**Process drama in language teaching: supporting student Modern Language teachers in the development of creative practice.**

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Abstract

This paper reflects on issues arising from a research informed learning and teaching project intended to enable student teachers of Modern Languages to experiment with the use of process drama in their classroom practice. Our research sets out to explore the barriers student teachers might encounter in attempting to develop more creative approaches and to suggest ways of supporting them to cross the unwritten dominant pedagogical boundaries of Modern Language teaching into different terrain, such as that of imagined experiential learning in drama.

The research was undertaken over a period of three years by a Modern Languages tutor and a Drama tutor teaching on a university based initial teacher training programme in England. The aim of the learning and teaching project was to enable and encourage trainee language teachers to use drama teaching techniques acquired through collaborative projects with student teachers of Drama .The intention being to enhance and enrich the learning experience of pupils through creative and imaginative use of the foreign language.

The idea that process drama could become part of the language teachers’ repertoire has been in circulation for some time (Kao and O’Neill, 1998, Brauer, 2002), and yet there is little evidence to suggest that its use has become widespread in England. One key issue arising from the research concerns student teacher identity as crossing dominant subject pedagogical boundaries to step into uncertain territory requires courage.

The paper concludes that it is possible and desirable to create spaces where beginning teachers can learn to work collaboratively across subject boundaries in order to develop a more creative approach to their practice.

**Introduction**

The use of drama in Modern language (ML) teaching is not uncommon, but usually takes the form of a performance of a prepared script, not too far removed from the traditional ‘role play’. We are attracted to the idea of ‘process drama’ in language teaching because it offers an innovative approach where language is used creatively and spontaneously as opposed to learning by rote. Effective language learning requires opportunities for authentic verbal interaction (Mitchell, 2003) which allow learners to progress from familiar to unfamiliar contexts and require them to produce language ‘on the spot’ (Harris et al., 2001). Creating opportunities for learners to use language spontaneously and creatively can, however, be challenging for teachers (ibid. p2). In England, this has been identified as a weakness by the national schools inspectorate (Ofsted):

*‘Overall there was insufficient emphasis on helping students to use language spontaneously for real situations. Consequently too few students could speak creatively or beyond the topic they were studying by making up their own sentences in an unrehearsed situation.”(Ofsted, 2008, p12).*

There is a body of research evidence mainly from HE (Higher Education) and EFL (English as a foreign language) contexts internationally which indicates that process drama can be an effective tool for promoting the spontaneous production of language (Kao & O’Neill, 1998, Liu, 2002, Even, 2003). However, there is little evidence to suggest that its use is commonplace. A practice based study conducted by the drama practitioner and theorist Cecily O’Neill and a teacher of EFL points to two reasons for this. Firstly that teachers do not see how pupils would be able to participate in a drama with very limited foreign language skills, secondly, teachers, constrained by a culture of testing, emphasise accuracy over fluency and are too quick to jump in with corrections which ‘inhibit pupils from entering dramatic worlds’ (Kao and O’Neil, 1998, p.28).

Our research sets out to explore an additional reason, which centres on the challenges student teachers face in venturing beyond the unwritten pedagogical boundaries of Modern Language teaching into the very different terrain of imagined experiential learning in drama. Experimenting with forms of pedagogy not prevalent in the Modern Languages classroom entails stepping into uncertain territory, often without the support of models provided by the mentor as classroom teacher. Furthermore, the beginning teacher often finds herself struggling to accommodate her own creativity in a school environment which requires conformity to an accepted form of practice (Gleeson and Husbands, 2001).

A key issue arising from the research is therefore that of the emergent student teacher’s identity. Stronach et al.(2002) propose that professionalism is a juggling act between ‘economies of performance’ (defined as manifestations of the audit culture such as exam results, state prescribed curriculum and pedagogy) and ‘ecologies of practice’ (defined as professional dispositions and commitments engendered collectively and individually) (p109) .It is within the tensions generated between these two ‘disparate allegiances’ that that the professional is able to develop a real understanding of their work and belief (p122). Within the context of teacher education, it is necessary for the beginning teacher to experience the gap between the ‘possibilities of induction’ and the ‘experiences of initiation’ wherein lies the ‘place of invention’ (Stronach, 2009, p165).We have taken this interpretation of early professional development as a lens with which to examine how teacher educators, student teachers and pupils experienced the teaching and learning of a foreign language through process drama.

We suggest that by encouraging student teachers to explore the use of process drama during their school practicum they are engaging in creative practices which challenge the ‘norm’. This requires them to take risks and to be open to the possibility of failure, but also allows them to experience a sense of professional autonomy. This ,we argue, has the potential to facilitate emancipatory outcomes (Gardner, 1993,p399) as creative acts can empower individuals who challenge the way things are normally done (Craft, Jeffrey and Liebling, 2001,p5).

For us as university tutors, our process drama and ML project was also a journey into uncharted territory: neither had any knowledge or experience of the other’s subject field and we found the research base to be very limited and largely theoretical. We suggest that the conflicts and discomforts evoked by cross-subject collaboration can become fertile ground for new ideas to emerge. Homi Bhabha’s concept of the Third Space in *The Location of Culture* (1994, p.27) proved useful in considering how we and our student teachers had to negotiate between established and ‘new’ pedagogical practices. Third Space is a term that resists literal interpretation (Bhabha 1994, p.37) but in this study we use it to conceptualise the space we created for student teachers to be ‘free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities’ (ibid, p.38) as ML teachers without being totally shaped and bound by dominant pedagogical approaches.

The aim of the research was to reflect on the ML student teacher, mentor and pupil experience of learning language in a process drama context and to evaluate our experience as tutors introducing it. Evidence is drawn from interviews with ML and drama student teachers working on cross curricular projects whilst on school placement. In addition, the views of pupils, mentors and tutors participating in the ML/drama projects were sought. We examine the co-construction of a pedagogy which unfolds on three levels: firstly through the collaboration of two teacher educators, one a specialist in Modern Languages, the other in Drama, secondly through groups of drama and ML student teachers working together and thirdly through the work of student teachers with their pupils in language lessons. Issues arising from a thematic analysis of the data focus on the attitudes and dispositions which facilitate collaborative working and an openness to experiment with pedagogical approaches beyond subject boundaries.

**Context**

The research was conducted with student teachers on a one year post-graduate Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) programme in a University in the North West of England over a period of three years from 2008-2011.The context for learning foreign languages in the UK presents particular challenges for teachers and learners, which might not be as acute for EFL teachers in other countries. Most significantly these concern the motivational aspects of learning a language other than English (Dörnyei, 2001, Enever, 2009, in Dale, R. And Robertson, S., 2009). Modern Languages are optional after the age of 14 and the fact that fewer than half of all pupils choose to continue learning a language is attributed to a perception that languages are a difficult subject where success is less likely than in other subjects (Coleman, 2007, p252). However, concerns have also been raised about the curriculum content and the lack of creativity in current pedagogical practice. Official commentaries (The Languages Review ,2007, p.16;Ofsted, 2008) point to teachers’ rigid adherence to topics and textbooks at the expense ‘real communication’ as being problematic. Furthermore the lower status of MLs in the UK means less curriculum time is devoted to their study than in most other European countries with the average being just 2 hours and 15 minutes of language lessons per week from the ages of 11-16.This compression of time means that teachers often feel compelled to focus on assessment, leading to a narrowing of the curriculum and fewer opportunities for more creative activities.We acknowledge that the particular constraints of the UK context may not apply in other countries. Our experiences of working on cross curricular ML/Drama projects with teachers and pupils in English language classrooms in the Netherlands (2007) and in Spain (2008) and with ML teachers in Austria (Pochazka, A, 2007) have provided us with rich opportunities to develop our ideas where the cross curricular approach we are advocating is more commonplace.

The argument is often put forward that teachers do not incorporate more creative approaches into their teaching because the (external) GCSE examination does not test spontaneous language use, but the ability to perform pre-learned phrases (Pachler et al.,2007,p91). This does indeed present the teacher with a dilemma: if the tried and tested method produces ‘good results’ why should they take risks with innovative methods where outcomes are unknown? In her work on the social psychology of creativity Theresa Amabile (1996) draws attention to the importance of motivational aspects of creativity. She concludes that ‘coercion’ is detrimental to creativity and that people are ‘primarily motivated to do something creative by their own interest in and enjoyment of that activity’ (Amabile, 1996, p15).

Language teachers are highly motivated by a love of other languages and cultures and express a strong desire to share their language skills and personal experiences of living and working abroad with their pupils. When they arrive in school they must transform this body of personal knowledge into a school subject – a ‘field of knowledge for others to acquire’ (Pachler et al., 2007, p47). This process is, according to Pachler et al. more complex for ML student teachers than for student teachers of other subjects due to the ‘unique pedagogical dimensions’ of the subject. One of the principle aspects of this being that the subject matter (the target language) is also the medium through which pupils learn (Macaro in Pachler et al., p56).It is in this transformation that their intrinsic motivation becomes subsumed by the ‘pressure to conform’ which arouses extrinsic motives as all efforts become directed towards goals which are extrinsic to the task (Crutchfield, 1962, in Amabile, 1996, p91) such as assessment.

Our intention in introducing student teachers to process drama is that they should be encouraged to refocus on their intrinsic motivation for teaching and learning languages through experimenting with more creative approaches which encompass a wider view of human experience. In the current environment, where according to Ken Robinson schools often appear to be organized like ‘factories for learning’ (Robinson, 2011, p55) this is very challenging for teachers and for those responsible for their early education. However, it is incumbent on all of us as to challenge this and to explore alternatives. Learners are indeed ‘turned off’ languages by unimaginative teaching and arguably, the people best placed to make changes are teachers themselves (Joubert,2001,p32). However, in order to bring about change it is necessary to provide spaces where student teachers are free to experiment. Thus, we offer our project as an example of how creativity can be experienced in a real and meaningful way which enriches the practice of participants at all three levels, within the context of an ITET programme.

**Project outline and emerging issues**

We embarked upon our cross-subject experiment, in the belief that process drama could provide an exciting and new context for the generation of spontaneous language in the ML classroom. Process drama is a very open ended, creative learning activity which is at one end of a ‘continuum’ of drama approaches in language teaching and learning with scripted performance and ‘role play’ at the other end (Kao &O’Neill,1998). It introduces emotional and physical elements into language learning, acknowledging that communication involves not just the voice, but the body (Brauer, 2002). Communication becomes possible through a continuum of verbal and non- verbal responses, allowing sophisticated thought processes to occur within a limited range of language. The introduction of an imaginary, fantastical context for talk can inspire the learner to search for language as they are drawn into the action in which they have an interest in moving forward. It is a form of collaborative storytelling where participants are taken through a ‘drama discovery where the outcomes are in the balance but decided finally by those involved’ (Drain, 1995, p203). It is not a ‘performance’ but a form which allows the participant to alternate between watching, listening and doing (Boal, 1995).

This approach is quite far removed from traditional methods of language learning which privilege logical and linguistic intelligences at the expense of other ‘intelligences’ or modes of thinking such as the interpersonal or bodily- kinaesthetic (Gardner,1983). We refer here to Gardner’s critique of the dominance of certain kinds of intelligence in education systems which devalues the artistic, creative and intuitive dimensions of human experience.

Process drama presents a significant challenge for the student ML teacher in that it is dialogic, pupil- centred and incorporates dramaturgical forms of 'self-other imagining’ in open-ended learning situations where the teacher is often co-learner (Neelands 2002, p.6). It requires the teacher to ‘assume functions which go beyond the more usual ones of an instructor, model and resource’ (Kao & O’Neill, 1998, p1), moving away from a teacher-centric approach to more ‘horizontal’ relationships (Freire 1972).Language teachers, however, often deem it necessary to retain linguistic control of the lesson, seeing this as a way of scaffolding pupils’ learning and avoiding feelings of failure.

Kao and O’Neill (1998, p.28) noticed that language teachers were often sceptical regarding the ability of language learners to engage in a complex drama with limited language skills .Although process drama is an open ended activity, it does require very careful linguistic scaffolding and student teachers were given guidance on how to match the linguistic demands of the drama with the abilities of the pupils. There must be a clear focus on the development of linguistic skills if the drama is to be of value on the languages classroom. It is a question of balancing dramatic techniques with ML pedagogy. We therefore try to ensure that the ML student teachers should not feel that process drama is too far removed from their own subject practices. They are introduced to the basic drama ‘conventions’ for example, ‘hot-seating’, and ‘teacher in role’ within linguistic contexts which are drawn from the National Curriculum. We invite them to contrast the conventional ‘unframed’ role play with a ‘framed’ role play (Hulse and Owens, 2007) which has the same linguistic elements but has an enjoyable dramatic tension, producing a compelling reason to communicate. This is a fairly complex pedagogical feat and so it was necessary to put in place support for those students who elected to try it out with their pupils. This was in the form of readymade one hour ML drama activities adapted from ‘pre-texts’ (Owens and Barber, 2001) written for drama lessons, but with clearly mapped linguistic content.

Pre-texts are ‘deceptively simple starting points used to engage participants and allow them to move quickly towards challenging drama activities (Flemming, 2001). The purpose is similar to that of the dramatist which is to engage the participants in ‘significant experience’ (O’Neill 1995, p.64). The drama practitioner often works inside the creative process, in role alongside the participants and there is no audience involved. Transposing these one hour dramas into the languages classroom was a learning experience for all involved. Initially lessons taught whilst on school practicum were jointly planned by the student teacher and both Drama and ML tutors. Although this level of support is not sustainable, this was a very successful model for all involved - tutors, student teachers and pupils. Student teachers were invited to take from the sessions whatever they felt was useful to them, from drama games and activities designed to develop the four language skills, to a one hour process drama.

In developing our ideas for introducing ML student teachers to process drama, our guiding principle was that the emerging pedagogy should be robust enough to survive the ‘crucible of classroom experience’ (Stronach et al. 2002 p 124) where innovations are ‘tested, adapted, resisted, embraced or ignored’ (ibid.).We drew on both drama and ML theory as well as our own experiences of working with student teachers and of teaching our subjects in different contexts. Our ideas emerged initially through working with groups of student teachers (sometimes in mixed ML/Drama groups and sometimes just ML student teachers working together)in University sessions which took the form of practical workshops. As ideas evolved, ML student teachers began experimenting with them in the classroom, supported by tutors and by their drama peers. It was important that student teachers were able to assimilate new approaches into teaching methods which were more familiar to them. For example they are taught the traditional Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) model (Littlewood, 1981) which is a technical, teacher led approach based on ‘grammatical forms and isolated linguistic features rather than on meaning’ (Pachler et al. P71). It is however, a method proven to be an effective way of helping learners memorise new language and it is its very limitations which provide a useful scaffolding for early professional practice (Broady, 2002).In order to be able to use language to create a dramatic narrative, learners must have acquired the necessary vocabulary and linguistic structures upon which to build. With appropriate scaffolding ,even beginners can participate in an open ended process drama.Cropley and Cropley (2008) highlight the paradoxical nature of creative practice where they argue that new ideas must be developed within existing knowledge (p362).The drama project provided our student teachers with a space to wrestle with such paradoxes, conflicts and dilemmas and indeed to engage with the tensions and contradictions at the heart of our education system.

Drama is intended to be a playful and enjoyable experience which at the same time provides a meaningful context for language production. Participants, whether pupils, or teachers, are invited to play, to act spontaneously and to engage their imagination in childlike ways. Gardner proposes that this capacity for connecting with childhood is a key component of creativity (Gardner,1996, p134).The joy of inventing a story, of creating characters is about the pleasure of working on something for its own sake ,not for any extrinsic reward(Amabile,1996, p6).It is however, in a ‘seriously playful and playfully serious’ practice (Heikkinen 2005, p.51).Student teachers are invited to reflect on the serious intention behind the fun and enjoyment, that is to provide opportunities for learners to develop their ability to communicate in another language and to be motivated to do so. Joubert proposes that creative teachers should not be afraid of ‘looking foolish’(p22) , and yet for a beginning teacher who has not yet been able to establish a secure professional identity (McNally ,2006, Day et al.,2007 ) this can be daunting. As participants in the drama ourselves, we are demonstrating to our students that it is possible for professionals to engage in what might be considered ‘childish’ or ‘foolish’ behaviour’ in the interest of creating purposeful learning activities. It is as much about teaching them ways of being creative as it is about methods of creative language use in classrooms. However, it must be admitted that asking beginning teachers to cross a subject boundary which they themselves have not yet fully experienced is an ambitious proposal.

**Research Methods**

Our data has been gathered over a period of three years .It includes questionnaires collected from each cohort and individual and group interviews with student teachers from three successive cohorts and a former student who continued to use drama in her first teaching post. We draw on evidence from students’ written reflections and practice based research. We also analyse pupil responses through pupils’ written feedback and through lesson observations conducted by tutors .The ML students who have participated in this research have diverse backgrounds, ages and experiences of language teaching and learning. About 20% are native speakers of French, German or Spanish. About one third have had previous careers in other areas such as international business and a significant proportion have prior EFL experience.

Our research focused on four questions:

* To what extent is the emerging professional identity of student teachers defined by their subject specialism?
* What are the challenges of introducing student teachers to pedagogical approaches outside their own subject specialism?
* How can student teachers be supported to work across subject boundaries?
* Is there scope within an ITT programme to promote a collaborative, cross curricular approach?

**Findings**

**To what extent is the emerging professional identity of student teachers defined by their subject specialism?**

The student teachers were unanimous in expressing positive views regarding the potential benefits of introducing process drama into their practice. Their passion for languages finds expression in a desire to enthuse their pupils and to persuade them that learning a foreign language is a worthwhile and enjoyable enterprise. When asked what the possible benefits were, many students cited ‘being creative’, ‘using language for a purpose’ and ‘engaging pupils’.

*“I can see how this idea could really motivate these pupils’*

Beginning teachers, it has been argued, develop a sense of their professional self through the conflicts and dilemmas which arise from the ‘possibilities of induction’ and the ‘experiences of initiation’. For the beginning ML teacher, the complex and particular demands of the subject clearly delineate subject boundaries. Whilst the student teachers were unanimous in expressing positive views regarding the potential benefits of introducing process drama into their practice, the majority did not do so during their practicum but preferred to work within the limits of accepted practice. This manifested itself in a desire to retain control of learning rather than allow the pupils to create their own language:

*“I gave them the story of what was happening and we looked at the translation”*

Student teachers fell back on familiar teaching approaches based on rote learning:

*“What we did was create a situation in a Spanish Café....They had to learn some dialogue, they had to read aloud...practise how to say some high frequency words.”*

However, the inclusion of discrete elements of drama, such as games, mime or the use of conventions such as ‘freeze frame’ into lessons was more common:

*“We look at the words in the story, at the phonetic sounds of the words...then we put mime to the main word...then, in groups ,they put together their own drama piece using the narrative script they are given...(the pupils)really enjoy it.”*

The ML student teachers prioritised linguistic outputs in the drama work they did in the classroom. The view that process drama was suitable only for older pupils who had already acquired a good level of language was evident.(a view not borne out in our experience of co-teaching mixed ability groups of 11-12 year old pupils).There was concern that they lacked the experience and expertise to judge the linguistic content of the lesson:

*“Great idea, but are they able to do it in the target language?”*

*“How to adapt the language for younger pupils who know very little?”*

A great deal of attention was given to anticipating the language required by pupils and structuring the drama narrative to ensure it did not exceed their capacity. Planning lessons was more time consuming than for a ‘normal’ ML lesson because the language needed to enable pupils to participate in the drama is not provided by a text book, but decided by the student teacher.

There is evidence that the individual student’s willingness to see beyond their subject specialism depends on their personal experiences and dispositions and the extent to which this was supported in school. Students placed in schools where Performing Arts were prominent were more likely to incorporate drama into their practice, as were those who had prior experience of drama.

**What are the challenges of introducing student teachers to pedagogical approaches outside their own subject specialism?**

Process drama is a complex approach to teaching requiring a high level of skill. Arriving at an interpretation of this which was accessible to student teachers but did not over- compromise the spirit of it was a challenge for both tutors. The evolution of theories and practice in an inter-subject context was an extended process of trial and error, although a very enjoyable one which enriched our professional practice. For example, the Drama tutor had to adapt to working within a very limited range of language and a focus on linguistic outcomes whereas the MFL tutor had to learn drama techniques. Sharing this process with student teachers was a risk, but in doing so more democratic relationships were established between tutor and students.

Beginning teachers are usually enthusiastic about trying out new ideas, and we have found our students to be open to the idea of using process drama in language teaching. Nearly all students elected to participate in the optional extra ML/Drama sessions and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. They enjoyed the University sessions and could clearly articulate a rationale for using process drama in lessons:

*“I like the idea that children can input their own ideas. The drama was not set in tablets of stone.”*

*“It’s not about acting; it’s about boosting their confidence in using the language.”*

However, only a minority of them were prepared to try it out in the classroom, the majority preferring to stay within the safer subject boundaries of role play and drama games. The data highlights a number of factors which inhibit the transference of a new pedagogical approach from University to the ML classroom. These concern both ecologies of practice and economies of performance and include a fear of relinquishing control of behaviour and of learning, a lack of time and a lack of skills and experience.

Students expressed a fear that introducing pupils to a new way of working in language lessons would cause discipline to break down:

*“My Year 9(class of 13-14 year olds) wouldn’t take it seriously, they would rip it to pieces.”*

They had doubts concerning their ability to deal with unexpected outcomes, particularly with classes they did not know so well. The issue of ‘trust’ was frequently raised:

*“It’s scary not knowing how it’s going to go.”*

*“..for me to know how the group will react doing such an activity, where they have to move a bit, I like to know them a little better.”*

One student who had experienced success with a scripted drama (narration accompanied by group mime) felt that was enough to cope with:

*“I think they struggled with the amount of freedom they were given. I had to rein it back in quite a lot. But they really enjoyed it.”*

Students’ concerns also focused on the ability of pupils to cope with the linguistic demands of such an open ended approach:

*“I really liked that thing we did in Uni when we had to create the house of that person, that was really good, but I don’t know that the children in my Year 7 would have that language skills to do that. It might be something to do at KS4.”*

They were very conscious of more pressing curricular priorities and tended to see drama as a supplementary ‘fun’ activity. The view that real language learning is about ‘covering the content’ was evident:

*“Drama can take up so much time. We have to get through the topics.”*

There is evidence that the curriculum time allocated for languages is decreasing (CILT, Language Trends Survey 2009). One student teacher said that she was discouraged from continuing her drama work because Year 9 of 13-14 year olds were allocated just one 50 minute ML lesson per week.

The planning process was detailed and time consuming. Students needed quite a lot of support, due to a lack of confidence and experience. In particular they needed advice on structuring grammatical and lexical content.Lessons co-planned and taught with the tutor were particularly successful in this respect.

**How can student teachers be supported to work across subject boundaries?**

Our research suggests that with support from both school and University, student teachers can benefit from a cross subject dialogue which enriches their practice. The University Drama/ML sessions were seen as positive, enjoyable experiences by almost all of the students. Questionnaire responses show that they appreciated having opportunities to ‘share different ideas and viewpoints’ as well as learn new teaching strategies. As one student commented, following a cross-subject session:

*“ML trainees could contribute to language and drama trainees could come up with ideas on how to incorporate it creatively*”.

The sessions provided them with models of classroom practice which stimulated enthusiasm and confidence and helped develop a clear understanding of the potential benefits of process drama, regarding purposeful and creative language use and improving pupil motivation.

*“Very innovative .I will definitely try this on my new placement.”*

*“I copied it. This gave me the confidence to explore new techniques.”*

A small number of MFL students said they felt ‘uncomfortable’ working with Drama trainees. One commented that Drama trainees are “over the top and over-act” which led to tutor reflection on the need in the future to allow for discussion of not only affinity, but difference in terms of perceived and portrayed subject teachers personal and professional identities.

The principle factor affecting the successful implementation of process drama in the MFL classroom was having specialist support from peers, tutors or mentors. Such support was welcomed by student MFL teachers. In particular they benefitted from guidance on managing groups of pupils in an open drama space. The challenges of creating a genuinely reciprocal relationship were also highlighted. For example, the challenge of negotiating the focus for the lesson was a particular issue .with a number of MFL student teachers noting that there was ‘too much drama’ and not sufficient emphasis on language content. Each student teacher pulls the lesson in the direction of their subject.

*“It would possibly have been better if drama had put more languages into their work as well as just putting drama into our (ML work), but certainly they have helped us a lot.”*

However, there is evidence that genuine reciprocity is achievable and mutually enriching. ‘Arnie’ a drama student teacher and ‘Diana’ (ML) planned and taught successful cross curricular lessons on placement:

*Arnie : “I can see loads of ways in which drama can be used to teach languages. I am learning French at the moment so I can do more.”*

*Diana: “I am learning new drama techniques and I think this has definitely helped my self confidence.”*

**Is there scope within an ITT programme to promote a collaborative, cross curricular approach?**

There is evidence that cross- subject seminars and workshops can promote a positive attitude towards collaboration and can be a springboard for student teachers to develop cross –curricular approaches to their teaching on placement. Clearly the whether this will become integral to an individual teacher’s practice is questionable. However the majority of the student MFL teachers said that they would be interested in trying out the approach in the future, indicating that a seed has been sown which might grow if it is nurtured in school.

It is clear from the evidence that not all schools are themselves open to cross-curricular approaches, and that student teachers on placement in these schools feel unable to introduce innovation:

*“The view of the teachers seems to be’ we have found what works. It is difficult to contradict them. I can’t sell the idea of drama in the department I am in.”*

A number of ML student teachers elected to implement a Drama project for a small scale practitioner research project which they undertake as an academic assignment .We have found this can act as an encouragement for students to be more innovative in the classroom.

Student teachers placed in schools where cross curricular approaches were well established, benefitted from support. For example, ‘Katy’, was able to continue her cross- curricular work with drama as an NQT and supported a student teacher who wanted to try it out. She describes the advantages of being able to capitalise on pupils’ knowledge of drama conventions and terminology in her MFL lessons:

*“Being a performing arts school…a lot of activities they do in other subjects are drama based as well, so they are already used to drama”*

The evidence gathered from observations of MFL/Process drama lessons indicates that there are benefits in terms of motivation and rich opportunities for creative language use. The atmosphere in the classroom was one of great excitement and a feeling of achievement as pupils drew on all the language they knew to and searched for new words to create the story.

*“Our group was very funny, I loved every bit of it. The French we spoke was good!” (Lucy )*

**Conclusions**

Dörnyei and Csizer’s(1998) ‘Ten Commandments for Motivating Language Learners’ identifies the following as having a positive impact on motivation to learn a foreign language: arousing curiosity, introducing unexpected or exotic elements, addressing personal interests and ensuring all learners are involved in challenging tasks. We have found that process drama can be an effective way of addressing all of these elements. The willingness of pupils to engage in dramatic storytelling in a foreign language has surprised and delighted us. We are convinced of the value of introducing student teachers to a cross-curricular approach and have found that collaboration can be a door to creative approaches and an encouragement to the development of a ‘professional self’ which is not limited by subject boundaries.

In presenting the drama project as an ‘exploration’ of practice we are offering student teachers a model of professional learning where practice itself is a creative process of discovery. Professional knowledge is not ‘fixed’ but is continually made and remade within a professional learning community (Mc Laughlin et al. 2006). The exploration of innovative pedagogical approaches can lead the student teacher to question current versions of accepted practice and encourages a critical engagement which is at the heart of creative practice .Such experiences can be‘ transformative’ in terms of developing a sense of identity and an ability to adapt to change. Zeichner (2003) Student teachers can find this approach challenging because the onus is indeed on them to make changes and to develop new pedagogies.

It is important to acknowledge that individual responses to this invitation to engage in a critical and creative approach to practice will vary. We hope that out student teachers will perceive it as an ‘enabling device’ and not as a burden (Joubert,2001) as they begin to forge a professional identity which is often fragile in its initial stages (Hargreaves, 2002). Sternberg argues that individuals possess different ‘leanings’ of self government which are either ‘progressive’ or ‘conservative’ (1988,p142). Creative behaviour, he says, requires a ‘progressive’ disposition, a capacity not only to express dissatisfaction with existing principles but to act to change them. Conversely there are people who like to adhere to the rules, prefer familiarity and avoid ambiguous situations. We suggest that our ‘dispositions’ are perhaps more fluid and move between conservatism and progressivism. There are times when we prefer to take comfort in the familiar and sometimes we feel compelled to act to make changes.

Presenting a strong case for the value of the approach necessitates acknowledging not only the euphoria but the un-comfortableness in crossing the cultural boundaries between subject pedagogies for the student teacher. We have come to view the gap between the ‘possibilities of induction’ and the ‘experience of initiation’ (Stronach, 2009) as a ‘third space’ (Bhabha, 1995); a term not intended to invoke images of a comfortable professional place in which innovation is managed, but rather a site of possibility with all the accompanying risks and uncertainty associated with change. We envisage the Modern Languages / Drama border as one site in initial teacher education where student teachers can question their subject identities and practices and nurture an understanding of how to live with and learn through the disparate allegiances of ‘ecologies of practice’ and ‘economies of performance’. We propose that the co-construction of creative approaches can bring about a more motivating and enjoyable experience of teaching and learning languages which is in the common interest of both teachers and learners.

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