cocoa, jam and bread etc.
Detail	Ambient objects - those which are not necessarily used but which add to texture - the 'bogey', Lizzie's nightie.

The use of objects that the children have brought in enhance their sense of purchase they have on the drama and leave them with a tangible association of the day.

The evocation of another world - a story in the past - that can be (re) discovered is dependent on the care with which these sensual 'atmospherics' are chosen and the recognition of the qualities they have and the feelings/associations they can evoke.

Role

The childrens participation and empowerment in the drama

What worked about the way we used role? What does role make possible?

Being in-role as 'the children in Miss Evans' class' meant -

The children has the safety of something that was familiar to them - ie being their own age and being in school - and therefore the freedom to both be themselves and be creative within the given role and framework.

The role was close to themselves

The role was understood

They met the characters collectively and later as individuals within a collective

They met the characters of the children on an equal status.

The role allowed for play/make-believe e.g. their brothers, families, farms, holiday, dens, work they had to do, what Billy did.

Having an actor - the character of Kathleen - eased into the group drew them into the drama.

The role enabled them to examine the behaviour of adults in relation to themselves.

The role empowered them to have influence and responsibility in relation to adults - telling Mrs Jones about Gethin delaying Bethan while preparing party.

It enabled them to confront and argue with adults to question adult's behaviour

It provided them with a position to appreciate and look at themselves and their lives.

The strength of them staying in the same role throughout the day means they can develop and deepen their understanding of the situation and the people in the story and be empowered in a progressively more 'difficult' or complex way as the day goes on.

The endowment of role is akin to that of a creative 'game' - if it is made appealing, safe and clear it is irresistible.

Role enables children to 'travel' to and live in other worlds/other times.

Facilitation

Guidelines to remember

That the pattern to the learning which takes place at any given point in the day should never be assumed or pre-empted - the reflection on the action should always be particularised to the response of any given group.

Giving emotional support to what a child is saying is important.

Linking the particular action in the drama to universals.

- 'I expect we've all.....'

or 'Have you ever.....'

The importance of giving of oneself - showing that 'I'm also fallible/emotional/excited. This also serves to validate their response to the drama.

Establishing the limits/boundaries of the relationship is important - what is desirable in order for the day to work/be enjoyable for them.

Acknowledge conventions - 'Now we are outside the story.....'
'I'm going to be the mam now.....'

Ways we could improve the facilitation

We could read and interpret the actual physical images more closely. (This would mean greater attention paid to the detail in the making of these images)

Finding new ways to 'free up' the role for instance if one technique isn't working being able to use another that will suit that particular groups strength eg. A group that relates best to characters as opposed to sitting outside the story reflecting may have the drama illuminated by calling on the characters to 'speak their thoughts'

Taking time out during the tour of a programme to re-assess the pattern or phrasing of questioning, missed opportunities.

Taking enough time to listen

Fighting against 'determining' a route that may have been fruitful before

Tone

The way that we present ourselves physically, verbally, emotionally to the group

Communicate the safe/demanding and exciting nature of the work to be done.

Show that it is serious

Be affirmative and appreciative of all their work - both pre and what they do on the day

Be friendly, confident and re-assuring i.e. we know what we are doing.

Make the boundaries clear, establish a healthy, friendly discipline.

Devices and conventions

Techniques and structures that work

Having a 'Hook', an enticement such as the photo-album that encourages curiosity and investigation.

Setting up mysteries whose unsolving is the purpose of the day.

Collective story telling/memory building

i.e. 'What does the entrance to the den look like'

'What are you wearing on the way to school'

'What are we going to bring to Bethans picnic?'

That the tasks they do progress in their demands or complexity/depth - i.e. moving from conjecture with the facilitator, to something practical, to something emotional and conceptual.

Tactile use of objects and clothes - the messages these relay about someone - testing them against the reality or the concrete.

Observation - Stopping the story at high points, inducing spontaneous reactions, anticipation, suggesting courses of action - words that could be said.

The structure of having the school as something they kept returning to was a good device in that it allowed them to reflect on the progression of events/relationships but also allowed us to monitor their engagement and learning.