

An investigation of writing in a primary class using drama

**Submitted by Christiana Christou to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education
In January 2011**

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Christou', written over a dotted line.

ABSTRACT

The thesis explores issues in the writing development of primary school children where drama was used as a teaching and learning pedagogy. It is based on a case study carried out in 2005-2006 in a Greek primary school Y4 class in Cyprus where the author was teaching and investigates the nature and relationship of the two processes when used together.

The project involved twenty drama sessions (over six months), each followed by a writing task that stemmed from the contents and children's participation in drama. The overall aim was to describe 'what happens when drama is integrated in a writing classroom'. Informed by the Vygotskian theory of learning, it sought to investigate the impact of using drama on children's: (a) attitudes and views towards writing, (b). engagement with writing tasks and (c) quality of writing.

A qualitative case study methodology and multi-method approach to the design of the study were adopted on the basis of what can best investigate the issues raised by the research questions. Questionnaires, interviews, observations, writing samples, video recordings and researcher's log were used to collect data throughout the year, before (Sept-Dec) and after (Jan-Jun) drama integration in writing lessons.

The collected data were analysed by quantitative and qualitative methods. Findings indicated positive changes in children's attitudes and views towards writing following the introduction of drama and progressively positive improvements in most children's engagement in writing. Additionally, analysis of writing samples provided indications of positive contribution of drama towards children's writing and insights into the interaction between drama and writing content.

On a theoretical level, this thesis suggests that the concept of mediation is central in interpreting the interactive relationship between drama and writing. It also indicates the impact of drama as a sociocultural setting on children's agency in their development as writers and raises questions for further research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	11
1.1 <i>PREFACE</i>	11
1.2 <i>STUDY CONTEXT</i>	12
1.2.1 The structure of Cyprus educational system & Curriculum	13
1.2.2 Language Curriculum	14
1.2.3 Writing - Aim, Teaching and Assessment	14
1.2.4 Language Curriculum and Drama	15
1.3 <i>OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS</i>	16
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	18
2.1 <i>INTRODUCTION</i>	18
2.2 <i>THEORY OF LEARNING</i>	18
2.2.1 Social constructivist view of learning	18
2.2.2 Vygotskian theory of learning and concepts that inform the present study	20
2.2.2.1 Social interaction and the internalisation process	20
2.2.2.2 Mediation	21
2.2.2.3 Language	21
2.2.2.4 Writing	22
2.2.2.5 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)	23
2.2.2.6 Scaffolding	24
2.2.2.7 Play	24
2.2.2.8 Imagination	25
2.2.2.9 Creativity	25
2.2.2.10 Motivation and learners' agency in their learning	26
2.3 <i>SUMMARY OF THE SECTION</i>	27
2.4 <i>PERSPECTIVES ON WRITING</i>	27
2.4.1 Cognitive perspectives	28
2.4.1.1 Hayes & Flower's Model of the Writing Process	29
2.4.1.2 Hayes's Model of the Writing Process (1996)	30
2.4.1.3 Kellogg's model (1996)	31
2.4.1.4 A model for beginning and developing writing- Berminger & Swanson (1994)	31
2.4.1.5 Two models of composition processes-Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987)	32
2.4.1.6 Learning, teaching and assessment of writing within a cognitive perspective	33
2.4.1.7 Summary of cognitive perspectives	34
2.4.2 Sociocognitive perspectives	35
2.4.3 Sociocultural perspectives	36
2.4.3.1 Children's writing development within a sociocultural perspective	37
2.4.3.2 Sociocultural view of relationships between talk and writing	39
2.4.3.3 Learning, teaching and assessment of writing within a sociocultural perspective	40
2.4.3.4 Summary of sociocultural perspectives	42
2.4.4 Genre theory	42
2.4.4.1 The development of genre theory	43
2.4.4.2 Learning, teaching and assessment of writing within a genre theory perspective	44
2.4.4.3 Summary of genre theory	45
2.5 <i>SUMMARY OF THE SECTION</i>	46

2.6	<i>THEORY AND RESEARCH IN DRAMA IN EDUCATION</i>	46
2.6.1	Theoretical Underpinnings	47
2.6.2	Drama as pedagogy	47
2.6.3	Claims for Learning	48
2.6.4	Educational Claims Underpinning Drama as Pedagogy	51
2.6.4.1	Theoretical Concepts that underpin the practice of Drama in Education	51
2.6.4.2	Arguments for the educational orientation of drama	54
2.6.5	Research findings on the use of drama as a medium for teaching other subjects across the primary curriculum	58
2.6.5.1	The impact of drama on other curriculum subjects	58
2.6.5.2	The impact of drama on language learning	60
2.6.5.3	Literature review on drama and writing	63
2.7	<i>PRESENT STUDY'S POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD LITERATURE</i>	70
2.8	<i>CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS</i>	71
2.9	<i>SUMMARY</i>	72
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY		73
3.1	<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	73
3.2	<i>RESEARCH PARADIGMS AND THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS</i>	73
3.2.1	Scientific paradigm	74
3.2.2	Interpretive paradigm	75
3.2.3	Epistemology	76
3.2.4	Ontology	76
3.2.5	My position	77
3.3	<i>RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND RESEARCH METHODS</i>	78
3.3.1	Methodology	78
3.3.2	My research methodology	79
3.3.3	Qualitative case study	81
3.3.4	Considerations about using other research approaches	82
3.3.5	Methods	83
3.3.6	My project's methods	84
3.4	<i>RESEARCH CONTEXT</i>	84
3.4.1	Setting and participants	84
3.4.2	Aims and objectives	85
3.4.3	Research questions	85
3.5	<i>DESIGN</i>	86
3.5.1	Project design	86
3.5.2	Time allocation and structure of drama-writing sessions	87
3.5.3	Research Design	87
3.5.4	Research process	90
3.5.5	Selection procedures for the Focus Group Children	90
3.6	<i>DATA COLLECTION METHODS</i>	91
3.6.1	Questionnaires	91
3.6.2	Questionnaire in my research	93
3.6.3	Interviews	94
3.6.4	My interviews	96
3.6.4.1	Limitations of interviews in the present study	98
3.6.5	Observation	98
3.6.6	Observations in the present study	100

3.6.7 Writing samples	102
3.6.7.1 Development of assessment scheme	102
3.6.8 Lesson Plans.....	103
3.6.9 Video recordings of drama	103
3.6.9.1 Considerations in using video camera	104
3.6.10 Researcher’s log.....	104
3.7 TRIAL OF THE INSTRUMENTS.....	105
3.7.1 Questionnaire	105
3.7.2 Interviews	106
3.7.3 Operating the Writing Assessment Scheme.....	107
3.7.4 Video Recordings	107
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS	108
3.8.1 Stages in Data analysis of the present study	109
3.9 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY & TRUSTWORTHINESS.....	110
3.9.1 Reliability	110
3.9.2 Validity.....	112
3.9.3 Validity And Reliability Of Case Study Research	112
3.9.4 Trustworthiness.....	114
3.10 RESEARCH ETHICS.....	117
3.11 SUMMARY.....	119
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	120
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	120
4.2 QUESTIONNAIRE.....	120
4.2.1 Questionnaire Part A	121
4.2.2 Questionnaire Part B.....	123
4.2.3 Questionnaire Part C.....	124
4.3 INTERVIEWS	129
4.3.1 First phase of analysis: Deductive Analysis.....	130
4.3.2 Second phase of interview analysis: Inductive analysis.....	148
4.3.3 Interviews - 3 rd Set.....	154
4.4 DRAMA VIDEOS	162
4.5 OBSERVATIONS.....	170
4.6 WRITING SAMPLES	177
4.6.1 Quantitative analysis of writing samples.....	177
4.6.2 Findings - All FGC’s writing samples.....	178
4.6.3 Findings - Individual Writing samples	180
4.7 RESEARCHER’S LOG	181
4.8 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	183
CHAPTER 5: DATA SYNTHESIS AND FINDINGS.....	185
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	185
5.2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SIMILAR DATA SETS.....	185
5.2.1 Relationships and synthesis of questionnaire and interview findings	186
5.2.2 Relationships and synthesis of video and observation findings.....	187

5.3 <i>RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DRAMA CONTENT, WRITING SAMPLES AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS</i>	189
5.3.1 Qualitative analysis of writing samples within the context of drama lessons	190
5.3.1.1 Lesson 1: The Selfish Giant – Episode A	191
5.3.1.2 Lesson 2: Children in resistance.....	194
5.3.1.3 Lesson 3: Blodin the Beast Unit –Episode A	196
5.3.2 Drama contribution towards writing.....	198
5.3.2.1 Text Level	198
5.3.2.2 Sentence Level.....	201
5.3.2.3 Word Level	202
5.3.3 Relationships between drama, writing analysis and children's views	202
5.4 <i>CHILDREN'S PORTRAITS</i>	203
5.4.1 Eliz's Portrait	204
5.4.1.1 Eliz's attitudes and views of writing	204
5.4.1.2 Eliz's participation in drama and her engagement in writing	206
5.4.2 Chris's Portrait	209
5.4.2.1 Chris's attitudes and views of writing	209
5.4.2.2 Chris's participation in drama and her engagement in writing.....	210
5.4.2.3 Chris's writing	211
5.4.3 Nik's Portrait.....	214
5.4.3.1 Nik's attitudes and views of writing.....	214
5.4.3.2 Nik's participation in drama & engagement in writing	215
5.4.3.3 Nik's writing	217
5.4.4 Summary of portraits	219
5.5 <i>SUMMARY OF CHAPTER</i>	219
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION	221
6.1 <i>INTRODUCTION</i>	221
6.2 <i>REVISITING THE SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS</i>	221
6.2.1 Changes in children's attitudes and views towards writing following drama	222
6.2.2 Engagement in writing following participation in drama	228
6.2.3 Drama contribution towards writing.....	232
6.3 <i>INTEGRATION AND CENTRAL CATEGORY</i>	238
6.4 <i>STUDY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THEORY</i>	241
6.5 <i>REVISITING THE STUDY'S CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</i>	249
6.6 <i>EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS</i>	252
6.7 <i>SUMMARY</i>	255
CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	256
7.1 <i>INTRODUCTION</i>	256
7.2 <i>SUMMARY OF THE STUDY</i>	256
7.3 <i>LIMITATIONS OF FINDINGS</i>	260
7.4 <i>CRITIQUE OF THE STUDY</i>	263
7.5 <i>IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND FINAL NOTES</i>	265
APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE	269

APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS USED TO PREPARE QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW AGENDA.....	274
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW AGENDA 1 & 2.....	277
APPENDIX 4: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE	279
APPENDIX 5: CLPE WRITING SCALE 2 (CLPE, 1997).....	280
APPENDIX 6: WRITING CRITERIA AND SCALES.....	281
APPENDIX 7: WRITING ASSESSMENT SHEET	
APPENDIX 8: RATERS CONSISTENCY CHECK.....	285
APPENDIX 8: RATERS CONSISTENCY CHECK.....	286
APPENDIX 9: ETHICAL APPROVAL & PARENTS' CONSENT.....	287
APPENDIX 10: QUESTIONNAIRE (PART A) SPSS ANALYSIS.....	292
APPENDIX 11: QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS - PART C.....	297
APPENDIX 12: SAMPLES OF TRANSLATED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS.....	299
APPENDIX 13: TRANSCRIPT OF DRAMA VIDEO ANALYSIS (SAMPLE)	304
APPENDIX 14: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE (SAMPLE).....	306
APPENDIX 15: SAMPLE LESSON PLANS.....	307
APPENDIX 16: DRAMA ACTIVITIES & RESEARCHERS'S LOG EXTRACTS.....	314
APPENDIX 17: FOCAL CHILDREN'S WRITING SAMPLES	326
BIBLIOGRAPHY	329

LIST OF FIGURES & TABLES

<i>Figure 2.1 The present study's conceptual framework</i>	72
<i>Table 3.1: Data Collection – Chronology Table</i>	89
<i>Table 4.1 - Analysis of Overall Attitude</i>	121
<i>Table 4.2 - Writing Preferences</i>	123
<i>Table 4.3 - What helps me most with my writing</i>	125
<i>Table 4.4 - What causes me most difficulties when writing</i>	125
<i>Table 4.5 - The thing I like most about writing</i>	126
<i>Table 4.6 - The thing I dislike most about writing</i>	127
<i>Table 4.7 - Ways to improve and become a better writer</i>	128
<i>Table 4.8 - Statements about writing</i>	130
<i>Table 4.9 - What children liked about writing</i>	131
<i>Table 4.10 - What children did not like about writing</i>	132
<i>Table 4.11: Deductive analysis - Coding frame of predetermined categories</i>	133
<i>Table 4.12 - Do you like writing?</i>	135
<i>Table 4.13 - Where do you like to write?</i>	136
<i>Table 4.14 - When do you like to write?</i>	137
<i>Table 4.15 - Apart from homework do you do any writing outside school?</i>	138
<i>Table 4.16 - What helps you in your writing?</i>	138
<i>Table 4.17 - What is good writing for you?</i>	140
<i>Table 4.18 - Who is a good writer and how do you know that?</i>	141
<i>Table 4.19: What can you do to become a better writer?</i>	142
<i>Table 4.20 - What do you feel when teacher says “we’re going to write”?</i>	143
<i>Table 4.21: Do you like reading out your writing to the rest of the class?</i>	144
<i>Table 4.22 - What difficulties do you find when writing?</i>	145
<i>Table 4.23: What do you like to write about at school?</i>	146
<i>Table 4.24 - What do you like writing about at home?</i>	147
<i>Table 4.25: Coding Frame of 2nd Phase of Interview Analysis</i>	149
<i>Table 4.26: Coding Frame of Analysis of Interview Set 3</i>	156
<i>Table 4.27: Coding Frame of Video Analysis</i>	164
<i>Table 4.28: Coding Frame of Observation Analysis</i>	170
<i>Table 4.29 - Length of Writing</i>	176
<i>Table 4.30 - Overall Change in Criteria Over Time</i>	178
<i>Table 4.31 - Overall Change in Levels of Writing over Time</i>	179
<i>Table 4.32: FGC's Overall Change in Quality of Writing over Time</i>	180
<i>Figure 6.1 Revised conceptual framework of the study</i>	251