Title: Achieving creative collaboration between language teachers and artists: An evaluation of a workshop-based approach

Abstract (213 words)

Inspired by academic thinking and practice-based work on creativity and education (e.g. John Steiner, 2000) and creative approaches in language education (e.g. Frimberger et al 2017, Cummins & Early, 2011), this article is based on outcomes of the project “Creating Welcoming Learning Environments – Disseminating Arts-Based Approaches to Including All Learners”, funded by the UK Arts & Humanities Research Council (2017-2018) (AH/R004781/1). The project brought together creative artists (specialising in film-making, drama, crafting, poetry and the spoken word, textiles and music) and teachers in the south-west of England, who collaborated on integrating arts-based practices into language teaching, learning and assessment.

The focus of the project was to generate new ways of teaching a) children developing English as an Additional Language (EAL) in mainstream primary, secondary and special schools and b) all children in schools where there is a commitment to building an ethos of inclusion and diversity in relation to languages and cultures. The article reports on how co-operative, collaborative workshops were used to bring teachers, creative artists and researchers together in a way which valued everyone’s knowledge and expertise. A thematic analysis of data from evaluation interviews undertaken with the participating teachers is provided and the potential for workshop-based professional development opportunities as a way of achieving creative collaboration in schools is discussed.

**1 Introduction**

This article explores a process of creative collaboration (John Steiner, 2000) and an evaluation of a funded educational research project which took place between 2017 and 2018 in the south-west of England, entitled Creating Welcoming Learning Environments: Disseminating Arts-Based Approaches to Including All Learners (henceforth CWLE project) (award number AH/R004781/1). The CWLE project brought together creative artists and teachers of English as an Additional Language (EAL) for learners from 4-16 years in a series of workshops. The goal of the workshops was to facilitate an exchange of practices and ideas between the participants leading towards the development of creative teaching and learning approaches and ideas for use with learners in schools.

The rationale for generating arts-based learning activities came from a previous project which conceptualised the arts as a language (Phipps, 2019). The CWLE project was funded as a follow-on to a larger AHRC project entitled “Researching Multilingually at the Borders of Language, the Law, the Body and the State” (henceforth RM@Borders project) (award number AH/L006936/1) and focused on interdisciplinary understanding of migration, the arts, languages and identities. Because that project did not directly focus on educational practices, the CWLE project grasped the opportunity to explore and evaluate the potential for enriching learning and teaching approaches for learners developing EAL with arts-based approaches. To achieve the intended creative collaboration, the CWLE project worked with creative artists, named later in the article with their permission, who were committed to celebrating multilingualism and working with teachers.

The focus for this article is to share how workshops were used to achieve creative collaboration and to provide an analysis of evaluation interviews conducted with participating teachers, using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). The artists specialised in film-making, drama, crafting, poetry and the spoken word, textiles and music but for the purposes of this article the workshop using film-making and drama will be focused upon.

For background information, the three broad goals of the CWLE project are given here, although for a full account of the project see Anon & Anon (2022):

1. *To disseminate* techniques for using arts-based methods for creating welcoming learning environments, building on techniques from the RM@Borders project (Anon 2020);
2. *To exchange* skills and techniques for working with arts-based methods (between teachers, researchers and artists)
3. *To generate* products and techniques (film-making,music, poetry and spoken word, visual arts) which can be shared between and among schools.

The specific research question explored in this article is as follows:

1. How do teachers reflect on and evaluate their experience in CPD which focuses upon arts-based practice and educational practice for learners of EAL?

**2 Contextual Background**

The motivation for action for the project came from two key areas. The first one was our desire to counteract, in the educational context and in a creative and practical way, a phenomenon apparent recently in British society referred to as “linguaphobia” (Carrera, 2018), associated with fears of linguistic difference and linked to attitudes towards immigration and expressions of nationalism (also explored in Ladegaard & Phipps, 2020). Prior to the 2016 Brexit referendum there had been public pronouncements by politicians from different mainstream political parties in the UK which signalled a negative orientation towards multilingualism in schools and families and these have been reported in applied linguistics publications (Conteh et al, 2007, Blackledge & Creese, 2010). These negative orientations include perceived societal problems such as community divisions and challenges in classrooms faced by teachers. As discussed in Conteh et al (2007) and Blackledge & Creese (2010) politicians believed that increased focus on learning English and depriorisiting children’s multilingual skills would be the solution.

The second motivation for the project came from our awareness of policy changes relating to languages and education. Over a period of decades, the education policy arena in England has been seen to move away from a position embracing linguistic diversity within school communities in the 1970s, towards the current time where the importance of English (only) for success in school has been emphasised, perhaps at the expense of recognising and valuing children’s wider linguistic repertoires. These two positions can be traced from the Bullock Report (DfES, 1975) which saw a role for children’s languages and cultures in school and Tickell (2011) which saw children’s homes as being the place where languages other than English can be supported.

At the same time as these policy and policy-maker statements in England have expressed ambivalence about linguistic diversity, it is important to be aware of the growing numbers of children in schools in England who are bringing diverse linguistic repertoires with them. In England, there are currently approximately 1.7 million children (20.2% of the total) in nursery settings, primary and secondary schools learning English as an Additional Language (DfE, 2023), meaning that these young people communicate in one or more languages other than English in their daily lives. In 2011 the national census, which is sent to all households every ten years to document demographic data to support government planning and provision of services, included a question on languages used in the home, other than English. In one of the major cities in the southwest of England, where the research took place, the five most common languages spoken in communities were: Somali, Arabic, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu and the wider pool of languages included British Sign Language. The teachers who participated in the CWLE project all worked with children and families who were speakers and users of languages represented in this list.

The city where the research took place had a number of community-run schools, referred to as supplementary or complementary schools, which serve to support school-age children’s heritage language skills as well as offering support in mainstream curriculum areas such as literacy and numeracy. The complementary and supplementary school sector tends to be under-recognised and under-researched within the UK. Two notable exceptions from academia are a survey from 2007 reporting on the general views of children and young people attending supplementary schools in three UK cities (Strand, 2007) and an applied linguistics study which explored multilingual classroom interaction in two complementary schools in one UK city (Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani & Martin, 2006). Studies such as these tend to note the lack of liaison between the supplementary, complementary school sector and mainstream primary and secondary schools and then propose that closer collaboration between these sectors would be beneficial for children and young people’s educational attainment and for community cohesion more generally.

This brief section has offered some contextual background for the research reported in this article, taking in some historical and policy-related factors influencing the study. The article continues with a selective review of the literature which informed the project, both theoretical and practical (section 3). Next, we present our research ethos, methodology and the methods used with details of our sample and approach to ethical matters in section 4. Details of how the project was delivered through collaborative workshops and the creative outcomes of the workshops are described in section 5. The data explored in this article is the evaluative interviews conducted with participating teachers. This data is presented through a thematic analysis in section 6. The article ends (section 7) with a critical reflection on the achievements, limitations and ethical challenges raised by the project.

**3 Literature review of influencing theories and practices**

This section covers offers a review of a) theoretical work exploring multilingualism and b) educational practice studies which have explored educational interventions connecting language learning with creative arts practices. This review is necessarily selective and is attentive to the studies which have informed the work presented in this article.

The work of Phipps (2019) calls on researchers and educational practitioners to embark on a process of decolonising multilingualism. This would require the use of reflexivity, which Phipps illustrates in her work, to recognise and question the languages we operate in and promote (as teachers, researchers, policy makers as well as speakers and writers) and their histories in relation to our own. The process of reflexivity would also demand that we confront the absence of many languages used around the world but represented much less frequently in globalised education curricula and global publishing, an area further explored in Currie & Lillis (2022). These calls to decolonise our thinking and practice regarding multilingualism can be considered alongside the questioning of what Edwards (2004) refers to as a monolingual myth, that monolingualism is the norm. Gramling (2016) builds on this with his detailed critique of monolingualism and his interrogation of the forces and interests that generated the invention of monolingualism over time. Rejecting monolingualism and decolonising multilingualism, for Phipps (2019), will involve work which will be supported if we embrace creative arts practices as forms of language, alongside a broadened range of other languages. This call for action is one of the informing influences of the study reported in this article. We now consider some of the educational practice studies which have made a similar call.

A key text that advocates for and exemplifies combining creative practices with language teaching for multilingual learners is the edited collection by Cummins & Early (2011). The collection covers the integrated of practices such as multilingual storytelling, quilting, dance and drama into mainstream curricula in the Canadian context. Each chapter is motivated by a commitment to supporting learners’ identity development. The way in which Cummins & Early (2011) conceptualise identity in educational practice is through what they refer to as identity texts. Identity texts build on work in multiliteracies (e.g. Cope & Kalantzis, 2016) and expand upon previous, narrower definitions of literacy and text so that the textual meanings of a wide range of multimodal and multilingual media are incorporated. The activities engaged in by learners and reported in Cummins & Early (idem) allowed for the expression of knowledge and experience associated with cultural practices and languages in communities. This is how learners’ multimodal texts became personally meaningful, reaching beyond conventional school activities, and merit the name identity texts. Cummins & Early (idem) built upon the earlier work of Cummins (1996) where the importance of supporting learners’ multilingual identities in mainstream educational settings in diverse societies was advocated.

Making space for learners’ cultural and linguistic identities within their mainstream education was argued for in the work of Moll, Amanti et al (1992) through their concept of funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge refers to the knowledge held and passed on within communities and families and which may not be recognised or valued within formal school systems. If children’s funds of knowledge are not valued, there is a risk that they may be perceived as having a deficit of knowledge that is valued in schools with subsequent negative impacts on their school achievement. The funds of knowledge metaphor and argument have been taken up by education researchers and practitioners beyond the original context in which it was developed, that is, among Spanish speaking communities in Arizona, or among early years settings in England (Chesworth, 2014). The work reported in this article connects arts-based knowledge and practices with the funds of knowledge metaphor with the motive of enhancing learners’ positive sense of self and their identity.

Arts-based practice in educational settings has been a regularly reported in a variety of contexts and over several decades, ranging from the work of Pöyhönen et al (2020) in Finland, going backto the Creative Partnerships project in England from 1999 to 2005 (Sharp et al, 2006). Recent work shows increased academic and practitioner interest in using arts-based practices in language education which is regularly linked to pedagogies for learners, of all ages, from refugee backgrounds (Moore & Hawkins, 2021; Futuro, 2022).

The challenge of how arts-based practices can be integrated effectively can be considered through the lens of partnership or collaboration. The work of John Steiner (1997, 2000) is considered here, as we acknowledge the influence of her work on creative collaboration on our thinking. John Steiner (2000:3) described creative collaboration in the following way:

“Generative ideas emerge from joint thinking, from significant conversations, and from sustained, shared struggles, to achieve new insights by partners in thought.”

In our work, teachers and artists generated ideas and engaged in joint thinking in a series of

workshops where creative practices were experimented with, an approach which also has been explored in Bradley et al (2018). We were particularly influenced by John Steiner’s belief that joint thinking between collaborators working together as equals as generates innovation rather than a transfer of knowledge from one group to another. The next section sets out the research ethos and methods we developed to achieve our research objectives.

**4 Research Ethos**

In keeping with the work of Heller, Pietikäinen & Pujolar (2018: 7) the project conceptualised

the research as “socially constructed knowledge” which, for us, meant that the participation and

expertise of the different groups involved (teachers, artists, the research team) were at the heart of

the project, each with an equally valued contribution. In addition, we

learned from the work of Tuhiwai Smith (2012) on decolonising methodologies and her call

for researchers to resist conventional approaches which appear to be acquisitive models which focus

on taking / gathering data from others. For Tuhiwai Smith, the alternative to this approach is for

researchers to prioritise creating relationships and understandings which, in our view, supports socially constructed knowledge as set out in Heller, Pietikäinen & Pujolar (2018) and John Steiner’s (2000) creative collaborations. The emphasis on collaboration through arts practices, was supported by the ethos of mutual learning as exemplified in the work of Edge (1992, 2002) and his concept of teachers’ CPD as a process of co-operative development.

The need for a co-operative model of development was further stimulated by our recognition that, in recent times, concerns have been expressed about a culture of compliance present in education contexts in England (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009) and that this culture exerts control over teachers’ practices. This can be seen as particularly problematic for teachers with responsibility for children learning EAL, given what we know about the diversity of learners’ backgrounds, languages and experiences (NALDIC, undated). The educational climate and the CPD culture in England tends towards an emphasis on training, rolling out what works, and using toolkits to harmonise practices, an ethos characterised as performativity by education policy researchers (see, e.g. Ball 2003). The challenges faced by teachers of EAL tend not to be addressed in such toolkits given the diversity of learners’ prior educational experiences, in English and other languages. For these reasons, a co-operative and collaborative model of peer learning between artists, teachers and researchers was deemed the best-suited to this exploratory study and the evaluation of it presented here.

4.1 Research Methods

The methods, ethical issues and techniques of data analysis used in the study are set out in relation to relevant literature in this section. Our research was participatory in nature (e.g. Bastian et al, 2017) and centred around four creative arts workshops in which one or two lead artists, ten teachers and two researchers (the authors of this article) collaborated in sharing ideas, while experiencing arts practices first-hand. The four workshops focused on these areas of arts practice and were facilitated by the artists listed below:

1. Using drama and film (explored in more detail in section 5)
2. Using crafting and collage
3. Working with music and textiles
4. Poetry and the spoken word

The co-operative and collaborative ethos for the workshops was particularly important given that our focus was on using creative methods in teaching in schools. In the words of Joubert (2001:12, cited in Cremin & Chappell, 2021:300) “one cannot teach teachers didactically how to be creative”. We therefore emphasised the exploratory nature of our collaboration and that we as researchers did not have a set agenda we wanted or expected the participating teachers to adopt. We captured the essence of the workshop activities and interactions through our researcher fieldnotes (Creese et al, 2008).

The outcomes of the workshops were therefore unknown at the outset and hence an evaluation of our process was essential. We drew on the educational evaluation work of Kushner (2017:9) and his conceptualisation of evaluation as offering a process of “reflection and knowledge generation”, not as one of “information retrieval”. In this model the co-constructed nature of evaluative dialogues meant that we, the article authors and researchers, needed to undertake the evaluation interviews ourselves so that mutual reflection on the shared experiences of the workshops and subsequent actions by the teachers could emerge. For this reason, we generated interview questions which focused upon areas such as: teachers’ experiences of the workshops, their backgrounds (previous teaching roles, arts-related experiences), their current teaching responsibilities and their adaptations of arts-based practices encountered in the workshops.

We followed the ethical guidance for researchers set out by the British Educational Research Association guidelines (2018). The teachers who participated in the workshops received a participant information sheet and consent form which explained the research and allowed them to express their consent to participate and for their data to be included in the dissemination of the research. The data reported in section 5 is taken from two teachers who consented to their data being reported, with their names anonymised.

The two data sets gathered (fieldnotes from the workshops and evaluation interviews with two teachers) were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes generated from a close reading of the interview transcripts were: 1) Funds of Knowledge, 2) Relationships, 3) Breaking with received practices and 4) Tensions. For the purposes of this article, in section 5 we use our fieldnotes to reconstruct one of the workshops which introduced ways in which drama and film-making might be used support an exploration of the language repertoires of the learners in a school context. We then recreate how two teachers (presented using pseudonyms Ella and Mary here) transformed ideas experienced in the workshop into activities they felt would benefit the learners in their school. We then present evaluative interview data relating to theme 1, funds of knowledge, which, in our opinion, provides informative insight into our research question of how experienced teachers of EAL experienced collaborative and co-operative CPD with creative artists.

5 **Workshop 1 & Teachers’ Transformations**

Our fieldnotes are used here to reconstruct one of the workshops (using drama and film) to give an insight into the first-hand experience of activities, which were set up. We then present two examples of how two teachers (Ella and Mary) transformed their workshop experience into an activity they implemented in their school. Ella worked in a primary school for learners aged 4 to 11 and Mary worked in a secondary school for learners aged 11-16.

In workshop 1, which was devoted to drama and film, participants were invited to consider how visible and audible their learners’ home languages and cultures were in the school environment or the school’s linguistic landscape (Shohamy & Gorter, 2008). Discussion prompted by this question highlighted observations such as, from one participant, that the school had posters of greetings in many languages on display but that, because the posters were commercially produced, they did not necessarily incorporate the languages of the children in the school. The focus on audibility and visibility of multilingual resources and cultural experiences ties in with the work of Cummins (1996) on identity affirmation as being essential to supporting effective in mainstream classrooms for bi- and multi-lingual learners. The consideration of how languages are currently present, or not, in schools, led into a first-hand encounter with linguistic diversity through a quiz, with all questions being “which language do you hear?”, based on the film available here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bl77CaxL_BA> ). The film (developed and produced by Katja Frimberger and Simon Bishopp) offers ‘talking heads’ of students and staff studying and working at Glasgow University who speak one or more languages other than English.

In Transformation 1, Ella developed her own, contextualised, whole school activity to celebrate and promote the different languages known and used in her school community The school was located in a suburb of a large, ethnically diverse and multilingual city in England. Ella noted, however, that the school was generally perceived, incorrectly, within its local community as not being linguistically diverse. This was one of the motivations for Ella to work with the medium of film to highlight and promote the linguistic diversity of her school to children, parents and teachers.

Ella was inspired by her encounter with the short Glasgow University film to plan her own school-based film project. Ella wanted to produce a talking heads film of children in her school who used languages other than English. The way Ella set up the film was different from the Glasgow University film in that she wanted children to interview their peers rather than merely talk to the camera. The children’s interviews were guided by questions which the interviewers devised themselves, which brought out a range of questions such as “what’s your favourite word in your language?” and “Teach me a word in your language”. Once the filming process had been completed, Ella invited parents into school to join their children in viewing the film together and sharing the jointly created outcome of their work. A wall-mounted display showing images of children who participated in the film and examples of the languages in their repertoires was also created and displayed in the school as part of the project.

In Transformation 2, we recreate a whole school activity designed and implemented by Mary, who also participated in workshop 1. Mary’s professional role was as a support teacher in a secondary school for learners developing EAL, a role that involved assessing language needs and supporting language development in small groups.

Mary responded to the workshop 1 by bringing together the linguistic resources of the learners in her school with an existing system for communication in the school. The school had a tannoy system to communicate at different times of day with messages about what staff and students should be doing and when, for example, attending registration, going to lessons, going to lunch. In some schools, this is achieved through the sounding of bells or alarms at relevant times. However, in Mary’s school timing was managed through spoken announcements, ordinarily in English. Mary’s project involved making recordings of some of these announcements in the languages used by learners in the school and to have, for one week, a set of bilingual announcements made in different home languages plus English. The home language announcements were made by the young people themselves. Mary reported that the announcements were made by young people in ten different languages other than English, namely Somali, Arabic, Panjabi, Korean, Italian, Hungarian, Portuguese, Polish, Urdu and French. Notices were placed around the school informing staff and students about which language they would hear each day and providing translations in the following way:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The language of the day is Somali** | |
| **Good morning: Subax wanaagsan** | **Good afternoon: Galab wanaagsan** |

Figure 1: A school poster

Mary reported to us that her project generated a positive response from learners and teachers: “the whole school really engaged with it.” The head teacher posted an item about the initiative in the school’s weekly newsletter which expressed her pride in the initiative and in the young people’s linguistic resources.

These two examples have given some insight into how two teachers participating in one of the workshops offered to experienced teachers of EAL who were interested in bringing creative arts into their teaching transformed their workshop experience into innovative classroom practice. In section 6 we provide a consideration of the evaluation interview data from the same two teachers, in relation to theme 1, funds of knowledge, identified during the thematic analysis.

**6 Thematic Analysis of Evaluative Interviews with Participating Teachers**

We explore data from our interviews with Ella and Mary here, in relation to theme 1 which was funds of knowledge, informed by the work of Moll et al (1992) and based on the teachers’ experiences of workshop 1. The funds of knowledge concept allowed us to consider the learners’ linguistic repertoires as a fund of knowledge and also the teachers’ own funds of knowledge of their learners, the school as a community and the wider community in which the school was situated.

Theme 1: Funds of Knowledge

In her evaluative interview, Ella reflected on various factors motivating her to design and carry out the film project in her school. One motivation was that Ella was aware that there was a perception in the local community that her school’s intake of children was not linguistically and culturally diverse. Using her funds of knowledge of the school and its locality Ella designed her film project to produce a tool for showing the linguistic diversity of the learners in the school in a positive and enhancing way. A further motivation for Ella to initiate the film project in her school was to engage children more broadly in their learning. Using her knowledge of the learners in the school Ella reflected further as follows: “we were struggling with how to reach and engage pupils”. This observation seemed to inform her decision to design the film project as a child-led project with children as both interviewees, and interviewers developing their own language-related questions.

Ella reported in her evaluation interview that the response from parents and children was extremely positive, with children featured in the film being asked by their peers to teach them some more of their home language. In Ella’s view this re-shaped some children’s views of each other as some of the languages used at home had not been known about by peers. This is quite a revealing about the status or presence/absence of languages other than English in this particular school’s linguistic landscape prior to the action intervention and links with the ambiguous attitudes towards linguistic diversity referred to earlier in this article. Within the school community linguistic repertoires appeared to have been funds of knowledge which were not widely appreciated beyond, of course, the speakers themselves.

A final reflection from Ella touched further on hidden funds of knowledge. She encountered one negative parental response to the film which came from a family who used British Sign Language (BSL) together at home. The family felt disappointed that their shared language was not included in the film and their daughter, a BSL user, was not part of the film either. While this was seen as an unfortunate and unintended omission, Ella responded by promising that the film would be updated to include BSL in the next iteration. This promise appeared to indicate that the film was being considered as a valuable part of the school’s regular communication about itself to its learners, families and the wider local community.

Mary revealed her own funds of knowledge regarding her belief in the importance of creative arts in mainstream education in her evaluation interview. Mary had originally trained and worked as a primary school teacher and she described her typical practice in this way: “in primary school I used to do a lot of clay work”. She explained that “clay work” involved the the children in making something using clay as a starting point for some cross-curricular topic work. This approach, it seems, fitted with Mary’s understanding of learning and learners which she expressed as follows:

“starting with students, and I think that … I like the approach that the student isn’t an empty vessel and art is a way of really drawing that out”

Mary’s belief that learners have interests and expertise which can, at times, be hidden, was further evidenced by the following comment on her school announcements project:

“The activity was very positive I think. It really raised the profile of our bilingual learners”

It is apparent from this comment that bilingual learners in the school had linguistic repertoires which may not have been recognised widely. Mary explained in her interview that the learners who participated in the project were excited to know when their announcement would be played and they kept asking her for this information. There was a gap between the recordings being made and them being used in the school which generated these questions. Mary concluded that she noted benefits to the self-esteem of the learners involved in the project.

**7 Conclusions**

To conclude, we summarise our findings from the work reported here, which, we acknowledge, is a subset of the larger CWLE project, the data generated and school-based initiatives carried out. We then offer our recommendations for future practice and research relating to CPD, collaborations between artists and language teachers and school-based activities bringing together creative arts and the linguistic diversity of individuals and whole school communities. Finally, we offer our questions for future exploration for researchers, artists, and teachers in practice-based contexts of learning and teaching.

We had approached this study as an exploration and a creative collaboration between experts in different arts practices and educators who specialise in the education of learners developing EAL in mainstream schools in England. As such we did not have a hypothesis or an expected set of outcomes, however, an overarching finding was that both artists and teachers saw great value in bringing together their practices to generate new, language-focused activities to be used in the different school contexts in which the participating teachers worked. This encourages us to pursue further collaborative work bringing together languages and creative arts to study and explore the ways, modes, materials and activities, which can be developed for the benefit of learners in schools, both those who have rich linguistic repertoires and their peers.

A second outcome of this work is the observation that the activities generated by the teachers operated at different levels of educational practice: whole school level, class level and one-to-one (learner and teacher) level. In transformation 1 (a film) and 2 (multilingual tannoy announcements) discussed in this article, we saw how individual learners, in groups, worked with teachers to create a product which was then offered to the whole school community, and, in the case of the film, to parents as well. Space does not allow for the presentation of other transformations in this article, however, a more detailed record of the full project is provided in Anon & Anon (2022). In the teachers’ evaluation interviews it became clear that the creative arts approaches seemed to engage learners and achieve outcomes which were not being achieved within current practices.

These outcomes lead us to three areas of further exploratory and evaluative research which we see as meriting attention in the language teaching community. Firstly, we propose that research on specific arts-based activities (e.g. collage, textiles, film, etc.) with learners of different ages (primary or secondary school) and stages of English language development (beginner, more advanced) will provide a valuable platform from which future research and practice can be built.

Secondly, we recommend that a systematic evaluation should be conducted of the impact on children, parents, teachers and school communities of the type of activities we have presented here as being “whole school ethos” activities. This work will be valuable in informing institutions beyond those taking part in research of the potential benefits of such work, particularly, but not only in schools with a multilingual and multi-ethnic intake of learners.

In our view, a final area for research is related to understanding better the process of the ways of working set out in this article. By this we mean that it would be of value to researchers, educators and potentially all involved in developing CPD to track the transformation process from first-hand experience of arts practices in a workshop setting through to action in schools. This work could potentially provide further insights into arts processes and practices which generate resonance with teachers and which are more likely to lead to the take up and embedding of arts practices in education.

We stated in our introduction that we were motivated to develop a project which would take action within the realm of language education. We responded to two prompts: growing signs of linguaphobia within England and an ongoing interest in how creative arts can be used further in support of language education for learners of EAL, as argued by Cummins & Early (2011). We have reported here on how we witnessed a strong motivation amongst a self-selected group of teachers to engage with innovative practice linking creative arts approaches and teaching and learning of EAL.

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