Co-participative research in dance-education partnership

Nurturing critical pedagogy and social constructivism

Linda Rolfe
University of Exeter

Michael Platt
Suffolk Inclusive School Improvement Service

Veronica Jobbins
TrinityLaban
What kinds of creative partnerships are manifested between dance-artists and teachers in co-developing the creativity of 11-14 year olds, in dance education? How do they develop?
Dance Partners for Creativity

- 3 key research areas
  - partnership roles and relationships
  - how creativity is conceived and facilitated
  - questioning and challenging practice
DPC research questions

- Over-arching question

  What kinds of creative partnerships are manifested between dance-artists and teachers in co-developing the creativity of 11-14 year olds, in dance education and how do they develop?

- Site-specific research question in each of four locations developed from the main question
Creativity and Education

- National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (1999)
- Creative Partnerships (2002)
Creativity and Education

- Cultural Entitlement / Find Your Talent (2008)
- Creativity Culture & Education (2008)
- Rose Review of the Primary Curriculum (2009)
- European Year of Creativity & Innovation (2009)
Dance Policy

- Two major shaping factors
  - Dance as art - creative and expressive
  - Dance as physical activity - part of PE

- Importance of
  - Dance located within PE National Curriculum
  - Physical activity agenda
  - Dance Review (2008)
Is creativity stifled by increasing constraints from performativity?

- In dance education
- In wider education
  - e.g. Craft & Jeffrey (2008)
- OFSTED reports
  - creativity is assumed as a dance education product when this is not always the case (OFSTED, 2006).
Creativity

Creative partnership

- Co-participative, dialogic engagement
  - Following Jeffery (2005); Chappell, Craft & Best (2008)

- Problematizing apprenticeship and polarisation
  - Challenging e.g. Galton et al (2008); Griffiths & Woolf (2004); Pringle (2008)
Methodology

- Qualitative
- Social constructivist epistemology
- Broad critical theory frame

- Zeichner (2008) - third space
- Gore (2003) - critical pedagogy
- Wenger (1998) - communities of practice
Methodology

• Theoretical framework and background
  http://education.exeter.ac.uk/dpc

• Four partnership sites
  • East England Partnership
  • South West England Partnership
  • Southern England Partnership
  • London Partnership
Data Collection

- Qualitative, co-participative methodology
  - Arts-based methods
  - Lead (LR) and partner researchers (PRs) collect data
- Responsive to on-site activities
- Cycles of data collection and analysis
Data Analysis

- Analysis by partner (PR) and lead (LR) researchers
- 2 layers of data analysis
  - open coding related to both the main question and the site specific question by LR
  - LR in collaboration with PRs carry out an analysis that relates to the site research question, using approaches that are best suited to the site
- Analysis process is varied in each site
- Triangulation both in and across sites
Researchers

- Lead Researcher: Kerry Chappell, DPC Research Fellow, University of Exeter
- Partner Researchers: Helen Wright (Head of Performing Arts, Holywells School), Michael Platt (Teaching & Learning Advisor, Suffolk School Improvement Service)

Research sub-question

How do we actively create learning situations which influence/promote creativity, collaboration and independence?
A Journey in Creativity

The Places and People
- Holywell School: Yr 8 & 9 students, Drama Teacher
- Suffolk College: BTEC students, Dance Teacher
- Suffolk County Council staff: Teaching & Learning Advisor
- Murrayfield Primary School: Staff & students

The Project
- Intensive 5-week, Jan-Feb ‘09
- Integrated performance outcome with 70+ students

(Funded by the Northgate Foundation)
Methods across 5 week period

- Partnership mapping conceptual drawing by staff & students (LR)
- ‘What is creativity’ interviews (LR)
- Video
- Photography & ethnographic-style observation (LR)
- Observation notes (PRs and other staff)
- Teacher/artist joint & individual interviews (LR)
- Other staff interviews (e.g. headteacher) (LR)
- Student (Yr 8 + BTEC) interviews (PRs & students)
- Audio diary (PRs)
Site Analysis

- Analysis of transcripts
- Analysis of photographs
- Triangulation of emerging categories
See - Think - Wonder

What can you see?
What does it make you think?
What does it lead you to wonder?
What can you see?

Audience/performer relationship

Body language and facial expression of observers show concentration

Dancers are distributed in the space, facing different directions
What does it make you think?

A dynamic quality to the movement - energised

Dancers moving with confidence

Dancers are sharing the space but moving as individuals with an awareness of each other

All eyes on the performers – no one is distracted from the immediate physical experience happening in front of them
What does it make you wonder?

I wonder what ...

I wonder how ...

I wonder if ...
Some pupil comments

- There’s like people watching other people dancing, like inspiring the people who’s watching
- To use some of their ideas in our performance
- Not exactly the same ideas but to change it to be more smooth like theirs
- Trying new things, new idea
- One was like ‘fightish’ and the smooth one
- One was a bit more exciting
- It was very good their facial expression, some of them
- You could tell they used their strength
Fierce  Evil
Strong  Aggressive
Hatred  Snappy
Sharp whip  Eye Contact
Strength  Serious
Tension
Emerging categories

- Transformational change
- Creative and collaborative problem solving
- ‘Other’
  - Roles and relationships
  - Collaborative teaching and learning methods
Emerging questions

- What have we learned about this methodology?
- How have initial methods developed and linked to theory?
- How have the cycles of data collection and analysis worked in reality?