

The JOURNAL for DRAMA in EDUCATION

Volume 28, Issue 1
Spring 2012
ISSN 1476 – 9395
£3.00

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The National Association
for The Teaching of Drama **NATD**

Charity Number 1135457

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Editorial

On October 8th 2011 Dorothy Heathcote, President of NATD, died at the age of 85; she was the greatest drama teacher the world has ever known. Her death comes at a time when her ideas and approach to pedagogy are needed more than ever, yet at a time where they are simultaneously most under threat. She has left her indelible mark upon all of the practitioners in this Issue.

The Coalition Government seeks to formalise teaching and regiment learning in a way that makes vulnerable the work and progress in education that Heathcote pioneered. Her vision for a learning-based education with drama at its heart is being systematically pushed further back – if not altogether destroyed – by the schools *White Paper, The Importance of Teaching*. However, Dorothy's contributions to pedagogy continue to resonate amongst teachers and students worldwide in their attempts to defend education. We are reminded of this in this Issue through the re-publishing of Dorothy's article from the *Fight For Drama, Fight For Education* publication; the full text is published in a supplement to this Issue with an Editorial introduction that places it in context. Dorothy Heathcote's guidance and practice is as enduringly pertinent today as the ongoing fight for drama and for education. Man is still in a mess.

Accordingly, her legacy consists not just in the rich abundance of ideas and the plethora of literature she leaves behind, but in the generations of brave, creative educators and learners she has inspired. This Issue of the Journal celebrates this legacy, the life and works of Dorothy Heathcote and the teachers and practitioners continuing to explore and develop her methods and innovate in their own right. With this in mind, there is perhaps no better place to start than with Luke Abbott's latest explication of *Mantle of the Expert*, in which the author examines and illustrates the two key components behind one of the central modes of teaching for which Dorothy Heathcote was widely known. In the wake of its inventor's passing, Abbott continues to refine and ask questions of *Mantle* whilst maintaining its persisting relevance in a changing world; he offers us not just a touchingly intricate insight into the genius of Heathcote's practice, but urges us to find the courage to build upon the frameworks she has left us with and to discover our own.

Such courage can be seen in the work of Catherine Wardale who, in her *Case study on The Tempest - from drama workshops to Year 6 production*, highlights the difficulties of engaging children with Shakespeare. After asking a series of questions of the playwright and his relevance in a contemporary world, Wardale concludes that we cannot deprive children of the unyielding truth and beauty of his stories. She is vibrant and successful in her search for ways to connect the play with her class and alert and reflective when implementing them. For decades, Shakespeare has contributed more to a child's boredom at school than it has to their enjoyment: the outdated methods that some teachers have employed have failed many generations and must therefore be re-evaluated. Wardale proves that this cultural treasure can produce a great deal more than indifference; like her, we must recognise this hope and hold on to it.

In his latest contribution to Journal, Guy Williams promotes another hope on to which we must cling: namely the development of Educational thinking. Williams explores this notion in relation to his analysis of Assessment for Learning (AfL). Throughout the article, we are invited to take two contrasting approaches to AfL in an attempt to establish its longevity and value as a pedagogical concept. Williams balances both interpretations of AfL, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses as both a fad and as a serious mode of pedagogy, before concluding that accepting or rejecting it in this divisive way should not be our primary concern. Despite conceding its flaws as an over-arching guiding concept, he suggests that we should not dismiss it outright as a transitory trend; instead, we should identify, exploit and bring into focus the ways in which it can be *useful* to us as educators in the face of those looking to cull the development of pedagogy entirely. There appears to be a lesson here that we can apply to issues beyond that of AfL exclusively.

In this Issue's *International Section*, we are offered insight into the global influence of Dorothy Heathcote. In his *Dispatches from Palestine*, Luke Abbott highlights the universal significance of Heathcote's work, and the internationalist approach to drama in education we must take, whilst maintaining a profoundly personal tone; we are able to witness the capacity of drama, and Heathcote's methods in particular, to affect both the individual and the world in which he or she exists.

We are further reminded of the need to continually reflect upon our practice in Ian Yeoman's review of *Six Plays for Theatre in Education and Youth Theatre* by Geoff Gillham, and in Paul Gibbon's review of *Remaking the Curriculum; re-engaging young people in secondary school* by Martin Fautley, Richard Hatcher and Elaine Millard. Both reviewers highlight the importance of these texts: Gillham's relationship with Heathcote was one of the most powerful creative, pedagogical marriages of our time; Fautley, Hatcher and Millard invite all teachers into a fundamental review of what and how we teach.

Also in this Issue, we start the serialization of John Fines and Raymond Verrier's seminal book *The Drama of History*. Before his untimely death in 1999, John Fines was widely recognised as Britain's leading authority on the teaching of history in schools. The Journal Committee believes that this book, now out of print, offers a valuable and insightful illustration of how Education can be brought to life in the hands of a sensitive and skilled practitioner. He was also a close friend of Dorothy Heathcote and his work was deeply influenced by her.

This Issue opens with a report from NATD's newly elected Chair, Ruth Saxton, in which Ruth introduces herself and the National Executive Committee with whom she will be working to lead the Association through a period of great change and challenge. The death of Dorothy Heathcote leaves a huge hole in the world of Drama and Education. NATD and the Journal will keep her ideas alive and develop them further over the coming years. We are conscious that we stand on the shoulders of a colossus.

Chair's Report

By Ruth Saxton

I felt many different emotions as I was elected as the newest Chair of NATD. Unfortunately, it was sadness that prevailed only one week following Conference. It is with deep regret, that now my first formal duty will be to attend Dorothy Heathcote's memorial celebration on Sunday 11th December. I hope by the time you read this, I will have met many of you face to face on that day to celebrate the remarkable life of the World's greatest drama teacher.

I only had the pleasure of seeing Dorothy speak once but have spent many hours equally spellbound whilst watching her films. During her talk at Conference last year, I don't think I stopped smiling: it was an absolute pleasure and a privilege to share some of her stories and nuggets of wisdoms. Judging by the tributes and anecdotes, we have not just lost an innovator but a wonderfully warm and generous person. I know that many of us will continue to think, 'What would Dorothy do?' and not just whilst we're teaching.

You will in time be receiving an invitation to attend an EGM on 4th February 2012 at Hazelwick School, Crawley, when we would love you to come and explore the direction our organisation now takes following the passing of our President and how we can continue her immense legacy. On that day, with your help, we will also hold our own celebration of Dorothy's vast work and strong bond with NATD.

Until then, your brilliant new National Executive Committee (NEC) and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves.

Ruth Saxton – Chair

I attended my first conference last year. As a Primary teacher, I have no formal drama training and was worried that I would be regarded as a bit of an imposter and feel out of my depth. However, I was welcomed with open arms and made to feel very much part of the Association. Because of this, along with my passion and belief in promoting the teaching of drama, I joined the NEC.

Since then I have drawn on the warmth and support of a wonderful group of practitioners to improve my own practice and spread the word throughout my own Authority, as well as network nationally.

Now more than ever, I have sought this advice and drawn on the strength of our Committee. This term my school had an expected visit from Ofsted and times are now difficult in work. Luckily, I had a wonderful experience with an Inspector who was thrilled by my drama-heavy literacy lesson and gushed about how it was just what our children needed. Although I never doubted the power of our subject area, it has given me the official nod of approval I needed in my own setting and the hope that there are some sensible decision makers out there.

I am incredibly honoured to be the new Chair and I hope to do you proud and help drive the Association forward, alongside a fantastically committed team of professionals.

Pavla Beier – Vice Chair

I have been on the NEC for two years, going into my third. This year, alongside the title of Conference Officer, I have also been voted in as Vice Chair. I was happy to make this move as I wanted to become more involved in the organisation throughout the year, not simply around all things conference.

As Assistant Artistic Director at the Theatre Company Blah Blah Blah in Leeds as my full-time job, I feel the need to be integrally involved with NATD. Conference each year is an excellent space to share ideas and discussion with people in the TIE field and those in teaching itself, but being a member of the committee keeps the motivation and exploration alive for me.

Gemma Grubb – Secretary

This is my fourth year on the NEC as Secretary and each year has brought new faces, new challenges and ultimately, new delights. I had been attending NATD Conferences for a few years and each time I was welcomed warmly by the NEC and it was that warmth that encouraged me to be a part of the committee myself. I wanted to be a part of something that truly understood what education was about; that saw the child as the future and the hope - rather than the enemy - as the media would have us believe. I have broadened my experiences and my mind as part of being on the NEC, and mostly done whilst tapping away furiously on my laptop! I look forward to another productive year with faces old and new.

Liam Harris – Treasurer

Since first joining the organisation last year, I have not only recognised the importance of the work of NATD to me as an individual but also the importance of the organisation within the current educational climate. While I am still a student at the Central School of Speech and Drama I feel that the educational benefits I receive from the work of the Association are equal, if not exceeding, the educational benefits I receive from my place of study. I am optimistic that with a refreshed NEC and an enthusiasm for activity, the Association will once again thrive to promote dramatic pedagogy.

As Treasurer of the Association I hope to iron out some of the administrative issues that may have held back certain ventures of previous committees. While a certain stigma exists around the role of the Treasurer, I recognise the need to roll up our sleeves and

get stuck in to those jobs that appear less exciting to ensure that this organisation remains not only alive, but thriving. Now more than ever we need to pull together and work hard to ensure that our voices are heard advocating the practice of an organisation I am proud and privileged to be a part of.

Paul Bateson – Publicity Officer

I am a Secondary Drama teacher in the North of England. After attending an NATD Conference in 2009 I was so inspired and fired up by the people I met and the things I learnt that I couldn't not join the Committee. I wanted to join to share ideas and resources and promote creative and child-centred teaching and learning in schools. I want to make sure the exciting ideas I keep learning from NATD and trying out in my classroom get through to as many colleagues as possible.

Adrian Bailey – International Officer

I joined the NEC initially because I saw how passionate my former work colleagues were about NATD, and it was at an NATD Conference in Manchester some years ago that I was first inspired to become a drama teacher. As my relationship with NATD has grown, so have I grown.

As International Officer, my aim is to connect with drama practitioners and pedagogues from around the world, as we work to develop opportunities for us all to create progressive, valuable and outstanding work. NATD has a rich body of work, the value of which must not be underplayed. If my work can be deemed a worthwhile contribution to this, then I will be very happy indeed.

Hywel Roberts – Membership officer

I am Membership Officer as I feel it's important during these uncertain times to maintain the profile of Drama in Education. I'm a freelance educational consultant.

Matthew Readman – Member

I am a Secondary teacher located centrally in Birmingham and therefore often host NEC meetings. I have been a member of the Committee for a few years now and undertaken different roles. This experience, as well as a network of valued contacts, not only helps when planning Conference but also in key discussions.

Ryan Nolan – Member

I am passionate about Drama and Theatre in education and that I'm headed towards teaching as a future career. I hope to support NATD in any way I can in my first year.

Laura Acton – Member

I am a second year mature student of Drama, Applied Theatre and Education at Central School of Speech and Drama. Prior to returning to full time education I worked for Really Useful Theatres as well as in TV Production freelance and for BBC Drama. My decision to study Applied Theatre was shaped by the voluntary work that I did in Peru, a desire to work with young people and a firm belief in the value and power of Drama in Education. I attended the conference for the first time this year and the passion, creativity and commitment that the Keynote speakers, workshop leaders and other delegates had was an inspiration to me. I am very proud to be a new member of the Committee.

As you can see, we are an enthusiastic and proactive Committee. Our first meeting in November was a long but very productive one. Therefore we already have many plans in place. Firstly, as promised at the AGM, the brand new website is under construction. Our Publicity Officer, Paul, is bringing the Association into the 21st Century and setting up Facebook and Twitter accounts, so we can spread the word in all media. Liam, our wonderfully organised Treasurer, is setting up new bank accounts and working on systems to cut costs and workloads. Also, the Journal Committee, our brilliant voice, has plans to celebrate the past work of NATD in order for us to forge our way into the future.

And this is just a start! I will use my reports as a platform to keep you informed of our successes and the positive work we are doing on your behalf.

We really want to work with you, so if you have any queries or ideas for the Committee, do not hesitate to contact us.