

Creative Learning Symposium Report

LONDON THEATRE CONSORTIUM

ALMEIDA THEATRE **BATTERSEA ARTS CENTRE**

bush theatre **DONMAR** **GATE** Gate Theatre and Arts Centre

GREENWICH THEATRE LONDON **HAMPSTEAD THEATRE** **lyric**

ROYAL COURT **SOHO THEATRE** **tricycle theatre**

STRATFORD EAST ...a people's theatre **UNICORN** WWW.UNICORNTHEATRE.COM **Young Vic** It's a big world in here

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About the organisers

The London Theatre Consortium are a group of 14 off-West End, not-for-profit producing theatres in London. They are keen advocates for the sector and believe:

- that working together will help us develop strong strategic and creative initiatives,
- that sharing expertise, practice and resources is a powerful mechanism for maximising efficiencies and for managing the sharing of work,
- in the strength of collaboration and the power of a strong collective lobbying voice.



Thank you

Attendees, on behalf of the London Theatre Consortium, we want to thank you for taking part in our first Creative Learning Symposium. We hope that you found the symposium informative and worthwhile; your presence and invaluable input contributed to a successful evening of conversations and deliberations that we aim to continue into the future.

Our diverse and dynamic group of panellists provided valuable insight into the current challenges and opportunities of drama education and the industry, so thank you to **Kwame Kwei-Armah, James Graham, Cherelle Skeete, Katy Brown, Paul Webster, Titilayo Bamgbose** and **Michael Adewale** for your time and for sharing your prized experiences and knowledge with us.

Thank you also to the assistants and ushers who helped to facilitate this event, your support was much appreciated.

A special thank you to the Lyric staff for supporting and hosting this fantastic event, and to Romana Fello for the groundwork in instigating this conversation.

Summary

Much of what took place over the course of the evening has been captured in this document; however, there was a multitude of stimulating and vibrant conversations and connections being made that were beyond the scope of this report. In attempt to summarise the various discussion points of the evening, a list of the recurring themes is included here:

- ❖ The artist as a business
 - Teaching business and industry survival skills to students
- ❖ Teachers as artists
 - Teachers need opportunities to utilise their own arts training (time, funds, flexibility in specifications)
- ❖ Budget and time constraints for teachers
 - Limits what teachers can be and teach
- ❖ Not enough resources to support delivery of new material
 - Makes it difficult to teach new texts – falling back on old resources
- ❖ Specifications having to adhere to DfE guidelines
 - A challenge for exam boards to simultaneously meet strict government criteria and to make specifications flexible and diverse
- ❖ Contemporary relevance of texts and practitioners
 - Texts and practitioners need to be relevant to today and to those studying it
- ❖ Theatre industry and teachers to lobby the government and work with school SLT
 - Changing attitudes of drama as a 'soft' subject, recognising the value of the arts
 - Real change can only happen from the top down
- ❖ More diverse, multi-cultural texts and resources
 - Lack of diversity on the grounds of ethnicity, age, gender
- ❖ A broader curriculum
 - Teach alternative pathways into theatre (technical, design, marketing, admin etc.)
- ❖ A centralised network that connects schools directly with industry creatives and resources
 - dialogue and opportunities between theatres and schools and practitioners and schools
 - bank of resources on: contemporary practices and styles, plays, theatre roles, theatre making processes and production concepts
 - nation-wide network that is inclusive and accessible

The desire for positive change conveyed at this event was undeniable and tangible. There was a real eagerness expressed by many theatre representatives, creatives, exam boards and teachers in attendance to be actively involved in bridging the gap between drama education and the industry and to address the current issues surrounding the decline in arts-based courses, enrolments and teachers at schools and colleges. LTC are strongly leading the way by offering a platform for conversations and connections to begin but there is still work to be done by all stakeholders to find the best means for this to happen and to have lasting, real-world impact.

Introduction

On the evening of Monday 5th February, 2018, the London Theatre Consortium held its first Creative Learning Symposium, hosted by the Lyric Hammersmith. The purpose of the event was to bring industry and education together into closer alliance, forging conversations about the challenge of the current national curriculum syllabi and to discuss the future of an arts education that is more closely representative of current contemporary practice, with a focus on representation and diversity in the classroom and improving career pathways into the performing arts.

The LTC brought together major exam boards, as well as teachers, young people, theatre workers and creatives to discuss how best to:

- **Support current and future performing arts students and their teachers**
- **Create a more diverse and inclusive syllabus, supported by the exam boards**
- **Improve pathways into the theatre and performing arts workforce**
- **Encourage and strengthen the relationship between schools and theatres**
- **Increase the value of arts subjects within senior leadership teams**

The event was well attended by invited participants, with approximately 92 teachers, 40 creatives, 6 exam board representatives, 44 theatre representatives and 10 young people, which included current GCSE and A Level Drama students.

The symposium included a panel discussion on the future of drama education, followed by a series of breakout workshops and open space sessions that explored some of the core themes of the evening. The members of the London Theatre Consortium involved in the facilitation of the workshops were:

Current Curriculum: Challenges and opportunities

Marilyn Rice: Producer of Education- Lyric Hammersmith

Romana Fello: Young Court Manager- Royal Court

Future workforce

Jan Sharkey-Dodds: Head of Young People's work- Stratford East Theatre

Holly Smith: Community producer- Bush Theatre

Diversity, Representation and Access

Phil McCormack: Education Manager- Donmar Warehouse

Jules Haworth: Education Producer- Soho Theatre

Key Stage 3 (Open Space)

Catherine Greenwood: Learning Associate- Unicorn Theatre

Drama Resources (Open Space)

Jo Carey: Almeida Theatre- Participation Associate: Schools

Steven Pleasants and Olivia Chappell: Drama space (have attached their overall brief)

Making the case for Drama (Open Space)

Jenny Batt: Creative Learning Manager: schools and pathways- Tricycle Theatre

What can LTC do? (Open Space)

Georgia Dale: Schools and Colleges Project Manager- Young Vic

Daniel de la Motte-Harrison: Taking Part Assistant- Young Vic

Sean Holmes, Artistic Director of the Lyric, kicked off the night by welcoming everyone on behalf of the Lyric and Executive Director Sian Alexander and thanking the organisers of the event and Young Court's Manager Romana Fello as the 'impassioned instigator of the conference'. Sean's opening speech encapsulated the significance of the evening, giving gravitas to the purpose and relevance of the event:



'This is an event to focus on the importance of drama teaching in schools, to open a conversation about how the syllabus can better reflect a more representative and relevant range of voices that more closely align with the practice of today's theatre. Many of us here have benefitted from inspirational drama teaching, I know I did, and many of us do know the deeper benefits (despite what some might say) of studying drama as an academic subject. We thought harder, were challenged more deeply and collaborated more creatively when studying the subject. Maybe this is because a play is not literature; it can only truly be made to exist with collaboration of others, so the imagination of the writer and the imagination of the collaborator must, of necessity, fuse to create a whole. This gives the student an agency and freedom unique to drama. I hope today's special event is a useful, productive and collaborative beginning to a conversation that is both enlightening and necessary. Thank you very much.'

Panel discussion

Chaired by **Vishni Velada-Billson**: Head of Participation at the Royal Court Theatre
With **(from left to right)**:

Kwame Kwei-Armah: Artistic Director of the Young Vic

James Graham: Playwright (Ink, Labour of Love, This House, The Vote)

Cherrelle Skeete: Actor (Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, The Seagull)

Katy Brown: Head of Performing Arts, Hampstead School

Paul Webster: Edexcel Subject Adviser for Drama, Theatre Studies and Performing Arts

Titilayo Bamgbose: Current A-level student and Young Court Member

Michael Adewale: Current A-level student and Lyric Ensemble Member

Introduction

Vishni began by referring to the uncertain political climate surrounding the arts in education, advocating for the importance of this event in bringing creatives, theatres, exam boards, students and teachers together to positively explore what can be done to make a difference, aptly pointing out that 'the arts thrive in periods of shadow and adversity.'



Question 1

The first question to the panel asked them each to share **one key moment that consolidates why drama education is so important**.

Many relatable stories were shared, ranging from supportive and awe-inspiring drama teachers to significant moments of seeing your identity and lived experience represented and explored on stage or in play texts.

Key themes:

- ❖ **The personal affirmation that drama and theatre can bring**
How people personally connect with drama and theatre in various affective, cognitive, social, cultural and political ways, creating profound memories and significant life-events that continue to hold meaning throughout life.
- ❖ **The transformative experience of drama education**
How watching live theatre, studying play texts or performing characters from different walks of life offer students opportunities to make sense of their own worlds, to fundamentally change how they understand themselves, others, the environment, society and to begin to recognise their potential to become creative and political agents who can inspire others.
- ❖ **The rewarding experience of being a drama teacher**
The sense of wonder and satisfaction that comes from witnessing fundamental shifts in a student's response to theatre and from the recognition of having facilitated those discoveries in some way.
- ❖ **How drama can teach empathy and confidence**
The life skills and knowledge of how to understand others that can be gained from performing in front of audiences and engaging with characters' psychologies, circumstances and motivations.

Question 2

This question related to how well current drama education prepares students for the creative industries. Some members of the panel were asked, **‘what do you think students need to be taught that’s relevant to the current industry?’**

Cherelle highlighted a gap in the drama school curriculum that needs to address the ‘entrepreneurial side of what it means to be an artist’ today, raising a prevalent point that actors can leave drama school without support structures in place or the know-how to invent themselves as ‘savvy entrepreneurs’ e.g. finding agents, marketing themselves and their work, getting booked, finding space to make work, securing funding, doing tax returns etc.



James relishes the idea of an arts education that reflects the breadth and range of roles within the theatre industry, where the curriculum could expand to include design, production and stage management roles to widen participation for those drama students who don’t want to be actors.

James also wanted to know what creatives and theatres can do to help address the gradual crisis in arts education that is setting in, expressing the desire for a networked system where actors, directors, playwrights etc. can make connections with schools and vice versa to find opportunities to work more closely together.



Kwame spoke about the importance of talking about, thinking about and teaching the idea of ‘artists as citizens’ and activists, exemplifying the influence and support that a thoughtful and passionate artist could bring by taking an active role in their community.

Michael demonstrated that it can have a powerful effect and lead to a future career in the arts when schools are willing to open doors for their students by introducing drama-based courses and opportunities.

Key Themes / Questions raised:

❖ ‘The artist as a business’

How can drama education prepare students to enter the industry with core business skills necessary to start and sustain a career as an artist?

❖ ‘The artist as activist’

How can arts education raise students’ awareness of the potential political and social influence they could have on their local and wider communities?

❖ Access to multi-cultural resources and materials

Can drama syllabuses include a more diverse range of texts and works that represent multi-cultural backgrounds?

❖ A broader curriculum

Widen participation in the arts by including off-stage roles and pathways, such as technical and design roles.

❖ A centralised network that connects schools directly with industry creatives

For example, an app or an online space where creatives can post information about upcoming productions and where opportunities to visit schools can be arranged.

Question 3

The final question asked was: **'What's missing from current drama education?'**

Paul highlighted the difficulties that the exam boards face in supporting and guiding teachers and schools with connections to and ideas about current practice, pointing out that schools in average towns in the country especially find it difficult to access contemporary theatre practice. Paul calls for a proactive approach from the industry to make connections with schools and for there to be an ongoing open dialogue between practitioners and schools.



Katy encouraged drama teachers to be bolder, to contact actors or theatres to find opportunities for their students and to effectively create their own network.

Titilayo stated that students' attitudes towards drama as an 'easy' subject needs to change where they recognise that it is hard and one that requires more from them than acting, such as being able to express ideas eloquently and coherently.

Key Themes / Questions raised:

❖ **A nation-wide network**

How can the network be inclusive and make contemporary practice easier to access for schools and colleges outside of London?

❖ **Support needed from the industry**

Can industry professionals be proactive in making connections with exam boards and schools with ideas and work that they would like to share?

❖ **Changing attitudes of drama being a 'soft' subject**

What can schools, exam boards and the industry do to help change attitudes towards drama?

❖ **Teachers creating their own networks**

How can teachers actively build networks and what support do they need to enable this?



Current Curriculum: challenges & opportunities



Introduction

The 'Current Curriculum' workshops took place in Rehearsal Room 1 and were facilitated by Romana Fello, Young Court Manager from the Royal Court and Marilyn Rice, Producer of Education at the Lyric Hammersmith. In total 50 participants attended, with a mixture of teachers, students, exam board representatives, theatre representatives and industry creatives.

Objectives

- A. Explore playwrights and practitioners that are on the current specification
- B. Explore and discuss the limitations and potentials of the drama specifications
- C. Compile three practical action points of next steps to take on the 'opportunities' discussed

Activities

On the walls in the room were images of all the set texts and playwrights listed in all GCSE and A Level Drama specifications. Participants worked in groups and were given a key word such as RELEVANT, REPRESENTATIVE, INCLUSIVE, POLITICAL, ACCESSIBLE, HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, NEW PLAY, POSITIVE FEMALE that they had to assign to the texts and practitioners that related to that word.

Some of the initial reflections shared by participants were:

'I was struggling to find anything up there from the last 10 years or 15 years so it's not very representative of modern theatre'

'The texts are quite white [...] when you walk around the space it was hard to feel included [...] you can feel a whitewash [...] living in a city like London which is so cosmopolitan, it would be nice that the students can feel included in a class where they are looking at all these texts.'



'lots of the texts, as they are, don't jump out as being an inclusive text [...] we would perhaps find creative ways of making that text more inclusive.'

'there's a danger by referring to something as a set text [...] we are reducing the opportunity for new classics to emerge [...] we're going to get endless reruns of plays [...] we start to create a commercial model which is sustaining for itself but not for a diverse future.'

'the set text area of all the specifications is actually a small area, there is a lot of choice there.'

*'for me, accessible means would my students understand it, and would they get it. So, for example, I'm teaching *Machinal* [...] I work in a very diverse school and a lot of my sixth formers are EAL and I don't know how much they can access expressionistic theatre in the 1920s'.*

'the language and vocab we use as drama teachers [...] in assessments and general conversation [is] limited in terms of accessing diversity; it leads students to cliché and stereotypes that does not allow for diversity [...e.g. 'gesture' and 'facial expressions'...] practitioners have moved beyond these forms and are experimenting with it and our language as drama teachers is really limited'

Findings

The session moved on to discuss the various opportunities and challenges that the set texts and practitioners afford. The findings of these discussions produced the following points:

CHALLENGES: Set Texts

- Finding relevant, accessible text within constraints of the specification
- Some restrictions of the options to teach (list A & B in the specifications)
- More balance needed between historical knowledge and contemporary practice - *'we cling on to our history roots'*
- Playwrights are mostly white, older men
- Lack of diversity on the grounds of ethnicity, age, gender

- Budget – limits doing new texts
- Lack of live performances
- Accessibility: EAL students – no supports ITAs
- Time constraints/ timetabling – reading whole play/ other subject intervention

OPPORTUNITIES: Set Texts

- Introducing wide range of text – both far from young people and close to them
- Seeing and understanding plays in their contexts is an opportunity not a problem
- Re-imagining text – Donmar - Phyllida Lloyd shows
- Finding ways to avoid tokenism
- Variety of language – opening up scope and acceptable language
- Links relating to set texts (opportunity to **see** it)
- Offering different interpretations in schools from different practitioners
- Opportunities to pair practitioners with classic texts to reinvigorate them

A Set Text should be:

- Relevant / accessible/ current / interesting / thought provoking / challenging / enjoyable / inspiring
- Develop academic and practical research practice
- Rigorous and challenging – stretch and depth
- Develop a really confident understanding of the importance of practitioners
- Engaging enough that students would want to see it performed
- In a local theatre within the 2-year course
- Full of possibilities
- A mix of playwrights from all backgrounds
- Able to speak to people from diverse backgrounds /reflect the students that are studying it
- Bring a new and different perspective
- Lines you can read/perform over and over and keep finding more



CHALLENGES: Practitioners

- Accessibility
- Sharing knowledge and skills
- Limits set by examiners
- Who decides what a practitioner is?
- Combination with set texts
- Confidence in teaching
- Seeing their theatre
- Not enough resources
- Linking knowledge with assessment criteria
- Some practitioners reluctant to articulate their practice
- Finding the vocabulary to articulate the complexity of the practice

OPPORTUNITIES: Practitioners

- Use practitioners who are alive – investigate funds that working artists have to support school funds
- Let teachers be practitioners – make not having all the answers ok in schools
- Practitioners should be accessible to schools – teaching from videos?
- Utilise technology to document their work – more accessible
- Use practitioners already using young people's languages – who have ready adaptations
- Work with local theatres
- Starting conversations about different journeys into the arts
- Cross arts discipline
- Breadth - ethnicities/ differing abilities
- Are there some women? – all white

A Practitioner should be chosen based on:

- Ideally, your specialisms for quality, stretch and challenge
- The skills you want your students to develop
- Clarity of the method/ style
- Importance to the industry
- Contrast across the course
- Contemporary relevance
- Their work being on / in production and being available to do talks/ workshops on them



Future Workforce



Introduction

The workshops took place in the Studio and were facilitated by Jan Sharkey-Dodds, Head of Young People's work at Stratford East Theatre and Holly Smith, Community Producer at the Bush Theatre. In total, approximately 35 participants attended, with a mixture of teachers, students, exam board representatives, theatre representatives and industry creatives.

The industry has a range of training courses at FE & HE level, with additional internships and apprenticeships available to young people. These provide them with some technical skills and some knowledge to get them started at an entry level in the industry. For this session, the idea was to step back and focus on the qualities and competencies that a young learner needs to be 'work ready' and to explore how they can be embedded in the future curriculum.

Aim

- A. To discuss the qualities and competencies required in order to be effective in the theatre industry
- B. To gather some actions to move forward with.

Findings

Question 1: What qualities and competencies are needed for a theatre workforce?

Some of the core qualities and competencies suggested were:

- ❖ Resilience - dealing with rejection
- ❖ Persistence
- ❖ Imagination
- ❖ Resourcefulness
- ❖ Visionary
- ❖ Risk taking – failure is where you learn
- ❖ Self-reflexive learning
- ❖ Ability to listen
- ❖ Taking initiative
- ❖ Problem solving
- ❖ Collaborative

Question 2: How can and does a creative curriculum meet those needs?



The main points and suggestions to come out of the discussions were:

- ❖ For schools and theatres to share spaces – schools could offer emerging companies suitable spaces to make work
- ❖ Artists in residence in schools, adapting to what can be done in those environments
- ❖ Work placement opportunities – for students to experience work in a professional context
- ❖ Theatres holding open rehearsals
- ❖ More networking events
- ❖ For schools/drama departments to celebrate their students' achievements more – shout about it
- ❖ Theatres and the industry to do more work with pastoral and vocational leaders e.g. presenting at options evenings to give students, parents, teachers and SLT a clearer sense of the breadth of roles
- ❖ A resource for students and parents that detail clear pathways into the theatre industry from GCSE through to HE and beyond
- ❖ For teachers to be realistic and practical when explaining terms – e.g. self-employed – what it actually means to be self-employed

It was acknowledged that some of the above is already being offered by London theatres, which prompts a final question going forward – how do we make each other aware of what's happening?

Diversity, Representation, Access

Introduction

The workshops were held in the Orr Room and run by Jules Howard, Education Producer from Soho Theatre, Phil McCormack, Education Manager from Donmar Warehouse and Lakesha Arie-Angelo from Soho Theatre.

Aims

- A. To start conversations between artists, teachers, exam boards and industry that address problems and challenges relating to diversity, representation and access in drama syllabuses.
- B. To gather some actions to move forward with.

Questions discussed

1. In a more diverse syllabus what should or would be included?
2. Are teachers and young people able to access work that is representative of a wide range of cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds?
3. How can we make current set texts/artists feel more relevant to the young people exploring them?



Findings

Question 1 – In a more diverse syllabus what should or would be included?

The main points and suggestions to come out of this discussion were:

- ❖ Teachers as artists, using their past skills
- ❖ More visiting practitioners
- ❖ Contemporary texts relevant to today and to those studying it
- ❖ Better representation for ethnic groups and women needed
- ❖ Engaging with all professions in theatre
- ❖ Teachers linking up with theatres

'[The syllabus] can't be diverse at the moment because there's so much formal structure in there that it's kind of lost its creativity [...] even though they've tried to change the texts in the syllabus.'



Further problems that arise from the formal structure of the syllabus as well as time constraints are that teachers are '*not given a chance to be practitioners*' and '*we are artists and I think the specs forget that*', alluding to the frustrations teachers feel in not having the opportunity to put their arts education and training in action to meet their creative potential and ultimately to craft diverse experiences for their students.

One challenge raised frequently pertained to the difficulties teachers face in introducing new and diverse texts when there aren't readily available resources. It was explained that teachers tend to fall back to texts that are well known and well-resourced because *'I'm going to pick the one where I have most support'*, referring to time pressures that teachers are under.

Others pointed out that there is no/limited representation of different ethnic groups and women and that the context of some set texts are suitable for certain students and locations but not others – they do not cater for the diverse demographic of people who are engaging with them.

An exam board representative in attendance explained that at the time GCSE and A Level Drama qualifications were being reformed in 2014, *'each exam board was given 15 sets of criteria [by the DfE] that the plays we chose had to meet and [...] it was quite restrictive'*. However, it was also pointed out that the specifications do include a free choice section to allow teachers to choose more diverse texts that best meet their students' needs.

There was a general consensus that texts are not relevant or diverse if they do not reflect current times and it was suggested that to move forward, teachers and exam boards should be asking *'how [they can] make the text a device to be able to think about what's happening now'*.

Question 2 – Are teachers and young people able to access work that is representative of a wide range of cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds?

The main points and suggestions to come out of this discussion were:

- ❖ Teachers need more support
- ❖ Finding the right plays for students can be hard
- ❖ Teachers to look into local cultural events for inspiration
- ❖ Theatres to create links and access to school
- ❖ Be inventive with current curriculum
- ❖ Utilising video/media to widen accessibility
- ❖ Bringing multi-cultural practitioners into schools
- ❖ Teachers building up networks with theatres
- ❖ Involving parents



A recently graduated drama student explained there was a lack of financial support from senior leadership for her drama teacher to take students to see more shows and that there was a lack of diversity in the class (mainly white, middle class students) which made it difficult to *'look at very diverse scripts because you're not getting that represented in the class'*.



As a way to build a network it was suggested that as well as approaching theatres and organisations, teachers could focus more locally on what artistic skills and cultural knowledges the students' parents could share. This would also help get parents *'on board with this idea of what theatre really is and how enriching it can be and the opportunities that are available for children'*.

Question 3 – How can we make current set texts/artists feel more relevant to the young people exploring them?

The main points and suggestions to come out of this discussion were:

- ❖ Stories can be universal and made relevant
- ❖ Be creative to explore them in a relevant way
- ❖ Having supplementary parallel texts to support the set text
- ❖ Talk to the exam board to see what they suggest
- ❖ Resource network which is accessible
- ❖ Don't be afraid of difficult/complicated conversations
- ❖ Ask the young people what they think



'All stories are universal [...] in a way the onus is on the teacher to make the story relevant [...] so how you teach it is crucial [...] you need to think about what it is that is relevant for your class and in your community and find those connections and make them real'

The exam board representative in the room explained that the set texts eventually chosen for the specification (by the exam board, artists and teachers employed as board associates) had been through a rigorous and lengthy selection process due to the DfE and Ofqual instructions to choose texts that were politically correct or not too controversial in content. As well as highlighting the ethical responsibilities that educational providers have to the welfare of their students, this draws attention to wider issues surrounding the authorisation and policing of curriculums and how government policy may specifically determine and shape how cultural practices are perceived and formed in the classroom and beyond.

In addressing how to discuss themes of race through the use of culturally relevant texts, a speaker in the room raised a point that when introducing new texts, teachers need not place emphasis on it being a '**black book**' and '**forc[ing] the idea that we're talking about race now**', and '**not to be afraid**' to have complicated discussions around issues that might be raised within the text that are also reflected in society.

The session concluded with two action points from participants for how decisions on set texts should be made. The first suggests that we need to be '*asking the young people*' what they want. The second point related to the proven criteria used to make decisions on set texts, suggesting that '*we need to speak to the people who make these criteria*'.

What can LTC theatres offer schools, students, or exam boards?



The discussions were facilitated by Georgia Dale, Schools and Colleges Project Manager, and Daniel de la Motte-Harrison, Taking Part Assistant, from the Young Vic.

Some of the main discussion points and suggestions for the LTC were:

- ❖ Showing what breadth is available for careers and the professional skills required. Exposure to all departments – Press/Marketing etc.
- ❖ ‘How to start a career’ workshops/talks/conferences/resources
- ❖ Affordable workshops for students in technical theatre, vocal skills, physicality
- ❖ Online resources that outline theatre makers’ & designers’ aims, concepts, styles, materials and skills
- ❖ A day to explore production/to hear from the creatives and designers – for live theatre units
- ❖ More exposure to actors and directors: students hearing from them about their experiences
- ❖ Work experience/work shadowing opportunities available to students
- ❖ Chance to sit in on rehearsals for keen students? Seeing theatre making in practice
- ❖ ‘Schools only’ performances – links can be made with curriculum and prices for tickets could be lower
- ❖ Post-show talks for schools
- ❖ Set texts to be staged more often
- ❖ Hosting GCSE / A Level exam days in local theatres
- ❖ Bringing a show / part of show into school as well as funded tickets (e.g. for Yr9 options)
- ❖ CPD courses /specialist training days for teachers
- ❖ Summer schools in directing and technical theatre for pre-PGCE students
- ❖ Promotion of the arts at a higher level in schools – getting senior management on board
- ❖ Lobby the government – conversations with the DfE about what drama is and can do, what teachers need from exam boards and the school/SLT
- ❖ A symposium that can draw SLT together with exam boards, major practitioners and theatre reps and politicians – making *‘a strong case for changing STEM into STEAM [...] until that happens, SLT [...] are not going to buy into it as it’s not important [to them].’*

Making the case for Drama



“Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.”

Article 31, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The discussions were facilitated by Jenny Batt, Creative Learning Manager: schools and pathways, from the Tricycle Theatre.

Some of the points discussed:

- ❖ Exploring effective citizenship through drama – engaging with politics
- ❖ The need to maintain drama as a subject within its own right and not marginalised as a teaching tool for other subjects (e.g. citizenship, literacy etc.)
- ❖ Assumptions that drama is just about playing games – invite parents in to observe lessons

A number of posters were displayed that helped contextualise the social/ educational/ economic/ personal values of studying arts-based subjects, outline the decline in arts-based subject entries and highlight the economic growth of the creative industries.

Between 2010 to 2017 there was a decline of 28% in the number of arts GCSE entries, with a similar drop in the number of creative arts teachers being trained. For GCSE Drama entries, specifically, there was a decline of 24%. For more statistics, follow this [link](#) to the Cultural Learning Alliance website.

Cultural Learning Alliance has published a document called *Imagine Nation*, which details research undertaken into the value of cultural learning. Some of the key findings in this report found that:

- The Creative Industries’ share of the economy is projected to rise from 10% in 2014 to 20% in 2020.
- UK Creative Industries are world leading, contributing more than £84bn a year to our economy and accounting for more than 2.9 million jobs.
- Participation in structured arts activities can increase cognitive abilities by 17%
- Students from low-income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree.
- Employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment.
- Students from low-income families who engage in the arts at school are 20% more likely to vote as young adults.
- People who take part in the arts are 38% more likely to report good health.

You can find a summary of the key research findings [here](#), or, for the full report see [here](#).

Key Stage 3



The discussions around KS3 (school years 7, 8 and 9) drama education were facilitated by Catherine Greenwood, Learning Associate from the Unicorn Theatre.

Questions explored:

1. What are your priorities at KS3?
2. What would you like to do differently at KS3?
3. What could LTC theatre do to support KS3?

Some of the main discussion points and suggestions were:

- ❖ KS3 gets by-passed because there is a bigger focus on GCSE/A Level
- ❖ Some lack of clarity in schools around the aims of KS3 Drama – should it be about offering enriching drama experiences or preparing for GCSE?
- ❖ Cross-curricula links e.g. drama and English departments having linked Schemes of Work to enhance the learning where, for instance, the Shakespeare plays taught in English are also explored practically in drama
- ❖ Have theatre companies work with KS3 students to build towards end of term art festivals
- ❖ Interdisciplinary approaches to creating theatre, involving drama, art and music departments to allow students to see and experience what other roles are needed to put on a play
- ❖ More time and money needed to design and deliver creative Schemes of Work
- ❖ Allowing a project to grow organically, where teachers can be facilitators instead of needing to deliver restricted Schemes of Work that organise the learning towards GCSE
- ❖ Finding clever ways of evidencing KS3 work – what we're doing, where the learning is happening
- ❖ Skill sharing between theatre practitioners and teachers
- ❖ Having the chance to engage with professional theatre at a young age, to capture their interest
- ❖ LTC could get young companies to perform in schools

Drama Resources



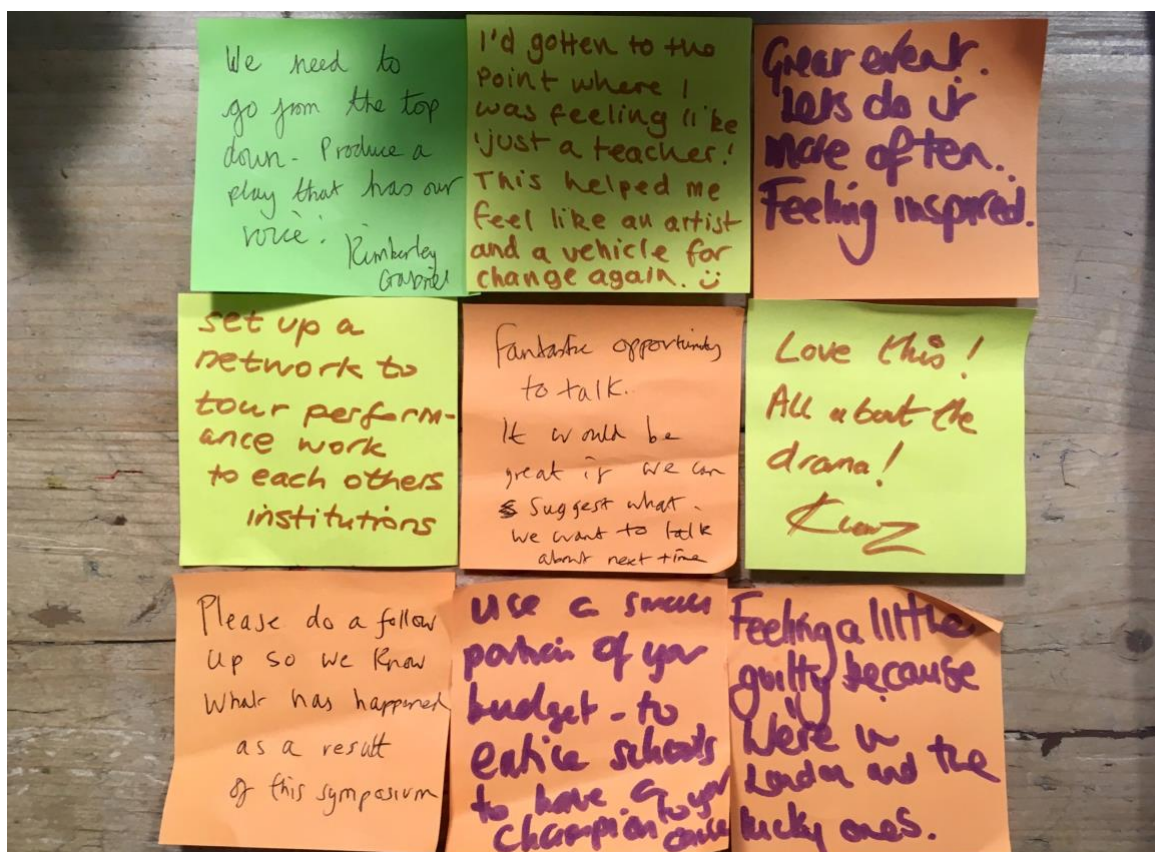
The discussions here were facilitated by Jo Carey, Almeida Theatre's Participation Associate, and Olivia Chappell and Steven Pleasants from Drama Space (see 'Further Information', page 24, for more information on Drama Space.) The discussions focused around what the LTC theatres are getting right about the resources they offer and what more can be done to meet teachers' and students' needs.

Some of the main discussion points and suggestions were:

- ❖ Online resources that include clips from actual productions and rehearsals
- ❖ More focus on specifically addressing a Director's artistic vision and intention – exploring what they wanted to achieve, the conversations they had with their creative team, the research they did in advance and how they work in rehearsals
- ❖ A general resource including recommended texts with breakdowns of characters to support teachers in choosing texts to explore for performance
- ❖ Resource packs that cover information on the production, the practitioners involved, and the devising/rehearsing techniques used
- ❖ Resources that have a costume, set, sound and lighting design focus
- ❖ A resource that supported teachers and students in responding to live theatre would be appreciated

There was a general consensus that a lot of what is out there and used by teachers is exploring more traditional ways of working and that more was required to make up a bank of resources on contemporary practice.

Feedback



'A fantastic event. Really lively. Some excellent discussions and an amazing array of delegates. Congratulations!'

'We must keep doing this. We must get together again.'

A mixture of teachers, drama school representatives, exam board representatives and creatives responded to the feedback survey, sharing what they took from the event and making recommendations for moving forward.

There was a general consensus that more talk and events are needed, where conversations that began could continue and further connections made. However, some attendees made recommendations for these events to focus on less areas, with smaller groups of representatives, leading to definitive outcomes and collective actions. Others expressed the need to widen participation to include universities, drama schools/conservatoires and school Senior Leadership Teams.

Many felt that effective change will only come from the top down, so the most useful thing would be for theatre industries to lobby the government, strongly campaigning for the arts, as well as working directly with school senior leadership teams, to help change attitudes about the value of the arts.

A recurring recommendation was to set up a central point of communication via the internet that would allow for a more linked up approach, and to support other schools, groups, theatres, areas that do not have as strong a network as there is or could be in London.

For some attendees, the event demonstrated how much desire there is for the industry and educators to work together to make positive change, celebrating the arts in education. It was highlighted by an attendee that work is already being done to bridge the gap between schools and industry, by companies such as [Theatre Workout](#), [Mousetrap Theatre Projects](#), [SOLT](#), BETA, [Action for Children's Arts](#), and [Creative Industries Federation](#).

Moving Forward

Since the Creative Learning Symposium in February, the LTC team have met to reflect on the outcomes from the event and to discuss plans for moving forward.

A number of actions are to be put in place in the coming months:

1. LTC artistic and executive directors will be writing a collaborative letter to the DfE, outlining the findings of the report and asking for a response.
2. This report will also be distributed to other organisations that share a similar mission, including all those who are part of [Participatory Arts London](#) (15th May, 10am-1pm, Royal Court), [SOLT](#), [UKT](#), the [What Next?](#) movement, and the [Big Arts and Education Debate](#) (20th April at the Birmingham Rep).
3. A film of our Creative Learning Symposium, along with this report, will be put on our website and social media to reach further audiences.
4. In addressing the desire for a more centralised space for drama teachers to access opportunities and resources, we will work on a Creative Learning page for our website that will be a compilation of what all LTC theatres are offering. This is then likely to be added to the Drama Space website once that has been set up (See 'Further information' page 24 for more details on Drama Space).
5. We will also be gathering some feedback on the symposium from the exam boards in attendance and discuss next steps and a wider strategy with them.

Our aims for sharing the report is to connect our findings and start a more joined up conversation with other organisations. It would hopefully start a large connected network where information can then be shared to support teachers more effectively through online resources.

Our short-term goals are to work alongside exam boards and teachers to support the delivery of the drama curriculum. Longer term, we aim to work with teachers and industry professionals to inform the development of examination specifications.

Further information

Details of organisations and companies that are relevant to the themes of the event.

Action for Children's Art

<http://childrensarts.org.uk/>

Action for Children's Arts campaign for children's right to the arts, connect children's arts practitioners and celebrate children's arts in the UK. They are dedicated to valuing children, valuing childhood and valuing the Arts.

Barbican Box

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/take-part/schools-and-colleges>

'Barbican Box is a portable box filled with the ingredients for making and creating original theatre, visual art or music inspired by our world class arts programme. Barbican Box launched in 2011 as a theatre education programme for secondary schools and FE colleges in east London.'

Blacktress UK

www.facebook.com/blacktressUK/ [@blacktress_uk](https://twitter.com/blacktress_uk)

'We are Black Women Actors from the UK Creating a safe space; Being the Voice for; Empowering, Encouraging and Enlightening Black Women Actors.'

Ccskills

www.ccskills.org.uk

'Creative & Cultural Skills gives young people opportunities to work and learn in the creative industries. We are an independent charity that provides careers advice and guidance, promotes apprenticeships, and delivers activities for young people through our National Skills Academy network of industry and education supporters.'

Create Jobs London

www.createjobslondon.org/

'We train young people through pioneering self-directed programmes, create opportunities directly with employers and we connect young Londoners with industry and like-minded peers.'

Creative Industries Federation

www.creativeindustriesfederation.com

'We ensure the creative industries are central to political, economic and social decision-making. Our unique network gives the sector a heft it has never had before and helps our members to derive creative and commercial benefit.'

Cultural Learning Alliance

www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/

'The Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) is a collective voice working to ensure that all children and young people have meaningful access to culture.'

Their research document, *Imagine Nation: the case for cultural learning*, can be found [here](#).

Drama Space

www.dramaspace.org E: hello@dramaspace.org

Drama Space is a newly formed company founded by drama teachers Olivia Chappell and Steven Pleasants. 'At Drama Space, we are revolutionising the integrity of teaching and learning in The Arts. We provide high-calibre, user-friendly resources, media, news and ideas direct from the world's leading arts organisations – and all in one place. Drama Space is a community that connects drama teachers, students and industry professionals, providing a hub of creativity and collaboration that benefits everyone.'

Independent Theatre Council

www.itc-arts.org

'ICT exists to enable the creation of high quality professional performing arts by supporting, representing and developing those who manage and produce it.'

LTC (London Theatre Consortium)

<http://www.londontheatreconsortium.com/>

'The London Theatre Consortium brings together 14 of London's theatres to work in partnership with a belief that working together will help us develop strong strategic and creative initiatives, that sharing expertise, practice and resources is a powerful mechanism for maximising efficiencies and for managing the sharing of work, in the strength of collaboration and the power of a strong collective lobbying voice.'

For more on LTC's work see this article <https://www.thestage.co.uk/features/2018/london-theatre-consortium-working-together-empowers-us/>

Mouse Trap Theatre Projects

www.mousetrap.org.uk

'Mousetrap Theatre Projects is a theatre education charity dedicated to bringing the magic of theatre into the lives of young people. We serve young people across London and beyond, focussing on those who experience disadvantage – whether economic, social or through a learning or sensory disability.'

Participatory Arts London

Twitter: @PALLondon

'A collective voice for people that design, produce and facilitate participatory arts in London. Reflecting on our practice; pursuing peer-to-peer learning. Developed from the Independent Theatre Council's (ITC) Education Managers' Forum, Participatory Arts London was formed to give a collective voice to people that design, produce and facilitate participatory arts in London. We are concerned about the lack of representation in our sector and are keen to start a wider conversation with creative practitioners and strategic and cultural organisations.'

<https://www.halfmoon.org.uk/participate/creatives/participatory-arts-london/>

SOLT

www.solt.co.uk/

'Society of London Theatre (SOLT) is an organisation that works with and on behalf of our Members to champion theatre and the performing arts.'

Theatre Craft

www.theatrecraft.org/what-is-theatrecraft/

'From direction to stage management, producing to marketing, lighting to designing, TheatreCraft is the only place to be for a unique glimpse into careers 'behind the scenes' in theatre.'

The Big Arts and Education Debate

www.birmingham-rep.co.uk/whats-on/the-big-arts-and-education-debate.html

'Join leading figures from UK theatre and education to debate the urgent issue of creative arts provision in schools.' 20th April 2018

Theatre Workout

www.theatreworkout.com

Theatre Workout™ is an award-winning theatre and events company based in London's West End, offering a number of services that include educational masterclass opportunities for school and student groups and corporate development training and conferences.

UK Theatre

www.uktheatre.org

‘UK Theatre supports organisations and individuals in the performing arts at any stage of their career, through a range of training, events and other professional services.’

What Next Culture

<http://www.whatnextculture.co.uk/>

‘What Next? is a movement bringing together arts and cultural organisations in the UK to champion and strengthen the role of art and culture in our society.’