

# capeuk



Drama into literacy  
approaches for your classroom

# ADVENTURES THROUGH IMAGINARY WORLDS

Key Stage 1 – Key Stage 3

# Foreword

## **CapeUK's mission is to prepare children to face the future with creativity and self-belief.**

Since 1997 CapeUK has worked developing our expertise as an enterprising creative research and development organisation. CapeUK's work is rooted in outstanding practice on the ground in Yorkshire and the North West, but we also have a national and international reach, collaborating with others who share the vision from around the world.

Creativity is a core human capacity which can be developed and nurtured in all areas of life.

Through developing programmes and working in partnership with others, CapeUK ensure that children have the opportunity to develop as creative human beings, actively engaged in shaping their lives and the communities around them.

The 'Adventures Through Imaginary Worlds' resource and the support of the 'imaginary communities' project, is part of CapeUK's diverse range of education focused work. CapeUK aims to support teachers in their continuing professional development to bring the curriculum to life using creative conventions and stimuli, and encourage pupil led approaches to personal learning.

CapeUK



## **Clifton: A Community Arts School and its partner schools, featured in this book, have been tremendously excited to work with CapeUK over the last year.**

It was wonderful when CapeUK approached us to work with them. From the start, we were determined that the working relationship between the school network and CapeUK was going to make a significant impact, and quickly.

We - real, live, busy and overstretched teachers like you - refer to adventures throughout this book because it has been just that for us and our students together. We have taken risks, ventured into unknown territory, fought valiantly against conventions and leapt bravely over mountains of bureaucracy! The adventure has been exciting and nerve-wracking and sometimes exhausting

but the difference that it has made to everyone involved has been more than worth it.

Clifton's network of schools has long worked hard to instil a love of learning amongst its students, alongside their parents and the local community. Creativity is at the core of all learning, from the arts to science to language. This project gave us an opportunity to develop this further, with a real focus on literacy and experience. Children long for opportunities to expand their imagination and apply their ideas - so we gave them plenty! It is impossible to describe exactly how exhilarating this year has been. As you flick through this book, I hope you are inspired to try the techniques in your own classrooms. Discuss what you are doing with leaders in your school and encourage them to set up networks across other schools to share your own adventures.

So why are you just sitting there? Turn the page, for goodness sake, and start planning.

Faye Kamsika, Assistant Head

# Contents

- 2: **Foreword**
- 4: **This Resource**
- 5: **The Five Key Concepts**
- 6: **Our Great Expedition**
- 7: **Chapter One**    Pupil Led Imaginary World
- 11: **Chapter Two**    Free Play and Re-Play
- 15: **Chapter Three**    Teacher and Pupil in Role
- 19: **Chapter Four**    Creative Classroom Space
- 23: **Chapter Five**    Pupil Led Purpose for Writing and Learning
- 27: **The Final Campfire**
- 28: **Your Adventure: The Survival Guide**
- 29: **Sustainability**

Passport to Delivery Cards x 5 (Enclosed within folder)



# This Resource

Five drama conventions have been developed which have proven extremely successful in enabling teachers to deliver a refreshing and exciting child-centred approach to literacy.

This resource offers a way to share these ideas through practical examples that make them accessible to anyone who is willing to take a few risks. The resource has been developed to support teachers and practitioners with a wide range of experiences, from absolute beginners to people with many years of experience in using drama in the classroom.

A team of primary and secondary teachers and one drama practitioner set out on a creative adventure.

They worked together for a year exploring how drama techniques could enhance literacy delivery and attainment outcomes in their schools.

As the chapters in this book unfold it is clear to see that their adventure uncovered more than the team originally intended. Although the main focus was to discover new drama approaches to literacy, the team of adventurers have created a 'kitbag' that has the potential to unlock a new immersive approach to teaching and learning.



## The Adventure Began...

A team of explorers met for the first time, all committed to the adventure ahead of them. Loaded with pockets full of enthusiasm, excitement, ethics and anxieties five lead teachers from five different Rotherham schools, led by an applied drama practitioner, faced the unknown.

Their mission was to go on an exciting adventure with each other and their pupils to discover what impact applied drama techniques could have in the classroom. They hoped to discover an approach to teaching and learning that would inspire both pupils and teacher and improve engagement and attainment in literacy. The only problem was ... their kitbag was empty!

There were lots of ideas to use on the adventure but the essential conventions and key concepts that would eventually earn their place in the valuable 'kitbag' needed identifying.

# The Five Key Concepts

Gradually the five key concepts emerged. The explorers sat down and carefully unpacked the following kit:

## Pupil Led Imaginary World

Pupils and teachers co-create an imaginary world to contextualise the learning



## Free Play and Re-play

Harnessing children's natural learning skills and imagination through play



## Teacher and Pupil in Role

Re-thinking the usual learning relationship



## Creative Classroom Space

Pupils gain ownership through the responsibility of using space creatively.



## Pupil Led Purpose for Writing and Learning

Pupils and teachers use all of the concepts together to plan and create their own motives for writing.



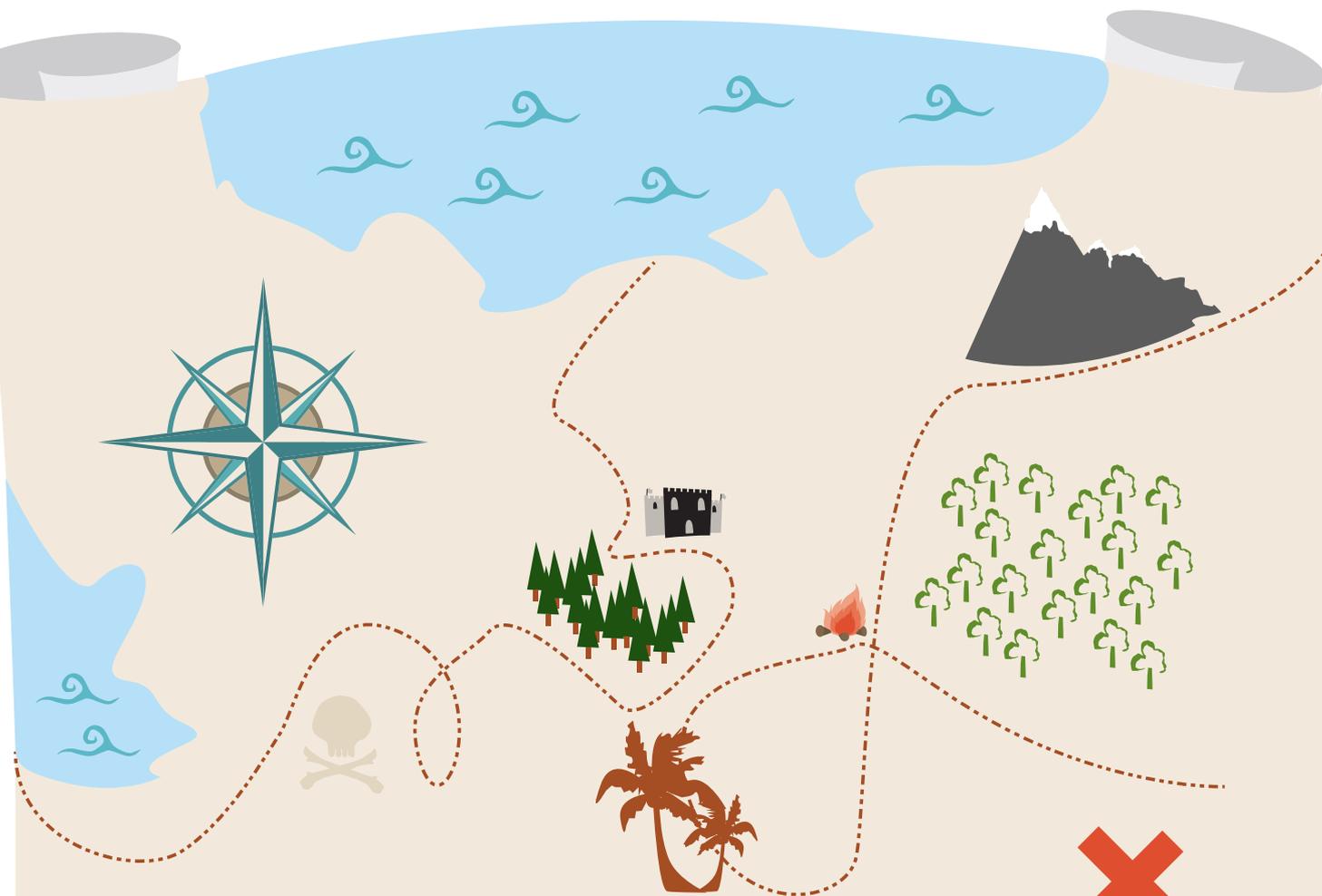
The kitbag contains some ideas that readers may be familiar with, such as 'teacher in role', whilst others are new approaches designed to invigorate and re-think how existing approaches can be used more effectively. It was the combination of all the pieces of kit being used that really pushed the boundaries on the adventure and created a whole new approach to teaching literacy. When unpacked, we can demonstrate how four of these concepts can be applied to the classroom independently.

# Getting Ready to Explore the Kitbag...

## Navigating Your Way

- Our [Great Expedition](#) on the next pages explains how a network structure supported and shaped the discovery of the five key concepts.
- The five main chapters explain the conventions in more detail with examples from five schools. Each chapter is supported by a [Passport to Delivery](#) for new adventurers to take into the classroom.
- The team reflects on the entire adventure in [The Final Campfire](#) on page 27.
- Finally the [Survival Guide](#) on page 28 supports future explorers and ensures you are fully prepared for your own adventure however large or small.





# Our Great Expedition

## Why work as a network?

To ensure quality sharing of best practice, professional development opportunities and support throughout the journey, a network structure was implemented and coordinated by CapeUK. This was also developed to enhance and underpin a larger shared structure of enquiry and reflection and provided maximum use of available resources and funding. Working in collaboration in this way with five schools allowed deeper learning to take place throughout and provided more opportunity for sustainability and continuation post initial delivery.

## Becoming a team

One drama practitioner was selected to work across all schools and one lead teacher from each of the five schools involved. These people, supported by the senior leadership team from their feeder secondary school, Clifton: A Community Arts School and CapeUK, became the core adventurers.

## The adventure mapped out

The team met for the first time to get to know one another. At this meeting the practitioner shared a great range of existing drama techniques to kick start the adventure.

## Meeting around the campfire

The adventurers from all five schools met as a team several times throughout the adventure. They discussed where they had been since the last meeting, what the next big risk might be, what had been learnt and sometimes where they had taken a wrong turn.

Everyone involved agreed that the network structure really enhanced the learning and created a real adventure with real discoveries. If you are interested in setting up a network or working in a similar way with staff within your school you can find advice in the **Survival Guide** on page 28.

# Chapter One



## Pupil Led Imaginary World

**“When I wake up in the morning and I know I am going to do something linked to my imaginary community I’m really looking forward to school”**

Year Four Pupil, Badsley Moor Junior School

During the year-long expedition into the unknown, the drama practitioner worked directly with one school at a time. Each imaginary world that the pupils and teachers devised linked directly with the topic being studied that half term.

An example from East Dene Primary will help demonstrate how a Pupil Led Imaginary World was discovered in the topic of ‘Environmental Problems’.

# Case Study:

## Environmental Problems

**Imaginary World:** Rolloxbridge Village on the beautiful Paradise Island.



### Background:

During the first week in East Dene Primary Year Four were taking part in a whole school reading initiative based on the theme of pirates. At the same time we had already identified the topic of environmental issues for our imaginary world.

This meant we had to re-think how we could discover the children's imaginary world utilising both themes. To combine the pirate theme with the 'environment' topic the class set sail as environmentalist pirates. They would search the seven seas for their imaginary world.

### How the approach was used:

Discussion and decision making - The pupils spent time discussing:

- What 'environmentalist pirates' could be –pupils decided they would search for different places with environmental problems
- Whether they should be morally 'good' or 'bad' pirates - pupils decided that they would become 'good' pirates (it didn't matter which they chose, it would just direct the story in a different way).
- What they would do – pupils decided they would help people or creatures living in places with environmental problems.

Exploration of ideas - The Year Four environmentalist pirates:

- Boarded their ship and set sail
- Found a tropical island that was under threat.

Using Free Play and Re-Play they:

- Searched the island to decide what it looked like
- Thought about what types of people or animals might live there
- Drew maps of the island and agreed a name for it.

Creating characters - The following week the whole class and the teacher:

- Took a position in a frozen picture of the island and became an eco-aware inhabitant of 'Rolloxbridge'.
- Decided their personal names and characteristics - a variety of characters were developed for example 'Roary the lion' and 'Kingkong' lived comfortably alongside all the other human roles adopted.

## The imaginary world was up and running!

Imaginative thinking - The imaginary world unfolded through a combination of:

- Character-based writing tasks
- Discussion
- Role play
- Free Play and Re-Play on the island.

Problem-solving

- The pupils created a dilemma - The dreaded Captain Blackbeard was planning to ransack

Paradise Island to get his greedy hands on the precious stones and jewels found in caves under the island. The island was going to be destroyed along with its beautiful environment including the endangered species of intelligent speaking parrots.

- The pupils and teachers worked collaboratively to solve emerging problems - The literacy learning shown below offers an insight into how they tried to solve the problems.

## Examples of literacy learning using the imaginary world:

- The islanders decided to write **persuasive letters** to convince Blackbeard to leave their island alone!
- Booby traps were also created during Free Play to keep Blackbeard off the island. The islanders **verbally explained** how these worked.
- The islanders met with Blackbeard (teacher in role) and **verbally persuaded** him to stay away, practising several rhetorical techniques.
- The islanders had an opportunity to sneak on board and read Blackbeard's diary using **inference skills** to reveal interesting secrets.
- **Stories with a dilemma** were then created documenting the events taking place in the narrative. Free Play and Re-Play were used as a physical planning tool to support the story writing (see Free Play and Re-Play Passport to Delivery card for details).

The stories were made into picture books.



# Adventurers Guide to Pupil Led Imaginary Worlds

“Try to be open minded! When I trailed the techniques in my classroom I was pleasantly surprised to discover the children’s imaginative ideas far surpassed any scenario I could have set up for them.”

Year Four Teacher, Badsley Moor Junior School

The narrative of the children’s imaginary world led to exciting, enthused and engaged learning throughout the half term. Importantly, the teachers found that it was not difficult or time consuming to set up the imaginary world and plan learning within it. All of the decisions were made by the pupils and the teacher. Once the characters and place were established the life of the world led the learning completely.

The concept of the Imaginary World has proven highly efficient because of its **flexibility**. A world can be discovered relatively quickly through activities that cover a great variety of objectives. It also has the **flexibility** to work either solely in literacy or to work completely cross-curricular.

## Create an exciting imaginary world in your classroom

Your ‘Passport to Delivery One’ offers a step by step guide to having a go at setting up an imaginary world in your classroom.

Once your imaginary world is established you can either:

- Continue to use the concept in conjunction with the rest of the kitbag (which encourages the pupils to lead their imaginary world and create purpose for learning - see ‘Passport to Delivery Five’ for further details).

Or

- Use the imaginary world as an engaging starter for your topic and plan work from the pupils’ initial ideas.

1. J NEELANDS  
Learning through Imagined Experience,  
Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1992: p.8.

2. P FREIRE  
Pedagogy of the Oppressed,  
Penguin, London, 1996, p.53.

3. D HEATHCOTE & G BOLTON  
Drama for Learning, Dorothy Heathcote’s  
Mantle of the Expert Approach to Education,  
Heinemann, Portsmouth, 1995, p.176.

## Unpacking the kitbag further: a closer look at the approach

### Pupils create a context for their learning

This world placed all of the learning into a context shaped by the imaginations of the children. Jonathan Neelands in his book *Learning Through Imagined Experience* suggests that drama “provides a bridge between the unfamiliar world of concepts and data and the recognisable world of human experiences.”<sup>1</sup>

The pupils are able to use the characters that they have created to discover new unfamiliar worlds through their existential knowledge.

### The teacher and student relationship

The pupils and teacher are both able to take on an active learning role within the newly created world rather than the pupils taking a passive role learning facts about the topic from the teacher’s perspective. The influential educational theorist Paulo Freire suggests that the pupils must be positioned as “transformers of that world” and not be used as “containers to be filled by the teacher”.<sup>2</sup> In this way the imaginary world intrinsically challenges the traditional teacher-student relationship.

### The “Dramatic Now”

The imaginary world also uses the theatre technique that Dorothy Heathcote calls the “dramatic now”.<sup>3</sup> The spontaneous action and interaction between the members of the group in the shared imaginary world creates the productive tension which drives the imaginary world forward. The impact of the “dramatic now” as a theatre technique is amplified through Free Play and Re-Play techniques discussed in the next chapter.

# Chapter Two



## Free Play & Re-Play

**“Children just don’t seem to play imaginatively anymore. Without an opportunity to play, how can we expect them to use imagination in their writing? Free Play gives them such an opportunity.”**

Year Four Teacher, East Dene School

The dynamic ‘expedition team’ first stumbled across Free Play at St Ann’s Junior and Infant School. The concept developed further in each school and has since grown into a clear two-part approach. A closer look at another adventure in Year Four at Badsley Moor Junior School will help explain how Free Play and Re-Play were used.

# Case Study:

## History - The Tudors

**Imaginary World:** Henry VIII's Dungeons.



### Background:

The Year Four class at Badsley Moor Junior School were learning about Henry VIII's rule in England. Once the pupils had decided on Henry's dreaded dungeon as the starting point for the imaginary world, their established characters began to instinctively question - or rationalise - why they were in the dungeon. Some were guards on duty, others poor pickpockets. This questioning inspired the first attempt at Free Play at Badsley.

### How the approach was used:

#### Enquiry Skills

- The first Free Play task was set up to explore how the characters had come to be in the dungeon – pupils used Free Play to create questions and discover answers about their characters past histories.
- The teacher got straight into character with the pupils – the teacher modelled how Free Play can be used and specifically focused on working with any pupils who appeared confused or less confident.

#### Independent exploration

- Generally the pupils spontaneously worked in small groups but some pupils would choose at times to work alone or in pairs.
- The guards played out how they first began to work for Henry. Prisoners played out arrests and protests

- the class began to understand their characters and their past histories.

#### Reflect and refine

The next part of the process was Re-Play. This was vital to ensure that the events unfolding in groups through Free Play were shared with the entire class.

- Everyone had the chance to share with the group how they got into prison by selecting and showing back main events from their Free Play.
- Groups and individuals re-played stories sharing unjust imprisonments, how they got the job of prison guard or hangman and how they became thieves - this helped the children to select, consolidate and refine their ideas and discoveries.

## Examples of literacy learning inspired through Free Play and Re-Play:

- **Stories were written** using Free Play and Re-Play as a physical planning tool (see your 'Passport to Delivery Two' for details). The stories documented the daring escapes of the prisoners and the brave attempts to stop the escapees by King Henry's staff.
- At the end of the half term the pupils used Free Play out of character to build memory machines and test how they would keep their character and the imaginary world of the dungeon safe. They used Re-Play to **verbally and physically explain** how to use the machines.
- These were subsequently written up into **explanation texts** so they could always remember how to access the precious memories.



# Adventurers Guide to Free Play and Re-Play

**“Try not to over plan! The children will lead the free play and will take their learning in a completely different direction to what you envisaged.”**

Year Five Teacher, St Ann’s Junior School

Setting up Free Play and Re-Play is simple. The first attempt at Free Play and Re-Play at Badsley, detailed in the case study, was set up like this:

**Teacher:** “It is exciting AND scary knowing that our characters are in the dungeon! Could we use all we know about Tudor times to find out how our characters ended up in there? Shall we get into character and find out more about the day we first entered the dungeon?”

**Pupil:** “What like actually do it? Like acting it out?”

**Teacher:** “Yes, it’s up to you how you want to play it out, shall we have 5 minutes before I give the signal to freeze?” (the class agreed) “OK off you go.”

Do not be tempted to dictate how the pupils use Free Play time. **It is very important that this stage is truly ‘free’.** Teachers may be tempted to decide on groups for the pupils but the team discovered that the concept was much more effective when the pupils played naturally with other characters.

## Set up time for Free Play in your classroom

Your ‘Passport to Delivery Two’ offers a step by step guide to help you set up Free Play and Re-Play in your classroom.

4. NEELANDS  
1992, p.11.

5. M ROSEN  
2011, Keynote Speech Flourish - placing creativity at the heart of inspiring teaching and learning. Cape UK’s Conference, 28.06.11

6. J MOYLES  
Just playing? The role and status of play in early childhood education, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1995, p.7.

7. J DEWEY  
Experience and Education,  
Simon & Schuster,  
New York, 1997, p.64.

## Unpacking the kitbag further: a closer look at the approach

### Benefits of play

Theory exploring the role of play in education tends to focus on the early years curriculum. A developing argument calls for ‘play’ to be used from Key Stage 2 onwards: “The spontaneous and unformed play of key stage 1 becomes more conscious and crafted through Key Stage 2-Key Stage 3”<sup>4</sup> The **structure** of Free Play and Re-Play pushes the boundaries of play into a useful learning medium far beyond Key Stage 1.

### Removes fear and raises confidence

At CapeUK’s 2011 ‘Flourish’ conference, writer and former children’s laureate Michael Rosen described play as ‘trial and error without fear of failure’.<sup>5</sup> Play can raise the confidence of our pupils in their own ideas and importantly remove the fear of failure, which is often key to disengagement in learning.

### Develops learning skills

Active engagement is not the sole purpose of Free Play. The play then “motivates and challenges” the pupils to “master what is familiar and to respond to the unfamiliar in terms of gaining information, knowledge, skills and understanding”.<sup>6</sup> Pupils are then motivated through play to explore new questions about the characters, the narrative and the time period.

### Stop and think

Dewey suggests that “the old phrase “stop and think” is sound psychology’ when discussing how free imaginative activity must be followed with reflection time”.<sup>7</sup> Re-Play is an opportunity to step out of the imaginative world, reflect and immediately use this to develop further, react and refine.

# Chapter Three



## Teacher and Pupil in Role

**“Taking an active part in the imaginary world and trusting yourself and your class can really develop challenging and engaging learning in your classroom”**

Year Five Teacher, Coleridge School

This part of the adventurers’ kit was tested out on the first leg of the expedition. Its place in the kitbag was questioned and trialled in a number of different ways before finally the team defined its best practice and it became part of the essential kit. The example of Teacher and Pupil in Role describes the experience of the brave explorers at Coleridge Primary School who first trialled this approach.

# Case Study:

## Children's literature - Narnia

**Imaginary World:** The swamps and forest of Narnia



### Background:

This approach was trialled in two different ways with Year Five at Coleridge school.

1. Pre-prepared Teacher in Role – During the topic of WW2 the teacher felt a little anxious about going into role, therefore the role was decided upon prior to the lesson. The teacher became 'Officer Binks' to ensure he felt comfortable maintaining behaviour whilst in character.
2. In role character developed with the pupils – During the next topic of Narnia the teacher created his character at the same time as the children created their characters and under the same conditions.

**The second approach was so successful that it has shaped how the concept of Teacher in Role is used in the kitbag.**

## How the approach was used:

### Imaginative discovery

- The class decided on their imaginary world – which was in Narnia.
- The class decided on who they were – lost mythical creatures.
- The characters were devised in this world through clay – Without any prior thought going into the role the teacher and pupils created clay models of their characters. The teacher created a slug called Solaris and the children created a great variety of characters including mini unicorns, trolls, and many exciting new creatures that the world had never seen before.

### Sharing ideas

- The characters were named.
- The class had the opportunity for the first time to physically bring their characters to life.
- The teacher bravely went first and became 'Solaris the Slug' and introduced himself in character – despite his initial reservations he used his body and voice to humorous effect that enthralled and inspired the children. His efforts paid off.
- The pupils were asked to take turns to introduce themselves as their character – The teacher was pleasantly surprised by which pupils were volunteering to go next – pupils who would usually shy away from any kind of dramatic activity in front of the class clamoured to stand up and introduce their adopted creature-roles in character.

In role characters as a tool for learning The class then began to use their own characters to lead their learning through the topic. The characters were used by both pupils and teacher through Free Play and Re-Play to lead their Imaginary World and to create Purpose for their writing.

## Examples of literacy learning inspired through Pupil and Teacher in Role:

- **Verbal description** of character abodes. In character pupils physically showed the rest of the class around their homes; describing what they could see and why they lived there.
- This was then transferred into a **descriptive piece of writing** about their character's homes.
- **Persuasive letters** were sent to characters on the side of the enemy to convince them to switch allegiances from either Aslan or the White Witch.
- **Creative stories** were developed to share the characters adventures in Narnia. This was the pupils' chance to ensure that their mythical creatures would never disappear from history again.



# Adventurers Guide to Teacher and Pupil in Role

**“I was a bit dubious at first because I had imagined it would be the children doing the drama and not myself, drama wasn’t one of my strong points; however, I found that teacher and pupil in role was one of the most successful and important concepts.”**

Year Five Teacher, Coleridge School

Characters are developed with the pupils – The teachers discovered that a positive relationship with their pupils developed when the characters were devised together. The technique is used in the following ways:

- 1) During Free Play and Re-Play
- 2) To set up and facilitate tasks and discussion
- 3) To model work effectively

New characters can be developed – any character can be developed collaboratively between the teacher and pupils. If the pupils at Coleridge wanted to meet Aslan, they could decide together his personality, what he sounds like and even who should ‘become’ Aslan.

## **Have a go at using Teacher and Pupil in Role in your classroom**

Your ‘Passport to Delivery Three’ guides you through three clear steps to use Teacher and Pupil in Role.

## **Unpacking the kitbag further: A closer look at the approach**

**“Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students”.<sup>8</sup>**

8. FREIRE  
1996, p.53.

9. DEWEY  
1997, p.58.

10. N. KITSON  
‘Fantasy play: a case for adult intervention’ in The Excellence of Play, J Moyles (ed) Open University Press, Buckingham, 1996, p.97.

### **Creating a learning community**

This concept places the teacher in a position where they can work alongside their pupils to learn from, about and with them. Dewey understands that “education is essentially a social process” and that “learning best takes place when individuals form a community group.” What is interesting when considering the explorers’ sense of ‘teacher in role’ is his assertion that “it is absurd to exclude the teacher from membership in the group”.<sup>9</sup>

By establishing the teacher’s fictional character together with the pupils the teacher becomes part of that community group and has a shared sense of the learning and the imaginary world developing.

### **Establishing a new learning relationship**

The teacher genuinely needs to understand the pupils’ characters to keep up with the unfolding events and guide the learning effectively. The children could not truly lead their learning if the teacher attempted to guide the learning from a distance. The pupils understood that their character was equally important to the teachers and that their characters had real authority to lead the developing narrative – and subsequently the learning.

### **Raising confidence**

Kitson suggests that “adult participation legitimises the play and encourages the children to see what they are doing as something valuable”.<sup>10</sup> Teachers modelled engagement in a meaningful way. The confidence of some of the more apprehensive members of the group soared when they saw their teacher working in the same way as themselves.

# Chapter Four



## Creative Classroom Space

**“It’s lots of fun because we can imagine and come alive, it’s good because we can’t really go there.”**

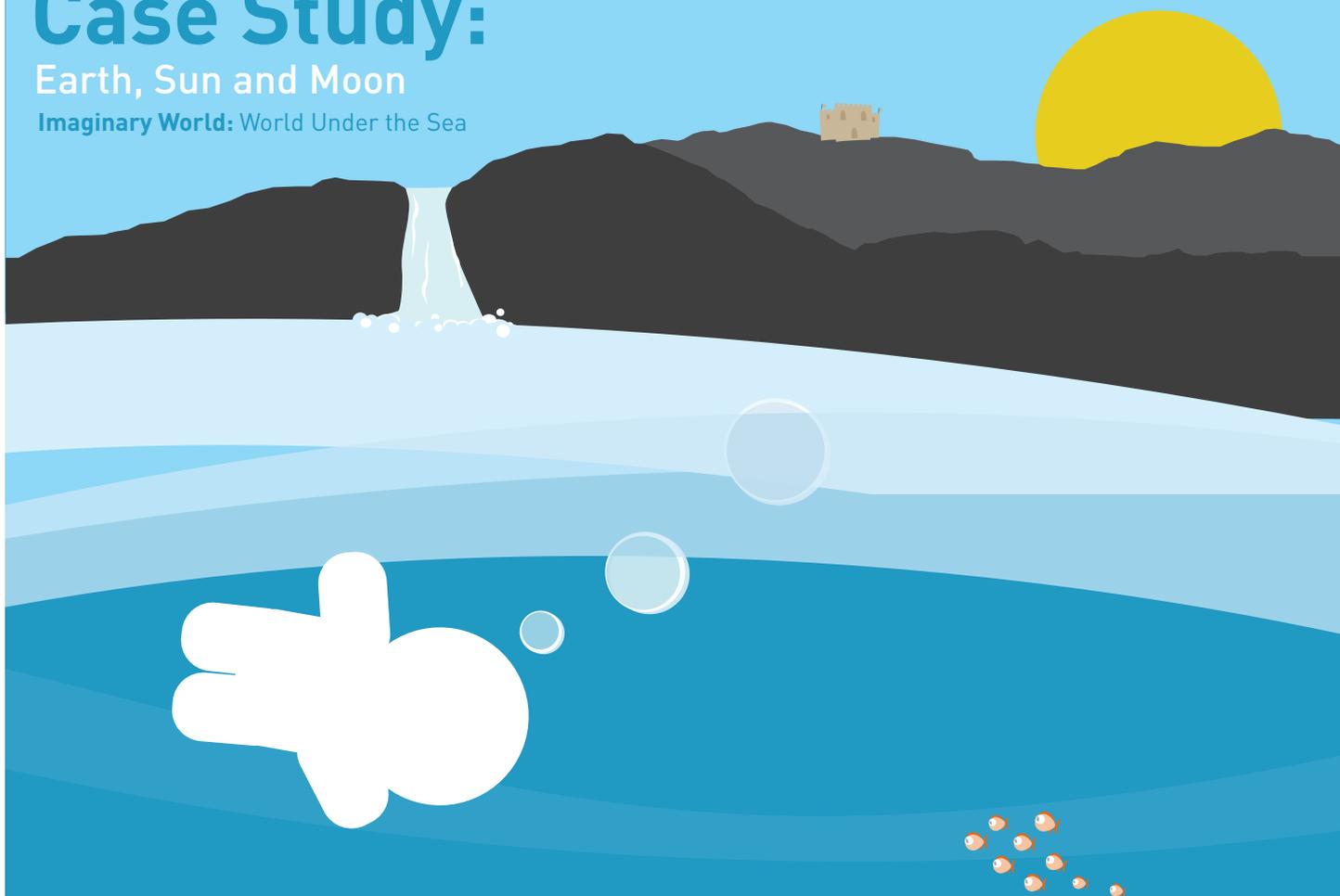
Year Five Pupil

The explorers discovered that Creative Classroom Space is all about being more open to new ideas about how to use space in and out of the classroom on a daily basis. On many of the adventures the simple technique of discussing with the pupils how we could use space led to the greatest discoveries. This chapter explains four simple approaches to re-thinking classroom space that the pupils and teachers uncovered during their adventures. The example in this chapter highlights how just one of these four approaches was used on a trek into the imaginary underwater world at St Ann’s Junior & Infants School. The example shows how the pupils and teachers used space in their classroom and school.

# Case Study:

## Earth, Sun and Moon

**Imaginary World:** World Under the Sea



### Background:

Year Five at St Ann's created their imaginary world under the sea. Characters were created including a friendly shark and a fish called Pudsey; these were developed further through drama and writing activities including making frozen memory images and writing diaries. The world was based around space travel as the topic was Earth, Sun and Moon.

### How the approach was used:

- The pupils decided on what environment they wanted to create to support their topic.
  - The pupils and teacher liaised with other teachers and senior staff to ensure they had support for space to be used in different ways.
  - The pupils and teacher decided on possible spaces to be transformed and decided on two spaces.
- 1) A corner in their classroom was highlighted by the teacher as a possible space to use and this was agreed by the class.
  - 2) The performance hall would be used for a day to celebrate and share their community with the rest of the school and visitors from home.

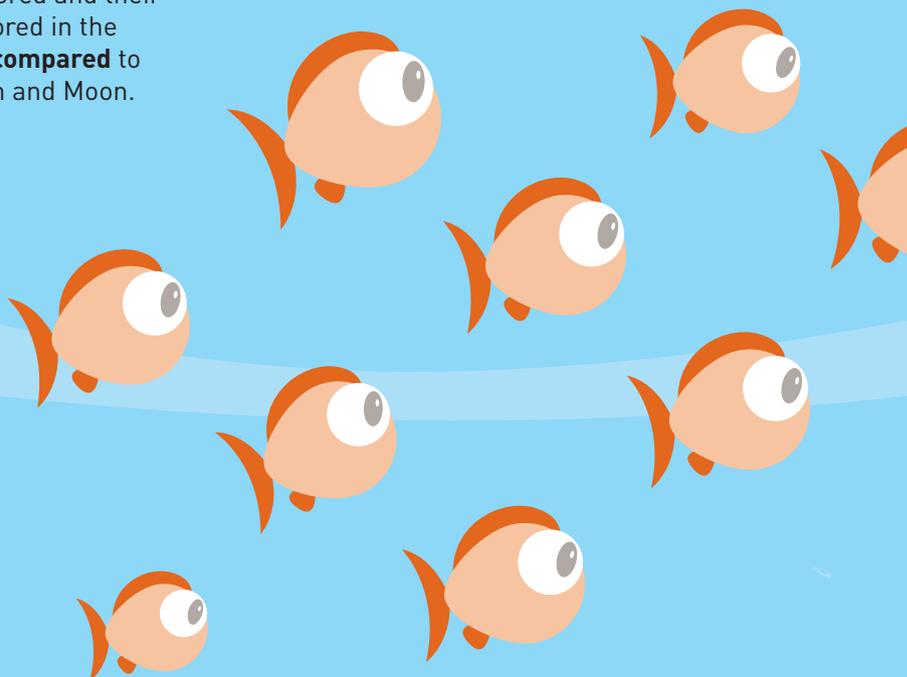
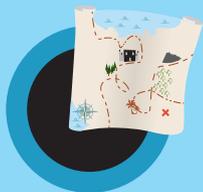
The group decided that the corner in the classroom would become the 'space exploration centre' and when their characters courageously set off on their next adventure into space, all of the evidence gathered and created by the pupils would be displayed in there. This space became more than a place to store all of their work, it added 'pupil led purpose' for the learning.

### Communication

- The group had already selected the big hall as their space to set up their imaginary world.
- To support the development and sharing of the imaginary worlds the pupils created giant two dimensional painted houses to show what their imaginary homes and world looked like.
- The use of colourful props created by themselves and an exciting setting encouraged the children to feel confident when explaining about their community.
- Utilising this big space the pupils physically created their imaginary world to share with others. Visitors such as parents and children from other schools were invited to walk around and see aspects of the world that the children and teacher saw in their minds.

## Examples of literacy learning inspired by the creative use of space:

- **Speaking and listening skills** were used when the hall became the underwater world and the pupils in character led visitors from the school and local secondary around their world.
- The space exploration centre added extra pupil led purpose to their writing. **Diaries about space travel** were displayed in the space exploration centre to share information with visitors about what space travel was like.
- **Fact files** about the planets they explored and their imaginary world were created and stored in the exploration centre. These were then **compared** to fact files created about the Earth, Sun and Moon.



# Adventurers Guide to Creative Classroom Space

**“Think about where your pupils work. Consider whether you would want to always sit at a table on a chair. Allow them to make decisions about where and how they work. Include them in the decision making process.”**

Year Four Teacher, East Dene School

## Places for writing

Places for writing was used when the pupils were asked to write from their characters perspectives. The question ‘Where would your character sit to write their diary?’ seemed to encourage the pupils to think about the writing type as well as helping the children write from different perspectives.

## Classroom layout

Classroom layout was used with the pupils out of character to support both written and role play tasks. The question ‘how should we set up the space to meet Captain Blackbeard and why?’ encouraged deep thinking about what the pupils wanted to achieve from their encounter and discussion.

## Signifiers of creative space

Signifiers of creative space supports pupils who struggle to visualise an imaginary world by making decisions together about what the world looks like. This could be used in any role play activity that requires the class to re-imagine their environment (see your ‘Passport to Delivery Four’ card for a clear example).

## Utilising space in your classroom and school

Utilising space in your classroom and school questioned all of the available space that could be used each day to enhance everyone’s learning experience. The case study offers a clear example of how this was used.

## Re-think how you use space creatively in your classroom.

Your ‘Passport to Delivery Four’ card describes two examples of how this concept can be used within two topics.

## Unpacking the kitbag further: a closer look at the approach

**“The strangest but most interesting thing happened when we gave the children the choice about the classroom layout for writing. They chose a different shape and worked incredibly hard and focused all day. It was bizarre as the children had been disengaged from writing, yet they chose to write long after they would normally have become fed up.”**

Year Four teacher, East Dene School

People’s surroundings and their relationship to them have a huge impact on how creative they feel and how productive they are. Dewey suggests that restrictive space can impact on pupils negatively;

**“The limitation that was put upon outward action by the fixed arrangements of the typical traditional schoolroom, with fixed rows of desks and its military regimen of pupils who were permitted to move only at certain fixed signals put a great restriction upon intellectual and moral freedom”.<sup>11</sup>**

Rethinking how the classroom and school space is used can make a real difference for both the teacher and pupils. The technique of asking open questions about space at the start of a day or a specific activity allowed the pupils to have a say in how they feel they could work best. Not only does this add to the growing sense of responsibility between pupils and teacher but it can make a real difference to the pupils’ creativity, and as Dewey asserts, “intellectual freedom” within their work.

<sup>11</sup> DEWEY  
1997, p.61.

# Chapter Five



## Pupil Led Purpose for Writing and Learning

**“Trust the pupils. I was astounded by the response particularly by initially quieter members of the class who, by the end of the year, were suggesting visits to local primary schools, leading sessions and generally being more active and engaged in all lessons.”**

English Teacher, Clifton: A Community Arts School

Purpose for Writing was one of the many ideas that the explorers started out with at the beginning of their adventure. The idea that people become more engaged with their writing when there is a clear purpose is a well evidenced concept. What the curious explorers went in search of, however, was how they could use this idea without always being responsible for the ‘big lie’ teacher led stimulus, that commonly sets up exciting purposes for writing and learning.

Pupil Led Purpose for Writing and Learning has been left until the final chapter because the approach works most effectively when the other pieces of kit are up and running in the classroom. Using the ‘Imaginary World’, ‘Free Play & Re-Play’, ‘Teacher and Pupil in Role’ and ‘Creative Space’ collectively offers pupils the freedom to constantly create their own purposes for learning.

The final example from Clifton: A Community Arts School is used to help explain how the combination of the concepts supported by the teachers’ developing trust in their pupils’ ideas can create an approach to literacy that truly incorporates pupil led purpose for all of the work in the classroom.

# Case Study:

## Non-Fiction

**Imaginary World:** Paradise Island



### Background:

A Year Seven class at Clifton: A Community Arts School had set up their imaginary world within their English lesson in the topic of Non-fiction. The openness of the topic meant that the scope of the imaginary world was literally endless! The teacher offered the group a starting point of holiday locations. Once the group had researched a great variety of holiday locations they created a holiday destination called Paradise Island.

### How the approach was used:

#### Research

- An initial research task enabled the group to discover exactly what they wanted their holiday resort to be like.

#### Applying the research to the imaginary world

- As a result of the initial research the class spent time establishing their world and characters upon the island. Junaid City, McGuire Jungle and Sunny Palace became established areas of the popular holiday island. Tourists could choose to stay in the luxurious Sunny Palace Hotel or the more adventurous tourists could stay in the McGuire jungle living in the trees amongst the locals.

- To add an extra level of depth to their world the pupils also decided that pirates lived and sailed in the surrounding seas –This added danger and a high risk that the pirates would ransack the island and destroy the islanders livelihoods and disrupt the holiday makers.

### Pupil ideas initially lead the planning

- Until this point the teacher did not plan past the initial research activity to encourage the establishment of their world to be truly pupil led.
- The teacher now used the ideas developed so far as inspiration to create stimuli to set a specific task – The teacher had a letter in a bottle awaiting the islanders explaining that a nearby island had been ransacked by the pirates and that danger now approached them.
- The task was then set, to discover whether modern day pirates still exist and if so find out factual information that the islanders could use to protect themselves.

### Pupils are empowered to take the lead

- From this point onwards the pupils' response to the tasks and their developing ideas about the island directly informed the planning.
- The list of literacy tasks inspired through the approach demonstrates how the planning was constantly determined by ideas from the pupils.
- The use of Free Play and Teacher in Role created momentum and supported the developing ideas and thus a clear purpose to the tasks.

## Examples of literacy learning inspired by the overall approach:

- **Research** into different types of holidays and different resort locations.
- **Maps of the island** were created and labelled to resemble the holiday brochures the students had researched .
- **Inference skills** were used to read the letter in a bottle from a neighbouring island.
- **Research** into modern day pirates through reading and note taking was essential for the island's safety.
- Once the research was undertaken the pupils decided to **write letters** to the Queen of England to ask for her support.
- The Queen responded with a letter (teacher created a formal response) and the pupils had to read and determine Britain's intentions
- Finally the pupils decided that a meeting between the pirates and islanders must occur to **negotiate** a deal that could save their livelihoods.

### Understanding the learning process

- By the end of the non-fiction module the students clearly understood how the teacher used their ideas to create purpose for their literacy. Pupils were much more able to suggest possible tasks for the next lesson as well as the ideas! The final meeting between the pirates and islanders was suggested and planned by students.



# Adventurers' Guide to Pupil Led Purpose for Writing and Learning

“Interestingly we found that the children created their own engagement. By establishing a totally shared ownership it removed the need for the teacher to develop elaborate hooks for the children to be interested and excited by their learning.”

Year Four Teacher, Badsley Moor Junior School

## Rethinking Planning

It is important to note that underpinning all of these conventions and this one in particular, is an extra awareness from the teacher to re-think how they plan. It was really important that the teacher did not try and envisage too far into the future. This approach can be split into two stages:

- 1) Empowering the pupils to create their own fictitious purposes.
- 2) Pupils begin to understand and support the planning.

## Encourage your pupils to create their own purposes for writing.

Your 'Passport to Delivery Five' cards explains how the concepts can be used together to establish Pupil Led Purpose for Learning.

## Unpacking the kitbag further: a closer look at the approach

**“There is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active co-operation of the pupil in the construction of the purposes involved in studying”.**<sup>12</sup>

## Empowering the pupils to create their own fictitious purposes

It can feel scary moving away from a set or pre-planned scheme of work but the teachers found that the pupils truly inspired them; so much so that

planning for the next lesson was much easier and more exciting for the teacher also. The imaginary world, the 'in role' characters and Free Play and Re-Play offer the pupils their own set of tools to explore their imaginations and create their own 'hook'. The approach ensures that the imaginative 'purpose' devised makes complete sense to the pupils; they are, in fact, personally involved throughout.

## Pupils begin to understand and support the planning

The approach gave pupils an insight into how their teacher was planning their lessons; they could see how their ideas were used to create literacy tasks. The pupils gradually used this insight alongside the skills they had developed through the other approaches to co-lead both the imaginary narrative AND begin to have a greater input into setting up of appropriate tasks. The constant negotiation between the teacher and the pupils' ideas and planning is described in the practitioner reflections:

**“The ‘shared understanding’ that the class seem to have developed is fascinating. It is as though they can see the bigger picture in terms of where their work is heading. We were excited when we realised that it is the children who can see the bigger picture and we are just allowed a peek every now and then to see where we can guide the work. It is the children who grab control and move the work forward”**

Drama Practitioner Reflections.

12.DEWEY  
1997, p.67.

# The Final Campfire: Where we have been and the next adventure

“This has really changed how I teach, this has really changed how I plan ... it has changed my relationship with the pupils, they understand the learning journey now.”

Year Four Teacher, Badsley Moor Junior School

## Where we have been ...

The team set out to find a drama based approach to literacy but ended up on an adventure far greater than any of the team had originally envisaged. The team questioned their concept of practice and dared to truly re-adjust the role of the teacher and pupils in the classroom. Throughout the book the adventurers have been defined using the traditional terminology of 'teacher' and 'pupil' to ensure the reader understands clearly how the process has developed. What the team have uncovered, however, is an approach that re-thinks these roles and inspires both parties to become 'learners' together.

The pedagogical approach to education that has emerged through the network is not claiming to be radical in terms of its ideology. References throughout the book embed the approaches in knowledge and theory from practitioners, philosophers and educationalists throughout the last century.

Many teachers and practitioners working in education today are aware of these developing educational pedagogies and the possible impacts of a child-centred approach to education. The potential of applying drama and the arts to education is also acknowledged as a means to inspire young independent learners to ask questions, seek answers and importantly imagine possibilities.

The challenge today is finding an accessible and sound approach which incorporates these ideologies in the ever changing world of education and wider society. Many great practitioners are asking these very questions and discovering the best possible ways to approach education. These approaches have undoubtedly impacted upon the adventurers' kitbag.

## The next adventure ...

It is only the beginning of this adventure and more than anything we hope that this will inspire readers to create their own kitbags that emerge from their new discoveries. The team are very excited about the impact that these approaches have had when used together! That's why their next adventure is already being planned. The question they are setting out to answer is, 'How can the pieces of kit discovered on the last expedition become an accessible useable approach to learning and teaching?' Imaginary Communities is going to utilise the learning from the last expedition to place the adventurers in a strong starting position. Their kitbag will not be empty at the start of this new adventure and hopefully yours will not be, either.



# Your Adventure: The Survival Guide

## Choosing the adventure trail that is right for you! –

Four trails have been proposed to support teachers when thinking about their next steps:

### 1) Using the conventions as enhancements and CPD –

A teacher or practitioner interested in trying out some new drama conventions in school can dip in and out of chapters in the book and try one or more of the key concepts in the classroom. The teacher can take the passports to delivery into the classroom. This can be done by a single teacher or a small group of teachers who wish to trial the new techniques.

### 2) Trialling the whole approach in your school –

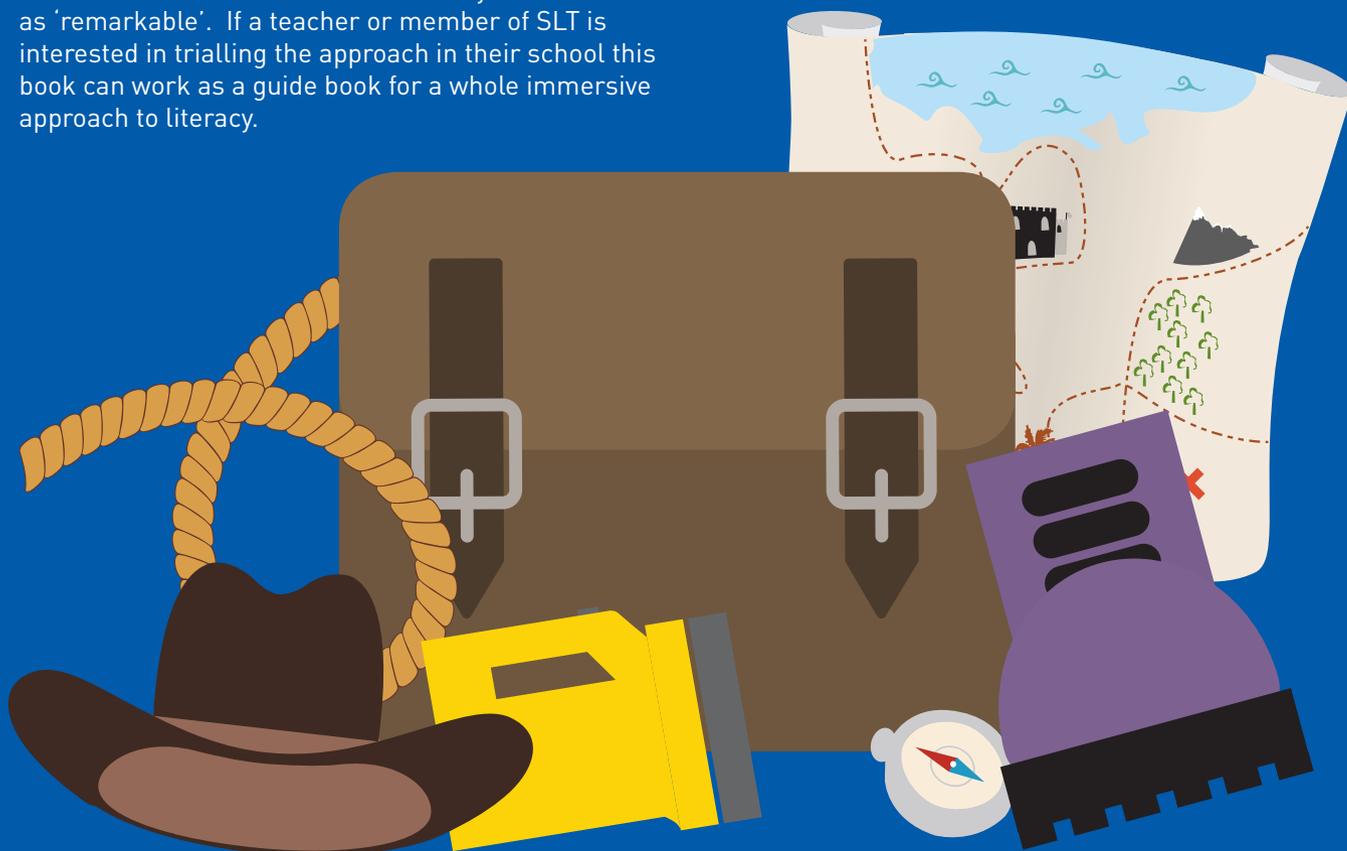
Chapter Five in the book explains how using the concepts together creates an opportunity to develop an immersive child-centred approach to teaching and learning that inspires the pupils to co-create the purpose of their learning with the teacher. The impact that this has had on both the teachers and pupils on the adventure has been described by teachers as 'remarkable'. If a teacher or member of SLT is interested in trialling the approach in their school this book can work as a guide book for a whole immersive approach to literacy.

### 3) Transition and EAL in secondary –

The case study in Chapter Five is based on one of the experiences that the secondary school had on the adventure. The adventurers have trialled Imaginary Communities in Year Seven as a supportive transition tool from primary to secondary. The approach was also used for Year Seven and Year Eight as an approach for classes of EAL pupils.

### 4) Trialling the approach as a cluster of schools –

At the start of the book 'Our Great Expedition' described how five schools came together to challenge and question how drama could impact on literacy. This resource has highlighted how the supporting network amplified the possible learning. If you are interested in working as a network to enhance your creative adventures, CapeUK may be able to support your schools.





# capeuk

## Sustainability

CapeUK can support your school to develop similar creative approaches to literacy across the curriculum, working alongside your school to develop a bespoke sustainable creative enquiry.

CapeUK also offers a range of creative solutions for schools including:

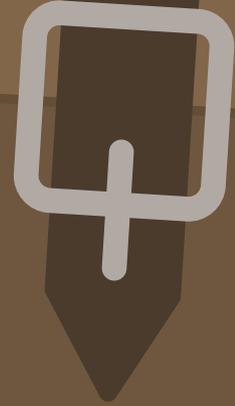
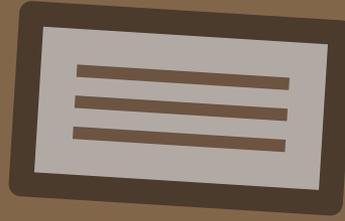
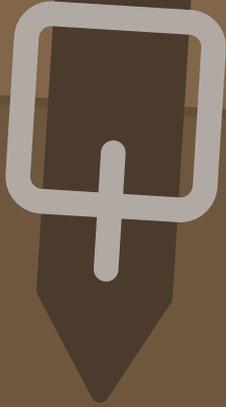
- Professional development for all staff working with children and young people
- Designing and delivering short and long term creative interventions to transform learning and teaching across your school community

Feel free to contact us to discuss which solutions would work for your school on:

0845 450 3700

or

[email\\_consult@capeuk.org](mailto:email_consult@capeuk.org)



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**GOOD LUCK  
ON YOUR  
NEXT  
ADVENTURE!**



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