

then a child can 'fail' in their own and others' eyes. The child may internalize this as their own failure, whereas one could argue that the 'failure' was the teacher's for not matching the task well enough to the child. This happens from time to time and is only really damaging if tasks set are consistently too hard (or too easy). In drama differentiation is often by outcome (although sometimes by task) but with shared responsibility among the group for that outcome. It is a supportive and collaborative forum for writing with the opportunity for children to contribute individually at their own level, to group success.

How can drama help us as writers?

We know that drama is:

- highly motivating and enjoyable
- stimulating and novel
- social and collaborative
- physical and kinaesthetic
- emotional and empathetic
- personally challenging
- excitingly risky at times
- different to other lessons (novelty)
- inclusive and supportive
- verbal and non-verbal.

Some brief examples have already been given as to how drama can help children as writers. Table 1.2 shows how drama can help address some common problems with writing.

Many of the common 'problems' and inhibitors that children experience as novice writers can be at least partly addressed through drama as a pretext and context for writing.

Drama gives moments of tension and time for vocabulary and ideas to incubate. Research by Cremlin et al. (2006) explored the types of support that drama offers primary school children as writers. The researchers found that the main features of drama that helped school children produce effective writing were:

- the presence of tension
- the degree of engagement
- time for incubation
- a strong sense of stance and purpose gained in part through role adoption.

When all these connecting threads were evident in a drama and a moment for writing was seized, the case study children's writing was recognised to be consistently high in quality. (Cremlin et al. 2006)

Table 1.2 How drama helps address some common problems with writing

Problems with writing can arise when children . . .	Drama helps address this by . . .
Don't have enough ideas or confidence to get started	Supporting the generation of ideas collaboratively that are then shared and belong to the group
Start writing but then soon run out of enough ideas and can't sustain their writing	Providing a new focus or deepen a current focus, thus sustaining the children's interest and sustaining the fiction which is inspiring the writing
Need support and encouragement while they are writing	Enabling collaborative writing, with the children all supporting each other to complete the writing task/s for the drama
See themselves as failures at writing and so have disengaged	Giving collective responsibility for the writing, so that no individual child should see themselves as personally failing (especially as they are distanced through being in role)
Become fixated on getting the technical aspects right to the detriment of the content	Working collaboratively on all aspects, so a child fixated on any aspect would be moved on with the writing by his/her peers
Stream out content with no attention (before, during or after) to organization and structure, punctuation and grammar and no will to edit or correct	Enabling a flow of ideas from everyone that can be written at the time and returned to later for redrafting in groups or as a class
Are risk averse and avoid experimenting as writers	Encouraging a risk taking in the drama that can spill over into a risk taking attitude to writing in the drama
Rely heavily on other people's ideas	Enabling the sharing of ideas by groups of different sizes, as well as individual writing tasks if appropriate
Focus on the handwriting rather than the content	Enabling the content of the children's writing to deepen the drama or drive the drama forward
Are given writing tasks that are not well matched to their skills level and interests	Differentiation by outcome, with children having opportunity to work at their own level while contributing to shared and guided writing
Find sitting still and working at a desk for long periods difficult	Not only being active, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic but also with times for reflection and stillness

All the drama units in this book build and use dramatic tension to catch and keep the interest and attention of the children. They are whole drama lessons that need time for the deepening of children's engagement with the role and situations, time to incubate their ideas before what Cremlin et al. (2006) would call, 'seizing the moment to write'.

Just the quick use of a drama strategy or two in English lessons might slightly and immediately improve a piece of subsequent writing, for example by generating and sharing vocabulary and phrases together in an accessible way, but for deeper contextual understanding and more significant and sustained improvement, teachers will need to give time to the drama itself to support the children to achieve high quality writing through drama.

Drama provides contexts for writing

Drama is very flexible and can provide endless interesting and meaningful contexts for writing. A drama can be set anywhere, at any point in time or in any place, with any situation happening involving any character/s.

Rather than teachers presenting children with writing tasks that seem to have come from nowhere (except maybe a past test or exam which many associate with anxiety), the writing tasks that arise within a drama, are connected immediately with the children because they are already engaged with the drama they have helped create, before any writing task emerges from it. They are co-owners of the fiction and understand the context and need for the writing from an insider's perspective.

Instead of receiving a writing task and just being told to 'imagine' (which is difficult for many children and adults), drama actively supports children to imagine together and helps them bring the imaginary contexts to life in a range of ways that are both verbal and non-verbal. They are actively and emotionally engaged with the imaginary contexts from which the need to write arises or within which pieces of writing that they read, belong (Figure 1.3).

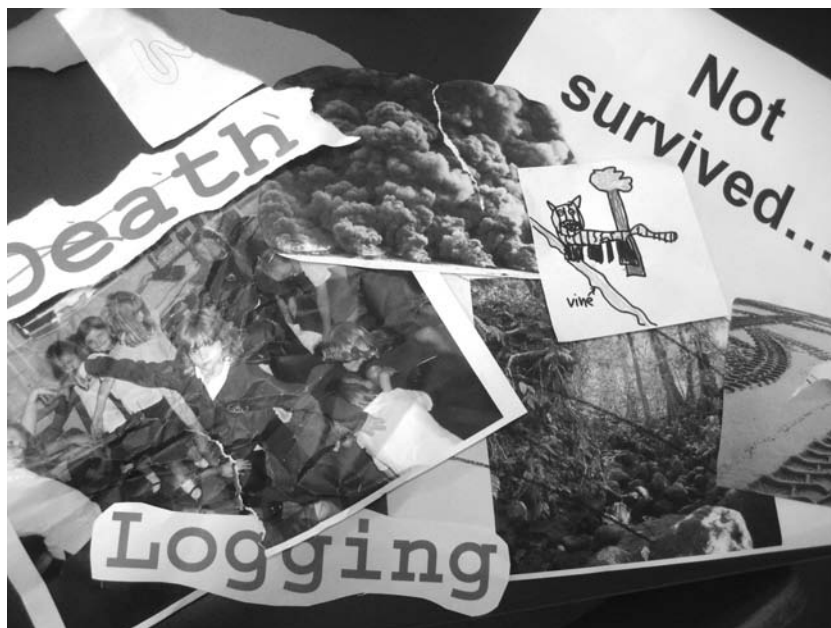


Figure 1.3 In drama children emotionally engage with imaginary contexts within which the pieces of writing belong

Drama provides purposes for writing

If we can't see the purpose of doing a piece of writing, then we are less likely to put much effort into it and it is less likely to be good. Why expect children to strongly engage with a piece of writing and persevere with it, if they can see no value or personal purpose for it and have no reason to care about it?

Drama has had a very motivating effect on reluctant writers. They enjoy writing more because they understand the context and the purpose of the writing. (Primary headteacher) (D4LC 2005)

Teachers can skilfully adjust the drama to generate a range of purposeful writing opportunities that feel 'real' to the participants who are engaged through working in role. The writing opportunities are not 'bolt on' as they are embedded purposefully in the drama or arise from it.

The writing we are introduced to as readers and role players in a drama may help us to get to know characters better. For example in 'The King's Daughters' (Unit 2), the different school reports of the princesses are designed to provide the children with insights into their different characters before the children engage with them in role. This in turn will help the children when they portray the characters themselves in the drama, or write for the different princesses as speech writers.

The teacher can ensure that the text types the drama requires are those the children most need to learn about and practise writing. If the children need to practise persuasive writing for example, then the teacher might steer the drama towards a persuasive letter. There is an example of this in Drama Unit 5, when the children have opportunity to write persuasively to the Mayor of Hamelin. The writing purpose is to get the Mayor to solve the problem with the rats. They will be able to draw on the rat incident experiences that they have already devised and enacted together in the drama. The children will not be struggling to imagine content, as they have already lived the situation together in role and now just need to focus on organizing and writing their persuasive letter. They have a clear sense of audience as the Mayor will come responsively to life as the TiR. If the children need to practice instructional writing then the same drama can require them to design a 'rat elimination device' and write a sequence of instructions explaining how to operate it. If they need to practice diary writing, the scenes they are involved in will have given them ample material for a personal diary entry. They can practise filling in information questionnaires in order to present 'factual' information to the council in Hamelin. They can become poets and write additional verses for the poem, based on scenes and events generated in the drama. Whatever type of writing the drama requires them to write, they will already have a good base to start from, provided by the drama they are living in role.

An imaginative teacher will see many potential reasons and opportunities for writing in any drama. They will probably focus on the most useful, necessary and inspiring. The children care about the drama and feel and see themselves as writing 'for the drama' rather than 'for the teacher' or writing for writing's sake. Both teacher and children know in reality that there is an underlying, veiled focus on the children writing but the children willingly go along with this because they want to keep the drama going and maybe influence it with their writing. The writing spotlight is on the drama rather than the child and so they feel less exposed as they write. The drama is acting as a kind of Trojan horse with the writing embedded within it.

Drama provides audiences for writing

Writing is nearly always intended to be read by someone in addition to the author. Think about the many and various types of writing you may already have encountered and read today

(including this book). Maybe you have read text messages today, a cereal packet, a newspaper headline or article, a leaflet, a billboard, a postcard, emails, instructions, an advertisement, directions, a recipe, a website and so on. All these pieces of writing were created and written by someone with a clear purpose and audience in mind. In school too often, the children do not have any sense of a real audience for their writing (other than the teacher or examiner). Drama can provide a 'real' engaged and present, audience that is responsive in or out of role to their writing. The children and TiR, become the knowing, present and responsive audience for each others' writing.

At school age children probably do not have many real audiences that they would be naturally writing for. Practising writing tends to involve children carrying out a series of one off and disconnected pieces of writing which are clearly just exercises and which are unlikely to be compelling unless the teacher has found some way of emotionally engaging the class with them. Many schools are increasingly creating opportunities for children to write to real people, companies and organizations as audiences, for real purposes. This is good practice and motivating for children. It gives a real purpose to the writing and sets up the likelihood of a genuine response. However, realistically children can't always be writing to real people and also cover the wide range of writing types they need to learn and practise. Through working in role, drama can bring any audience alive, into physical being and enable the writer in role to meet and interact with the imagined 'real' audience of their writing. In drama, children can (in or out of role) interact and talk with the audience who has read or heard their writing. The children, as writers and players, are present in the drama, to witness a character's responses and the impact of whatever they have written. Drama can emotionally engage children with 'real' people as a 'real' audience for their writing. The writing experience and the writing of course is absolutely real, even though the pretext and context is realistic.

In drama children become the characters who can also become the 'writers in role'. Co-participants in the drama become the audience too for any writing produced in and by the drama. The children and teacher can respond as the writer's audience, from a position of knowledge acquired by being inside and helping create the same drama. In Unit 1 for example, the children will collectively have become one housekeeper (collective role) who needs to write a reference for a servant. Later they might hear their own writing read aloud when they witness an employer (TiR) reading the reference they have written (and so they become the responsive audience to the impact of their own writing). Another example would be if the children are in role as royal speechwriters, interviewing a princess, before embarking on writing a very important speech for her. The later audience for the speech will be the king (TiR). The children can be in the court scene later as audience and will hear the princess deliver their speech. This again gives them opportunity to become the writers and the audience to their own writing. They can evaluate the effectiveness and impact of their writing and its spoken delivery by a princess, as well as gauge the response of the king to it.

The children in role are making frequent cognitive and affective shifts between being an actor, reader, writer, speaker and audience. Being able to shift in this way actively, reflectively and responsively, is an important skill that benefits both writing and drama. In real life it is unlikely

that children will need to write a speech for a princess but the real skills they use and develop doing this in the drama will continue to be of use to them. Their awareness of keeping the audience in mind as a writer will also remain. Improvements in writing gained in drama lessons need not be lost once the drama is over. The drama was pretend but the thinking, learning and improvement in writing is real and should remain with them.

Good drama builds up gradually, is sustained and connects the writing experiences and tasks. It offers a cohesive and sustained fiction within which writing is generated and belongs. It also offers an engaged, continuing and knowing audience, who remain present in different roles, responding with understanding and speed to that which is written. Writing in drama is usually carried out at the moment the drama requires it and gets an immediate response from the 'in role' drama participants as the audience for the writing. This audience includes the teacher. The writing enriches the drama experience and the drama experience enriches the writing, with both benefiting from and sustaining each other.

Drama provides motivations for writing

Young children who are developing normally, are highly motivated to spend considerable amounts of time role playing in their imagined worlds (alone and with others). The universal human need to imagine and pretend is neurologically driven (Baldwin 2004, 2012) and probably helps explain why children enjoy drama (Harland et al. 2000). From about the age of 2 onwards, they play, re-play, act and re-enact 'real life' and story experiences. This imaginary world activity may be increasingly shifting towards solitary engagement with electronic games in virtual worlds, to the detriment of physical and socially interactive activity (Dreyfus 2000).

In their natural, dramatic play young children voluntarily generate emergent writing, at times enjoying the physical activity and the feeling of imagined competency it gives them. They are getting ready to write and writing in drama later can be seen as a natural development of this.

Structured role play areas and activities usually have opportunities for mark making and emergent writing purposefully embedded within them, for example the pretend cafe may have a pad and pencils available in case children want to take orders from customers, or the children may have created the advertisements for the class shop, and so on. Hospital corners may have prescription pads, and travel agents might need children to 'write' with keyboards and screens as they try to find holidays for their pretend customers. If children feel motivated to write while dramatic playing, they have the materials ready and waiting.

Young players are instinctive authors as they create their play worlds and we should be drawing on this experience rather than marginalising it . . . when children are offered facilities for writing within their play, they will often use them. (Hall and Robinson 2003)

Writing while engaged with others in an imagined experience is not something that needs to stop after the early years. In drama, we can offer the same. Good drama teachers see the potential for continuing to build on this through structured dramas with embedded writing opportunities (as exemplified by the units in this book). Pre-school dramatic players may have

parents or carers who join in and support the children's writing in role activities and children in education may be fortunate to find drama teachers who will continue to do this at a higher level. For some children, a drama approach might make all the difference between success and failure at a writing task at any age.

Children enjoy 'pretending' and drama. Enjoyment is a key motivator. Once we enjoy something, we want to do it again and we gradually get better at it (whether it be drama or writing). Research on the effects and effectiveness of the arts in secondary schools (Harland et al. 2000) found that drama is the most motivational of all arts subjects. It is a very popular choice for pupils when they have access to it. If children find writing an enjoyable activity when it takes place within or after a drama lesson, then the enjoyment and writing are linked and this linking writing and enjoyment may extend beyond the drama lesson.

It was good to see the children using reasoning and thinking skills during the session and some of their ideas were really surprising. After being in role children were asking to write!
(Primary headteacher) (D4LC 2011)

Drama can make writing a supportive, social experience

Human brains are wired to be social. Children need to socialize, to become part of groups, to belong, to make sense of lived experience with and alongside other people. They spend a great deal of their lives in school, being told to sit still and listen to teachers, to work independently, not to copy, to do their homework alone, and yet we also want children to develop holistically as people with good communication and interpersonal skills. To achieve this they need to have time to be together, work together and talk together (Figure 1.4).

Drama is a way that children can learn together and drama can only work if they are interactive and cooperate and collaborate. Too often children talking and working together in school is seen as getting in the way of learning rather than it being considered as learning.

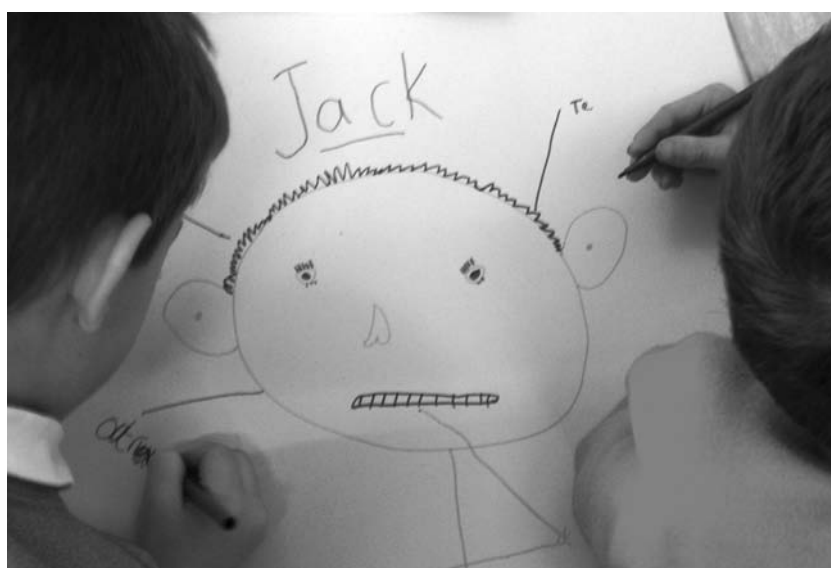


Figure 1.4 Children need time to work, talk and write together

It is enjoyable and socially appealing to work in groups with peers in a serious yet playful way with a clear learning focus. Maybe drama is popular with children specifically because it expects and encourages them to work and talk together, to solve problems and create characters, situations and narratives together. Drama and collective/collaborative writing both need the children to listen to each other, discuss, cooperate, negotiate, compromise, in order to be successful at the drama and/or the writing. Drama as a learning medium relies on the children using and developing their social skills because drama itself is a social activity.

Collaborative arrangements in which pupils help each other with one or more aspects of their writing have a strong positive impact on the quality of their writing. (General Teaching Council for England: Research for Teachers 2008)

Children also need to be able to write alone as well as together. However, achieving shared success as a collaborative or collective writer (as in shared and guided writing) will nonetheless help children to develop their writing skills and give a feeling of success that may transfer when the child is writing alone later. Knowing that a piece of writing will be later used in a drama can be motivating for reluctant independent writers.

All children wrote independently, including those children who had previously been quite resistant to writing. They worked with purpose and pace, wanting to reach the point where they could read it back in role. (A teacher action researcher) (D4LC 2005)

Whole-class drama creates its own collaborative community of 'role players' who can seamlessly move into becoming a community of actors/players, a community of writers or a collective audience for each others' writing.

There was a burgeoning of shared and guided writing activities that were introduced through national strategies. These sometimes involve children and teachers as co-writers, working collaboratively on writing tasks, talking aloud as writers about the process ('talk for writing' and 'writer talk'), working together towards a shared writing outcome. Drama fits perfectly with this more social and collaborative approach to developing writing. The TiR can work as model, scribe, collaborator and talk as a writer in role with the children as co-writers.

Writing with others can be stimulating and enjoyable, especially when you share imagined and emotionally compelling experiences in the drama from which to write. Instead of competing with their writing, the children are cooperating in order to help the drama advance. When the drama is progressing well, the children know that their writing has been an essential part of this. They can also reflect and rework their writing individually or together out of role later, when the drama lesson is over, reawakening their memories of the drama and re-evoking their emotional responses to continue the writing if necessary.

Drama can help build children's confidence and self-esteem as writers

Drama can help build confidence and improve children's attitudes to writing. This holds true for children of all ages and abilities (D4LC 2005) but for children who are particularly struggling

with writing and those who have become disaffected by failure, drama can be a lifeline for re-engagement and for building up their self-esteem and belief in themselves as writers.

Lower ability writers were more confident and more focused during writing lessons linked to the drama. They were keen to get their ideas from the drama, onto the paper. (Year 10 secondary school drama teacher) (D4LC 2005)

As drama is a social and collaborative activity, it requires the whole class (regardless of ability or disposition) to be involved or it can't work well, so peer pressure comes into play. Children who avoid writing or struggle with it are likely to become engaged nonetheless by drama as they don't want to be excluded by their peers (who probably want the drama to work). Also working supportively with collaborating peers, can leave children less individually and personally exposed, with the result that they may be less fearful about the writing they are doing together. The ideas of a less able or less confident writer can be valued, used and emerge within a successful, jointly owned piece of writing. They play their part in a successful piece of writing and success is a great motivator.

In many schools the educational diet children receive is rather repetitive, so children often enjoy drama because it is learning in a different way and has a novelty effect that can be capitalized on. If the drama is interesting they will stay interested and the positive effect on writing can be sustained.

Empowering children to have the confidence to share their thoughts and ideas verbally (in drama) will then inevitably lead to the development of their confidence to commit their ideas to paper. (A teacher action researcher) (D4LC 2005)

The most competent writers in a class are not always the children with the most imaginative ideas and drama often reveals this. Sometimes classmates find themselves looking at each other anew when a child who has difficulty with the process of writing comes up with the best ideas and when a child who lacks confidence to write, works very confidently in role. Education too often notices, values, develops and uses only some of the skills that children bring with them.

He had a negative self image and was difficult initially to engage in class . . . He began to engage with the drama sessions as they caught his imagination. And he was able to contribute his ideas and suggestions. As his ideas were being taken seriously by his peers (and by himself) he engaged more with the strategies and began to take ownership of the drama developments . . . his peers began to perceive him as a boy who had useful ideas and would help move the drama forward. (A teacher action researcher) (D4LC 2005)

In drama children are often playing the roles of adults who have status, responsibility and tasks to do (some of which may involve writing).

Two children who are usually quite difficult to engage were particularly responsive to the drama approach. They showed increased motivation and interest and were empowered by the opportunity to talk and work in role. They had a stronger sense of self-esteem being addressed as police officers. (Year 5 teacher, Acle St Edmund Primary School)

As police officers these children might have reasons arising in the drama to take notes, compile a police report of an incident after talking with eye witnesses in role or maybe fill in an incident questionnaire. Police officers (and other professionals) may also have an unspoken personal viewpoint on issues and events that can emerge through confidential diary entries.

Drama generates ideas for writing

Writers draw on their real life experiences and their fertile imaginations to get inspiration for their writing. Most children obviously have had far fewer and narrower real life experiences than most adults and have less to draw on first hand experientially. Many children however, have fertile individual and collective imaginations if they are given the chance in school to use and develop them rather than curtail them. Writers are generally good at drawing on and transposing real life experiences into imagined experience, drawing their ideas from what they might have seen, heard, read or imagined and transposing them onto the page as text. This is also what children are doing together in drama to some extent. They bring their ideas to the drama (stimulated by first hand experiences or stories, films and their play), and they pool their ideas to help create and sustain a shared, imagined experience which can then be transposed into (or contain) writing.

Children will probably need to come across other people's ideas in order to inspire their own. Both reading and drama are among the important ways of getting access to the ideas of others. Children need time and opportunity to work playfully together in role with their own and other people's ideas and from this, new connections can be made and new ideas generated. The class is a drama community which provides an in role forum within which children's own ideas are listened to, where they can see their own collective, and other people's ideas take shape (sometimes literally through physical form). They are 'in the moment' and present as ideas are generated, selected, used, played with and developed within the drama that will also feed their writing.

If you don't know what to write, drama helps you see other people's ideas and that gives you ideas. (Child, age 8, Aldborough Primary School) (D4LC 2005)

When working in this way (drama), they add ideas to each others work and the ideas build up. This boosts their confidence and when we actually get to the writing stage they are brimming with ideas and confidence. (Special needs teacher of 11- and 12-year-olds, Mile Cross Middle School) (D4LC 2005)

As children grapple with what they might write in drama, and have and share ideas, they will also be explaining their thinking, justifying and arguing for choices about vocabulary, form, content and organization and so on. They will be learning from each other, with the teacher alongside them as a co-participant, and sometimes a co-writer at the very moment of writing.

Drama provides structure to support and develop the writing

Drama for learning and for writing is a highly structured activity. Teachers who avoid drama may be under the misapprehension that it is too loose an approach but the level of structure

is in the hands of the teacher and the drama strategies available to a teacher are like a set of scaffolding, with each piece offering something different in terms of what it can support. Most good drama lessons are highly structured and focussed but also give opportunity for creative thinking and action.

In terms of developing narratives particularly, drama provides a very clear structure, as all drama is a story in itself. Once the children are inside the drama, they are also inside a story as collective storymakers and tellers and can then become storywriters and tellers, during or after the process.

Drama helps me to make sense because I already know what is going to happen in my writing. (Child, age 9) (D4LC 2005)

During drama, reasons emerge or can be planted, for children needing to produce many types of non-narrative writing, for example, a persuasive letter or an eye witness incident report, graffiti, lists and so on. Again, teachers can pick from their strategy toolbox, whichever strategy most appropriately supports the writing type (see Chapter 2, Table 2.1). The structural support for writing in and through drama is not just on paper, it is a living, multi-sensory and often physical structure that is experienced and then recalled. The strategies are visual, auditory, kinaesthetic organizers that scaffold the children's thinking and speaking in advance of the writing, thus acting as memorable organizers prior to writing.

The various individual drama strategies and conventions themselves can all be seen as separate structures or as pieces of scaffolding that can be joined together in sequences. A drama strategy in an English lesson might be used in isolation, to help children to organize and maybe voice their thinking before writing or strategies can be used in carefully structured sequences to create drama lessons that are structurally more sophisticated and effective as a preparation for writing. Chapter 2 of this book analyses some sequences from the units in detail to explain how this works in practice. There is nothing to prevent teachers from stopping the drama from time to time, in order to directly teach (out of role), what is necessary for the writing but the more the drama can flow, the more easily the children sustain their cognitive and affective engagement with it and the deeper the experience is likely to be. It is possible sometimes for the teacher to teach directly for the writing from within their role, if the role is carefully selected. For example if the children were novice journalists and the teacher was in role as a trainer of journalists, then the teacher can teach about writing from within the role.

The story of the drama could be made collaboratively, but a sound structure could be established to guide their writing. All the children could contribute and have their ideas incorporated into the main story. All parts they had to write were mentally and orally rehearsed easily without them saying 'I don't know what to write'. It could also be stopped at various points to teach or reinforce any literacy skills needed prior to writing. (D4LC action research teacher, 2005)

The children find writing through drama work helpful. They find the medium more interesting and memorable and an aid to the creative process to have sorted it all out before they put pen to paper. (D4LC action research teacher, 2005)

Drama uses and develops the thinking skills necessary for writing

Drama can be seen as thought in action (or thought in the making) with an aesthetic form. Different types of writing are underpinned by the need to employ different types of thinking. Drama can be used directly to stimulate and develop different types of thinking that underpin different types of writing.

- Drama stimulates, requires and supports individual thinking and inter-thinking.
- Drama shares and presents inter-thinking in visual, aural, kinaesthetic and tactile forms.
- Drama stimulates and demands different types of thinking and inter-thinking from its audience (who may also be its participants).

The various drama strategies and conventions (see *Drama Strategies*, pp. 50–61) can act as both thinking frames and writing frames and can be linked directly to the development of different types of writing (see Chapter 2). If a teacher is clear about the type of writing that he wants the children to develop, then he can select a drama strategy that will support the type of thinking that underpins that particular type of writing. Good teachers, who are practised in using various strategies, might decide to adapt them to try to make them fit even more directly with their specific learning and writing objectives. Teachers can change and bend strategies towards different writing purposes and types of writing as exemplified in the drama units, parts of which are analysed in Chapter 2. They can choose strategies to specifically get the children to engage in different types of thinking, prior to producing different types of writing (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3 How different thinking skills are developed through drama

Type/s of thinking	Example/s
Focus their attention on particular moments or characters or events.	Through the use of still image (focus on a moment) or hot-seating (focus on a character) or a devised scene (focus on an event).
Retrieve and bring to consciousness from short- and long-term memory past information of relevance to the drama task for further processing. Retrieval may be multi-sensory.	Through creating and engaging with a role that is based on past, real experiences and memory.
Formulate questions and enquire.	When questioning characters through hot-seating. Through the use of statement prompts, such as, 'I wonder . . .'
Gather and/or generate information of relevance to the drama or writing task.	Through reading in role or through improvisation or through the use of 'role on the wall'.
Encode and store information through a range of drama forms, visually, auditorily, kinaesthetically and tactilely.	Through devising scenes that have information within them that can be performed repeatedly.
Organize and arrange information so that it can be better understood, used and communicated to self and others in aesthetic and/or written form.	Through devising scenes or still images that communicate significant information and meaning about the characters or plot.

Type/s of thinking	Example/s
Sequencing events episodically.	Presenting a series of still images or scenes that convey episodes in the drama.
Transposing the form but not the substance of information retrieved, acquired or created.	When presenting a character first realistically in a scene and then symbolically as a role sculpture or vice versa.
Identifying and analysing parts and the whole.	Recognizing key moments or scenes in the drama and their impact on characters, plots and outcomes immediately and over time.
Recognizing relationships and inter-relationships and patterns of behaviour and/or threads running through a drama (or story) and seeing how they relate to each other.	Through 'forum theatre', which often focuses on changing negative patterns of behaviour.
Identifying main ideas, reasons, characters, motives, events, messages, themes.	When retelling the drama through a series of key images with captions and/or minimal speech.
Recognizing inconsistencies.	When participating in 'collective role' and portraying a single character there is a need to ensure that the character's speech and/or behaviour is consistent.
Generating new ideas and new meanings.	Through improvisation and working in role.
Delineating fact and inference.	When deciding (and possibly recording through 'role on the wall') 'what we know' about a character and 'what we think we know' about them.
Anticipating next actions, events, episodes and outcomes.	When devising short scenes or still images that portray possible alternative endings.
Elaborating.	Through returning to scenes that have already taken place and adding to, or extending them (possibly through improvisation or scriptwriting).
Connecting and combining information.	Bringing a range of ideas together to be presented as one image (e.g. as a 'role sculpture'). Or gathering individual responses to a moment in the drama, as single sentences and then arranging them into a collective poem. Or gathering information together around a 'role on the wall'.
Restructuring to accommodate new knowledge and information.	When improvising and working in role, accommodating new information received from others in role and adapting, assimilating and integrating it seamlessly into the ongoing improvisation.
Assessing and evaluating the quality of ideas and selecting from them.	When devising a short scene as a group and only using ideas offered by some of the group's members.

Drama helps children acquire, use and apply knowledge needed by writers

It is likely that schools that use drama as a context for inspiring and developing writing use this as one approach and that they may also use others. No single approach is the answer for all children. It is interesting to look at a variety of approaches and materials that schools

already use for the teaching of writing and consider them through a possible, whole-class drama lens.

For example the 'Talk for Writing' approach that many primary schools use (developed by Pie Corbett), has strong links with active storytelling. Its core is the use of re-enactment linked to communal, oral storytelling using specific gestures linked to particular words and phrases. The approach reinforces story content and structure by linking them to associated movements and embedding them through repetition, gradually moving on to children taking more ownership of the story through elaborating or using their own language to tell it. They will also perform and re-enact the known stories before moving on to create their own. Having embedded the stories, children can be encouraged to work creatively with them and maybe whole-class drama could be a good way to develop these stories and help the children take increasing ownership of them. Writing opportunities can then be embedded within the subsequent whole class, creative drama process.

A lesson created by a teacher in the 'Drama for Learning' (D4LC 2005) school improvement initiative used a Pie Corbett version of the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' in which the Troll was protecting the field from the goats because it had rare orchids in and the Troll in this drama was not up to the task! Through whole-class drama and using the children's in role ideas, they improvised a scene in which they put the Troll through the equivalent of performance management interview and listed the aspects of his job he needed to improve at, for example, 'Be fiercer'. These 8-year-old children ended up creating a different job for the Troll, selling plants outside a school where he could get free reading and writing lessons, as the Troll (TiR) could not read or write! Writing opportunities emerged for a poster to keep goats off the bridge, a new job description and an advertisement for a new bridge Troll and a letter of thanks from the old Troll who was learning to write but had his first ever letter scribed for him by a group of children.

Most teachers have a stock of well loved stories that have become embedded in their teaching that can be re-viewed through a drama lens and brought creatively to life to further benefit children's creativity and writing.