

## Introduction

Bishop Perowne Church of England College is an 11-16 voluntary aided school with a Performing Arts specialism and 1050 students. It has no catchment area and its admission criteria (siblings, active involvement in the work or worship of an established religious faith, social and health needs, attending a denominational primary school) result in a culturally diverse intake. The City of Worcester itself lies on the national averages for most indicators: wealth, poverty, cultural diversity, employment – hence the presence of “Worcester Woman” at successive General Elections.

C&T is a theatre company that specialises in combining learning, participation, ICT and drama for young and disabled people. C&T is a Regularly Funded Organisation of Arts Council England. C&T supports a growing network of partner schools like Bishop Perowne who each host a C&T Animateur. The Animateur uses C&T’s unique projects and processes (which could be anything from a website, a comic or even a toy) to stimulate creative learning in every aspect of the school’s life – be it the curriculum, the extended day or the wider community. Currently six schools all over the UK are working collaboratively as well as pursuing their own particular objectives – Historama is one such school-specific development.

C&T and Bishop Perowne have now been working together for 3 years. As a professional arts organisation fully embedded in the life of the school, C&T offers students and teachers creative learning that fits into the daily routine of the school – it’s not about going off timetable. C&T supports the College’s particular objectives of ensuring that the specialism is felt across the curriculum; community engagement; personalised learning for students; demonstrating vocational opportunities in the arts; managing Arts Award, and many others.

In practical terms this can mean many different forms of activity. Examples are:

- Working closely with teachers to offer them personalised CPD to evolve their practice towards more creative teaching techniques.
- Students participating in original projects across the network of schools, where students are using C&T’s secure online site [candtnetwork.org](http://candtnetwork.org) to share and discuss their contributions to the common project goal.
- Adults with learning disabilities coming into the school to create drama with year 9 and year 10 students.
- Extended Day groups such as Historama.

## History

12 months ago the History department identified some key weaknesses:

- Formulaic teaching.
- A lack of student engagement, particularly in boys.
- Low GCSE take up. Out of 222 students, 30 were opting for History, and a majority of those would have opted for History no matter what.

A dialogue began with C&T which resulted in:

- An assessment of the pre-existing teaching styles.
- Choosing the History topics which were considered to be most problematic.
- Cooperatively devising with each teacher new approaches which delivered the necessary learning outcomes in a creative way, but in a manner with which that teacher would be comfortable.
- First lessons being led by C&T, then team-taught, then led by the teacher.

As the year progressed, and more ambitious schemes of work were rolled out (often solo by the History teacher) C&T remained available as back-up. A total of 17 topics across KS3 and KS4 were tackled, covering topics from Year 7 Norman Conquests to Year 11 Perestroika.

## Historama

Led by demand from students, Historama was formed. Historama is an after school History and Drama group which focuses on curriculum topics in a fun and engaging way.

It is specifically engineered so that it can contribute back to the History curriculum, building on the positive classroom experiences history students are having with drama and the new pedagogies teachers are deploying.

A simple proposition to students, Historama has become a safe environment in which to explore dramatic devices and historical content and it challenges student preconceptions about what learning can be like.

### Impact

#### *Impact on students*

Students enjoy it. They recognise that they are participating in an activity that has some genuine, real “content”, rather than just an entertainment, and this motivates them to attend. They report a positive effect back on their academic work. It builds their drama skills (devising, performing, presentation, characterisation) along with the expected development in transferable skills (communication and social skills, public speaking, forming and shaping arguments). It encourages research and enquiry and interrogating the evidence of the chosen topic.

#### *Impact on teachers*

Teachers report a new enthusiasm for their teaching. They are developing new schemes at KS3 and KS4 with drama in mind, as well as using it to help students prepare for field trips. This new confidence has enhanced the Department’s work towards more creative, and effective, learning and teaching. Drama is being used for KS4 revision and has been integrated into the delivery of the new Health and Social Care course, also taught by History staff.

#### *Impact on student-teacher relationship*

An unexpected outcome is that students perceive teachers to be taking risks with their teaching and are consequently feeling encouraged to take risks with their own learning. It has improved the personal, “human” relationship between teachers and students resulting in better behaviour in class. In fact this has spilled over to other C&T projects where students

have been confident enough to ask (and get) staff to participate in what had been up to now a student-only activity.

#### *Impact on GCSE take up*

2006 67% A\*-C 20% A\*-A

2007 72% A\*-C 35% A\*-A

Year 11 2008 30 candidates (27% Boys )

Year 10 2009 68 candidates (61% Boys)

126% increase in 2009 option take up

#### *Impact on KS3*

Particularly impressive in the achievement of boys:

		5+	6+
2005/06	Boys	64%	22%
	Girls	89%	43%
	Both	77%	33%
Difference	B+G	25%	21%

2006/07	Boys	82%	40%
	Girls	83%	47%
	Both	83%	43%
DiffBtBoys		18%+	18%+

94% of students exceeded their Fischer predictions.

### What’s happening next?

Historama has been so successful that other C&T network schools are starting their own Historama groups, leading to the possibility of future inter-school network collaborations.

Significantly, C&T is no longer supporting the delivery of History because the department now considers itself fully capable of rebuilding the rest of the curriculum on its own.

C&T has now moved on to other subject areas, notably English, MFL and PSHE.

### Follow-up

A DVD version of this case study is available from [info@candt.org](mailto:info@candt.org)

[www.candt.org](http://www.candt.org)

[www.bishopperowne.com](http://www.bishopperowne.com)