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Master Programme in Waldorf Education

Master Thesis

Playing with Fire

Using a drama production to facilitate the development
of young adults with complex needs

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Content

Content	ii
Abstract	4
1.0 Introduction	6
1.1 Rationale for the current study	6
1.2 Context	6
1.3 Methodological stance.....	7
1.4 Background to drama for people with complex needs	8
1.5 Research design.....	9
1.6 Structure of the thesis	9
2.0 Literature Review	11
2.1 Descent into matter: Trust theory and principles	11
2.2 Drama history and tensions in education in UK	14
2.3 Alternative elaborations	15
2.4 Shakespeare in education	16
2.6 Masks	18
2.7 Complex needs	20
2.8 Drama for complex needs	22
2.9 Archetypes and therapy.....	25
2.10 Curriculum	29
2.11 Conceptual framework.....	32
2.12 Conclusion.....	37
3.0 Methods	39
3.1 Case study	39
3.2 Educational action research.....	39
3.3 Strengths and limitations of the research	41
3.4 Study participants.....	42
3.5 Ethical considerations	42
3.6 Procedures	43
3.7 Coding	45
3.8 Conclusion.....	45
4.0 Presentation and Analysis of Findings	46
4.1 Presentation as narrative.....	46
4.1.1 Drama and the student.....	46
4.1.2 The timing	47
4.1.3 The synopsis.....	48
4.1.4 Choosing Shakespeare.....	48
4.1.5 Location.....	50
4.1.6 How was the production undertaken?	52
4.1.7 Gathering data	60

4.1.8 How deep is change; how permanent is learning?	62
4.1.9 Conclusion.....	63
4.2 Analysis and interpretation of data.....	63
4.2.1 Performance therapy	64
4.2.2 Role-play and presentation.....	66
4.2.3 Cultural events in the theatre.....	67
4.2.4 Seasonal festivals in the rhythm of the year.....	67
4.2.5 Drama scenes and presentations.....	68
4.2.6 Full scale theatre productions.....	70
4.2.7 Engaging in other communities.....	74
4.2.8 Conclusion.....	75
5.0 Discussion	76
5.1 Summary of the outcomes of the case study.....	76
5.2 Manifestations outside of the case study.....	77
5.3 Building bridges between Bildung and Curriculum.....	79
5.4 Recommendations for curriculum.....	80
5.5 Conclusion.....	82
6.0 Conclusion.....	84
6.1 What worked	85
6.2 What did not work.....	86
6.3 What this research was not able to achieve, and what next?.....	87
6.4 Reflecting on the bigger picture	88
6.5 Summery	92
6.6 Conclusion.....	93
Literature	95
Appendices	99
Appendix 1:.....	99
Appendix 2:.....	100
Appendix 3:.....	102
Appendix 4:.....	103

Abstract

In this thesis I look at a problem in Ruskin Mill Trust colleges of an incoherent approach to drama and the performing arts. I reflect on a case study in which I consider how a drama production helps the development of young adults with complex needs; while also including a strand of action research in which I reflect on my practice and how it could improve. I consider the education principles of Ruskin Mill Trust, and how they aim to develop self-generated conscious action in students. I consider a brief history of drama in education, reflecting on the different strands from process drama to scripted theatre. I indicate an alternative drama stream inspired by Rudolf Steiner and Michael Chekhov, whose work is in line with the ethos of the Trust, and consider what impact this might have on young adults with complex needs. I reflect on how little research there is on the effects of drama on young adults with complex needs, and what this project might have to offer the field.

In considering the methodology I propose a conceptual framework within which to situate the performing arts in the Trust entitled ‘seven performance processes’ inspired by Steiner’s life processes. This encapsulates the broad field of practice across the Trust alongside the theoretical strands arising in the literature review.

I present the findings, initially as a narrative of the case study considering the experience of undertaking a theatre production with the staff and students in The Glasshouse College. Secondly, I present the findings in a conceptual framework scaffolding theory and practice with in the Trust.

In the discussion I make the case for drama with young adults with complex needs, indicating the effectiveness of techniques and processes. These included ‘the golden hoop,’ students performing with tutors, an imaginative approach to speech and movement, the effectiveness of performing Shakespeare and the positive outcomes of a large scale production. I indicate the positive and challenging affects the experience had on the participants, including the effectiveness of various activities, processes and exercises.

I reflect on other examples outside of the case study in which performance processes have arisen in the past. I also consider educational tensions in the Trust; while also deliberating what was not possible in this thesis. I recommend that a performing arts practitioners guide be developed, from which collaborative curriculum can arise, and that a period of

secondment be undertaken to work across the Trust as next steps of the action research process. The significance of the research is twofold, firstly for the Trust in developing curriculum in drama, and secondly for the field of drama for complex needs to which this thesis makes a small but valuable contribution.

1.0 Introduction

This study considers what might be achieved by doing a theatre production with young adults with complex needs. Ruskin Mill Trust (RMT) has three further education colleges for young adults with complex needs. Currently these colleges each have their own drama department in which tutors create their own curriculum out of their individual experience in drama and working with special young adults. These tutors might choose to include aspects of the vision and values of the organisation. However, there is an inconsistency in quality, content and outcome in the different colleges and the Trust has decided that it is no longer tenable for tutors to work in isolation. Rather they require a formalised curriculum for all tutors to work with, as they do in all other subjects. I have been commissioned by the Trust to collaborate with curriculum writers to develop a drama curriculum for all colleges and schools Trust wide.

1.1 Rationale for the current study

Previous research into effective use of drama for people with learning difficulties such as attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and oppositional defiance disorder (ODD) is very limited. Jindle-Snape and Vittrano (2005) found that only eight papers met the criteria of valid and robust data. However, most studies made no links to specific drama techniques and the nature of the disability; neither did they indicate where techniques did not work, hence the title of this thesis, *Playing with Fire*. For future research they recommended that: psychological diagnoses are explicitly stated; drama processes and techniques are recorded; components are made measurable; time is of a longer duration; the number of participant with special needs being observed is increased; the research design needs is clearly presented, and that the researcher has knowledge in the field.

1.2 Context

Trust founder Aonghus Gordon (2012) introduced a fresh concept in education which he referred to as a 'descent into matter'. He describes descent into matter as a journey from the craft to the maker, by which the maker is making themselves through the craft. Supporting this view, Grandin and Barron (2005) found that people with ASD benefitted immensely

when education emphasised a training element, emphasising skills for work and autonomy in the learner.

This approach reflects the European *Bildung* tradition, described as the ‘human way of developing one’s natural talents and capacities’, where, according to Gardamer (in Fleming, 2012), the result is not achieved in a technical manner, but grows out of an inner process of cultivation. This rationale suggests that role modelling and mentoring in experiential learning through drama could benefit the emotional, cognitive and behavioural development of some young adults with complex needs. The question is when, where and how is that achievable?

This endeavour raised the following question which, in turn, has given rise to this thesis:

How does a theatre production contribute to the development of young adults with learning difficulties?

In turn, this overarching question raised the following auxiliary questions:

1. How would such a production affect the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural development of the participants? In Trust terminology *how does this project support the development of self-generated conscious action?*
2. What processes and exercises could best support the students in preparation for the play? In Trust terminology this is articulated as *how does the project develop the integration of the seven fields of practice?*
3. In what way would the project affect the student in regard to preparation for work? Trust language would articulate it as *how does the project help the development of applied contemporary apprenticeship learning?*

1.3 Methodological stance

Scientific research with an originally positivist or materialist stance, asserting that reality exists objectively and independently of its relationship to the person experiencing it, would not necessarily be suited to a post-hoc study of this nature. Rather a constructivist research approach, which focuses on the context and position of the researcher as much as it does on the construction of what they provide as reality, is closer to what is required. Constructivism is built upon the premise of a social construction of reality, and by allowing multiple explanations of reality and considering the research context, it acknowledges the effects of

human agency in data collection and analyses. Constructivists claim that truth is relative and that it is dependent on one's perspective (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Seeking to reflect on experiences in the study, undertaken within a given place and time frame, these constructed concepts of reality will go to make up an aspect of the methodology that underpins this project.

There is however a need to embrace theories of a spiritual nature, for which a critical realist position which both acknowledges an absolute form of reality and holds that differing but equally valid explanations of the same research object can be provided, would be supportive. This enables theories of a more metaphysical leaning, with the likes of Rudolf Steiner (1997), and Michael Chekhov (1991), who will be cited as underpinning the theoretical frame of the commissioning body of this study, to be included.

Steiner (1997) emphasised human development of body, soul and spirit, a holistic approach to education which the commissioning Trust embraces. Chekhov (1991), inspired by Steiner's indications, takes drama practice into a new direction including psychological gesture, atmospheres and body centres. Summerfield Drama Curriculum, (2013) a Steiner Waldorf Drama Curriculum for upper school in Santa Rosa USA gives an overview of Steiner Schools' approach to drama; while Watson (2003) takes this into more detail. These theories and practices of a more critical realist stance have influenced the researcher situated within the Trust.

1.4 Background to drama for people with complex needs

Young adults attending RMT colleges are between sixteen and twenty four years old, and have not found a place in mainstream further education. The diagnosis of this client base includes ASD, ADHD, and ODD.

It has been noted that drama can help develop the individuality of the child (Way, 1967), and O'Toole et al (2009) considers the effectiveness of different approaches to drama, from process to public performance and how pupils have developed emotionally, cognitively and behaviourally over time. However, Kloch (1975), reviewing research in the field unearthed very little. Literature on the theme revealed a vast hole in the field of drama for people with complex needs, the primary source being Jindle-Snape and Vettraino (2007), whose review on related research generated many recommendations. In order to make valid generalisations in the field it became evident that valid, robust research was needed in order to evidence the

impact of drama toward the emotional, cognitive and behavioural development of young adults with learning difficulties before making any recommendations to curriculum writers.

1.5 Research design

This is a mixed-method design, working with two methods. The first research method is a case study of a number of deep veins of data that could be generated from the theatre production, where looking at the same event from different positions could offer a pluralistic perspective. This qualitative case study is an approach to scientific research that helps the exploration of a phenomenon or event within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the question is not explored through one lens only, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This method could enable data to be gathered and generalisations made in order to make recommendations for drama curriculum across the Trust.

The second method is action research, a method to explore my own practice and see how it could improve. As a researcher-as-artist-and-practitioner the study is on my practice as a theatre director and teacher. This action research considers the effectiveness of my practice by reflecting on the responses of the participants in the study. This could potentially contribute new knowledge in a field where very little exists.

The Trust's theatre production *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* by William Shakespeare is the context for the study. The *Pericles* production was developed over nine months, using a range of interventions from individual psychodrama, to improvisations and early exploratory work, through to working in the theatre, putting the play on the stage and performing before an audience. Interviews with students, staff and parents converge on the same question: How does participating in a theatre production affect the development of young adults with complex needs?

1.6 Structure of the thesis

In **chapter one**, the introduction, I look at the research stance, the background to drama for people with special needs and the rationale for the current study. I consider the context in which it is situated and the research design. **Chapter two** is the literature review looking at theories including Ruskin Mill Trust's educational ideas and principles, the role of the arts in education and the drama history and tensions in education in UK. I consider alternative

elaborations on drama practice followed by ideas of Shakespeare in education and the use of masks. I consider reflections on ‘complex needs’, and ‘drama for complex needs’ and conclude with theory on curriculum.

In **chapter three** I consider a conceptual framework, which includes the method used in the research. **Chapter four** is the presentation as the findings initially as a narrative of the *Pericles* case study including the context for the participants looking at the: who, when, what, why, where and how of the production. Secondly, I share the process of analysis and interpretation of data, looking at performance therapy, role-play and presentation, cultural events in the theatre, seasonal festivals in the rhythm of the year, drama scenes and presentations, full scale theatre productions and engaging in other communities while on tour.

Chapter five is the discussion in which I summarise the outcomes of the case study, and consider manifestations of performance processes outside of the case study. I look at the three principles of practical skills therapeutic education (PSTE) in seven performance processes. In **chapter six**, I conclude by considering what this research was not able to achieve, and what next. I also reflect on the *Bildung* and *curriculum* dichotomy, followed by recommendations for curriculum. I conclude by reflecting on the bigger picture.

2.0 Literature Review

In this chapter I will look at theories, debates and ideas that shed light on the field of drama curriculum for young adults with complex needs within an institution with a holistic paradigm. As this field of research is not well documented I will be reviewing a number of literary sources in order to establish a basis for the development of new methodological strands to underpin this project. I will consider the principles and educational framework espoused by Ruskin Mill Trust (RMT). I will look at the role of arts in education, the history and tensions of drama in UK, and alternative elaborations on the subject considering the use of Shakespeare in education, and the use of mask. I continue by reflecting on complex needs and autism, and consider ideas on the use of drama with complex needs. Finally I will consider theories and ideas on curriculum.

2.1 Descent into matter: Trust theory and principles

As this project is commissioned by RMT, I will establish the theoretical stance out of which it works, and from this basis I will develop a conceptual framework in which to situate elements of the study. RMT was founded by Aonghus Gordon in 1989 in the Stroud valleys in Gloucestershire. Gordon and his father had been renovating an old mill, when his father unexpectedly died. Gordon took on the idea of developing the mill as a project, and offered young people out of work and education the opportunity to work with him in this pursuit. RMT developed out of this project that gave complex young adults an opportunity to learn skills with a therapeutic approach. This would later become the Practical Skills Therapeutic Educational (PSTE) paradigm out of which the current curriculum principles are derived.

RMT's educational approach is underpinned by meta-theorists John Ruskin, William Morris, and Rudolf Steiner. From Ruskin, Gordon (2012) observed that the demise of skill was a result of machinery, which led to the understanding of the connectivity between nature, land, craft and the aesthetic. Gordon (2012) followed the ideas of Morris in relation to enhanced enterprise via the arts and crafts; which Gordon (2012) suggests, "enabled the emergence of a movement that endorsed the dignity of the hand in dialogue with imagination for domestic utility" (p. 9). Austrian philosopher and pedagogue Rudolf Steiner, in his book *The Essentials of Education* (1997), a lecture cycle to teachers of the first Waldorf School in Germany, says "the task of anthroposophy is to penetrate in every way the whole human

development of body, soul and spirit” (p.18). Through Steiner, Gordon (2012) was able to focus on the renewal of education through new, emerging spiritual values.

In his *Recovering Gifts* (2012) paper Gordon emphasises a fresh concept in education, what he calls a descent into matter. He describes that descent into matter as a journey from the craft to the maker, by which the maker is making themselves through the craft. Gordon (2012) claims that this journey is a process of ‘coming to our senses’, and that “This approach to learning and working offers students opportunities to recover from past experiences of failure and become more able to integrate physical health, emotional intelligence and cognitive ability in a self-directed and purposeful way” (p. 32).

In 2012 Gordon and Von Bulow, the head of staff development in the Trust at the time undertook a master’s degree, the fruit of which was a document outlining the principles, methodologies and methods of the Trust, entitled the Practitioners Guide 2013/2014. I will now outline the three key educational principles.

The first is the ‘why’ principle incorporating development of self-generated conscious action. This is achieved through the second ‘how’ principle of applied contemporary apprenticeship learning, and the third is the ‘what’ principle of the integration of seven fields of practice.

Gordon and Von Bulow (2013) describe the term self-generated conscious action as, “the ability to generate personal initiative out of the motivation to contribute positively to the world” (p.26). They suggest that the activities offered in the curriculum are, “designed to transform what may be unconscious, inappropriate or damaging behaviour and to offer positive alternatives” (p. 26). They indicate that, “finding meaning in life is one of the key contributing factors for wellbeing,” and that this may be compromised for “a vulnerable person or a person diagnosed with learning difficulties and disabilities, common ways of finding meaning in life” (p. 26). Physical, emotional or cognitive abilities can be delayed, “because certain crucial developmental steps were disrupted by trauma” (p. 26). These ideas take into account the complexity of the students that access RMT colleges.

The principle of applied contemporary apprenticeship learning arises in what Gordon and Von Bulow (2013) describe as Apprenticeship Communities of Practice. They reflect that over the last twenty years during which this model of learning has been developed, “we have made observations about the traditional apprenticeship model as it has been performed for centuries and concluded that the curriculum requires a contemporary model” (p. 30). This

model of contemporary learning implies, “mutual and ongoing learning and research processes that involve all active participants...and the potential to educate towards mastery of complexity” (p. 31). There is an indication that practitioners who are tutors reflect on their own practice, and their cognitive, emotional and physical development. Tutors then become role models for students who reflect on their own physical, emotional and cognitive development, “and they come to realize that they themselves are role models to others” (p. 31).

The final principle of the integration of seven fields of practice refers to the seven areas of work practice undertaken within RMT, which incorporate: spirit of place (Genius Loci), practical skills, biodynamic ecology, therapeutic education, holistic support and care, holistic medicine, transformative leadership and management. These are seen as part of a whole, where:

The seven fields of practice applied to the student curriculum represent activities that are provided and facilitated in different contexts: in the home, in the college, on the farm, etc. In the student experience they are not felt to be separate but as parts of a whole. (Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013, p. 35)

The field of practice called holistic support and care is scaffolded by the seven care qualities. The seven care qualities are derived from Steiner’s seven life processes (1990) which are organic developmental activities that when evolved without hindrance lead to healthy organisms. Steiner goes further to say that when these processes are ‘ensouled,’ through the arts, they do not only have relevance to non-conscious organisms, but to conscious human activity:

Truly aesthetic human behaviour consists in the enlivening of the sense organs and the ensouling of the life processes. This is an extremely important truth about humanity; [and] is to be found in the arts, in the enjoyment of art. Something similar occurs with the vital processes, which are more ensouled in the enjoyment of art than they are in normal life. (Steiner, 1990, p. 118)

He connects this to the effects of tragedy, partly as an illustration, but more as a description of the ‘ensouling’ process:

The aesthetic experience of tragedy really does engender processes that reach right into the physical body and are the organic that normally accompany fear and pity. It does this because vital processes are changed to processes of the soul. (Steiner, 1990, p. 121)

I would like to recognise the metaphysical nature of the philosophy that underpins such claims. In this instance with his use of the term ‘soul’ Steiner is referring to a catharsis of thoughts, feelings and intentions. I will bear this in mind as I consider the deeper nature of various styles of drama that might be supportive of the development of the young adults in the Trust. First I will reflect briefly on some of the tensions within the drama in education field.

2.2 Drama history and tensions in education in UK

There is a conflict of perspectives in the role of drama in education, some of which are evident within RMT. It is interesting that there has been a dichotomy at the heart of drama education in the UK, arising on the one hand from the nature of drama and the arts not to be pinned down, measured and shaped, and on the other hand the formality of curriculum, which by its very nature requires boundaries and content. This same dichotomy has arisen within the teaching of drama itself in the debate that drama and theatre are two separate subjects and that forced into a learning teaching relationship, assessment is either about interactional skills or a polished final product (Radley, 2002). These two views have been heatedly debated over the last sixty years and are still in position as I write.

The tipping point came in 1978 at a drama conference held at the Riverside Studios in London which sparked the fire that was to sweep the face of the English educational drama landscape. David Hornbrook (1980) challenged Dorothy Heathcote’s drama in education and drama-process approach for leaving out some essential ingredients, such as literature, plays, theatre and the audience. On the one hand Hornbrook called for a balance and on the other a change. He insisted that, “as well as having opportunities to improvise as they progress in drama, students should be increasingly confronted by published work of all kinds,” and that, “the dramatic curriculum must accept play scripts as an essential part of the study of drama” (as cited in Radley, 2002, p. 14). In addition to text, Hornbrook called for a drama curriculum that contained acting, plays and theatre and technical skills including lighting, costume and set design. This indicates important strands of the RMT curriculum development commission.

2.3 Alternative elaborations

Undetected by main stream researchers like O'Toole et al (2009) and Fleming (2012) there has been a stream of thinking and practice coming from Europe with a different approach. Steiner (1959), amongst other things, developed different techniques and exercise for drama, from speech and gesture exercises, to approaches for epic, lyric and dramatic styles; including Greek gym for the development of the actors body. For the purpose of this essay I would like to also cite the mood out of which Steiner brings his approach to acting. He says, "...the actor's inner life of feeling has to undergo change and development, until he is able to approach the whole of his art in a religious mood," a mood that cannot be reached by, "sentimental exhortations, no, only by dealing with realities" (Steiner, 1959, p. 389).

A late contemporary of Steiner's, Michael Chekhov developed a series of spiritually imbued creative exercises for the actor. Chekhov's key contributions to the preparation of that actor were: atmosphere, body centres, and psychological gesture (Chekhov, 1991). I believe these have relevance to students today. However, the question arises: can an actor or teacher really act or teach out of Steiner's impulses if they don't have recourse to a spiritual world view? I am choosing to recognise the metaphysical aspect of the work as it is a world view the Trust embraces. Anderson argues that practitioners cannot work out of a 'Steiner impulse' because, "... those trained in Chekhov need not acknowledge the spiritual worldview of Steiner." The indication is that a spiritual world view needs to be developed imaginatively, without which exercises, "...may well in time grow weaker and blur into the general secular techniques of the theatre of the day" (Anderson, 2011. p.159).

In an America Waldorf School in Santa Rosa, there is a drama curriculum which exemplifies many Steiner schools across the world. The online prospectus states that, "dramatic productions are considered an important component of the academic program because their success requires both focus and intense personal commitment" (Summerfield, 2013). They emphasise the importance of, "improvising, rehearsing, creating costumes, designing and building sets, acquiring props, and managing the myriad aspects of staging," which helps to, "build the feeling of community within a class through the highly interactive tasks of a theatre production" (Summerfield, 2013).

It is evident that in some of the Steiner schools there is an emphasis on the aspects of 'theatre' and what that offers the curriculum, and community. However, the process strand of

drama education is taken up alongside theatre by some teachers. William Watson who taught drama at Elmfield Waldorf Steiner School in Stourbridge UK for many years had taken up Steiner's indications for the appropriate development of thinking, feeling and willing in the educational process. Watson argues (2003) for the importance of doing before thinking, lest the drama activity becomes abstract, "for only through an intense physical engagement of the play with your lower realm [legs] can you plunge your personal thoughts and emotions about the play into your own individual soul force of will." Otherwise "they will be the thoughts of a wide awake head imbued with the soul forces of a dreaming heart and the sleeping hands" (p.16). This approach could offer a possible solution to the problem identified by O'Toole (2009) of teachers creating 'hollow and empty plays' on the stage.

The counter stream underpinned by Steiner, the spiritual guiding light for RMT, offers possible solutions to the thinking and practice of drama and theatre in an enlivened way. In what way could the exercises indicated by Steiner and Chekhov, and approaches emphasised by Watson to have any role in drama for young adults with complex needs?

2.4 Shakespeare in education

In looking at the response of teenagers in relation to popular culture verses traditional theatre, Fleming (2012) records them saying "EastEnders doesn't teach us anything [but] Shakespeare is more educational ... more inspirational" (Intro to theory and def. of art, paragraph 4). It is significant to consider the intrinsic value some young people place on classical literature in education, when the assumption might be the opposite. The assumptions the teenagers are perhaps making about the nature of learning and the relative values of 'high' and 'low' art are interesting. There might be interest in EastEnders, however, Shakespeare is more inspirational and has more educational value. Both have their place.

Steiner (1995) was very clear in his indications of the bard's importance for the child saying, "...what lives in Shakespeare works into the soul and mind of the child, and becomes in the child a strong impelling force" (p. 12). This impelling force is not only important for childhood, Steiner continues, but also for adults striving for spiritual ideals, because "receiving Shakespeare into our minds and souls might therefore be the very stimulus to give us men and women of today the power, the inner impulse to follow ideals, to follow real, spiritual ideals" (pp. 217-218). Ramsbotham (2004) suggests that the power of Shakespeare's plays did not come from his characters expressing a particular point of view, but was

developed, “out of the dramatic medium itself. Whatever is truly dramatic in a situation or character-what will bring them to life most fully on the stage-is the determining factor in Shakespeare’s plays” (p. 12). This supports the relevance for young people performing Shakespeare, not only reading or analysing it, which most of RMT students would find very challenging, but acting it. What is also interesting in Steiner’s insistence that Shakespeare is not only of Elizabethan times, but has a timeless quality, “Shakespeare has a wonderfully timeless power and, in this power, he is modern, as modern as can be” (Steiner, 1995, p. 218). I feel it is important for this study to investigate why Shakespeare might be, as the children in Fleming’s study suggest, inspiring, especially in regard to the young adults with complex needs with the RMT.

If, as Steiner indicated (1995), Shakespeare was drawing on the ancient mysteries of Greece in which rites were enacted whereby the viewer was, “lifted out of ordinary life and purified of physical passions through a catharsis brought on by sympathy and fear” (p. 228), then what might this suggest for Shakespeare in the present time?

Shakespeare has an internal logic to his plays that supports suspension of disbelief and the power of imagination (Kelsall,1985). Martin-Smith suggests that, “Young people especially need spiritual stories to guide them, especially in this material world, in which corporate messages compete to imprint their narrow commercial messages on young people’s minds” (Martin-Smith, 2010, paragraph 20). He bears out Steiner’s argument that Shakespeare awakens idealism in young people, by relating the importance of the journey the actors went through in regard to the journey in the play. “Engaging with this fictional narrative of Pericles’ journey is juxtaposed with their own journey narratives and they can create their own personal meaning at the locus where the fictional and personal narratives meet” (Martin-Smith, 2010, paragraph 30). What is particularly interesting is how the selfish nature of the phase of adolescence is ameliorated through drama, as Martin-Smith put it:

While the adolescent’s first loyalty may be to himself or herself, they developed a belief in supporting one another to tell Pericles’ story by helping one another to learn lines, change the set, listen to personal stories and to improvise when lines are forgotten during performance. For many adolescents, pulling together during the four-week intensive theatre experience was one of the most demanding and rewarding experiences of their lives. (Martin-Smith, 2010, paragraph 28)

Another interesting point here is how Martin-Smith alludes to Steiner's suggestion of 'initiation' through the Greek mysteries. Shakespeare's *Pericles*, set in Greece and following the powerful themes of death and resurrection has a strong resonance for the young actors. (Martin-Smith, 2010). It is evident having considered Martin-Smith's ideas which are cognate with the spiritual underpinning of RMT, that Shakespeare could be important of RMT students.

I would now like to look into the theatrical language of masks, to investigate to what extent they might have a part to play in the development of curriculum for young adults with complex needs. Firstly, the mask itself.

2.6 Masks

In the case study of the production of *Pericles* over 20 masks were used from different traditions including the Italian Commedia dell'arte, and Greek tragedy. I will consider some of the thinking behind some of these choices. I will look firstly at Donald Pollock (1995), an anthropologist researching the mask and identity. I will reference Toby Wiltshire (2007), a long standing mask practitioner reflecting on his years of practice and I will consider the thoughts of Peter Brook (1988), a director in the forefront of creative modern theatre. Finally, I will consider Steiner (1959) in regard to the significance of masks for drama and education.

Pollock (1995) referring to tribal cultures restricts the notion of identity or person hood to "agents of meaningful action" (p. 582). This is very much in keeping with Gordon's idea (2013) of self-generated conscious action. Pollock (1995) describes the relationship between the mask and the performer indicating that, "the mask is normally considered a technique for transforming identity, either through the modification of the representation of identity, or through the temporary- and representational- extinction of identity" (p. 582). It is also interesting to consider how much the audience participates in mask theatre in which "audiences and performers temporarily collude in the pretence that on-stage events and characters are not unreal" (Pollock, 1995, p. 592). I will refer to this in reference to the findings.

Wilsher (2007) considers masks as a folk art that "has had its place in the general consciousness of the culture" (p. 2). His mask practice, as founder of Trestle Theatre, was very much in the style of film; however, paradoxically he suggests that, "masks play the

essential game of theatre and are an antidote to the technological excess of film or the bland realism of television” (p. 2).

Wisher insists that, “masks offer us a spiritual experience when we least expect one-not in a religious sense but certainly a feeling of being taken outside of ourselves, a chance to lose oneself in the world of the imagination” (pg.7). The spiritual experience that is being suggested here I understand to be poetic, rather than a force of nature as Pollock has indicated, or metaphysical as Steiner suggests. This would indicate that not only can masks be popular, but they can encompass a spiritual nature, which perhaps contributes to the popularity?

However, there is a fundamental issue in my experience regarding masks in Western theatre, and Brook's solution is to borrow from traditional mask cultures and translate them into the style of the play being undertaken. So it follows that using a Balinese mask to express a Persian story, is not scandalous because, “one is dealing with certain essential strands, it is like in cooking-things that in theory you can't combine, in practice can be combined very well” (Brook, 1988, p. 25).

Turning to Steiner's (1924) perspective on masks and the young performer, his indications lie in a more western tradition than Brook's. Steiner (1924) indicates the significance of the mask in ancient Greek theatre for dealing with themes of destiny, suggesting that, “we can appreciate the genuine artistic impulse that lay behind the tendency to obliterate more or less whatever was individual in the human being, [by] giving him a mask” (p. 347). He emphasises the importance of recapitulation, going back over drama of different historic periods, for the development of the young actor. Alongside the Greek tragedy and the use of masks, Steiner (1924) highlights the value of the sixteenth century Italian Commedia dell'arte suggesting that it can bring vibrant life without the pretence of deep psychological and intellectual weight. He suggests that, “a school of dramatic art should arrange for courses of instruction in the history of the whole treatment of drama, and especially of character, beginning with the end of the fifteenth century” (pp. 350-356). These folk types are very important for the young actor to play, bringing large gestures and big voices to the characters with specific appetites and social standing.

I will now move from the content to the student, and consider who is using the Trust services.

2.7 Complex needs

Margaret Mead (as cited in Grandin and Barron, 2005, p. xvii) once wrote that, “if we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.” I believe this project is attempting to achieve a richer culture, the complexities of which need to be described.

The term complex needs encapsulates a vast grouping on the one hand of special needs disorders like autism spectrum, attention deficit and obsessive compulsive, and on the other mental health disorders like borderline personality, and illnesses including schizophrenia. The students that attend the RMT colleges all fall into the complex needs category which is made up predominantly of people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. I will look at three thinkers in regards autism. Dr Allan, an American physician with a speciality on the subject of autism; Dr Temple Grandin, an autistic reflective practitioner in the field of psychology of autism, and Naoki Higashida, a thirteen year old Japanese boy who was interviewed on the subject of his experiences of being autistic. Higashida does not represent an academic source; however, as he is similar in age to the students who attend RMT colleges, his first-hand experience of autism sheds light on how the drama work undertaken in the project might have been experienced.

The word autism is derived from the Greek word “autos,” meaning “self.” The Greek suffix “ismos” indicating “action or state of being,” translates roughly to a state of being withdrawn within oneself (Allan, 2013). Allan indicates that autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are generally characterized by social-interaction difficulties, communication challenges, and a tendency to engage in repetitive behaviours (Allan, 2013).

Allan (2013), Grandin and Barron (2005) and Higashida (2013) are all very clear that each person with autism is unique, a universe unto themselves, and that each autism intervention plan be it educational, medical or social should be tailored to address the specific individual. Allan (2013) indicates that, “most persons with autism have additional medical conditions such as sleep disturbance, ADD/ADHD, anxiety, seizures and gastrointestinal (GI) distress. Addressing these conditions can improve attention, learning, and related behaviours” (Paragraph 17). Since the 1960’s when autism was diagnosed there were 1:4000, now there are 1:88 children in the United States with the diagnosis of ASD (Allan, 2013).

Across the Trust, ninety-five percent of the student have been diagnosed with ASD. Allan (2013) cites studies indicating reports by parents and therapists of, “success with other commonly used behavioural therapies, including music therapy, floor time, pivotal response therapy, and verbal behaviour therapy. Anthroposophic treatments that have been found to be beneficial include anthroposophic remedies, eurhythmy, rhythmical massage, art therapy, and speech therapy” (Allan, 2013, paragraph 20). These indications are important, however, they do not imply any specific development or outcomes towards self-generated conscious action.

In order to grasp the scale of autism and the interventions in supporting people with ASD, I will look at some behaviours typical of people with autism, and consider, according to Higashida (2013) the reasoning for such behaviours. It can be difficult to understand what an ASD person is saying about their feelings, when all the “verbal junk that hasn’t got anything to do with anything comes pouring out of my mouth.” I have often heard it said that autistic people are stuck in their heads and are out of touch with their feelings, however, Higashida (2013) insists against popular belief that:

Our feelings are the same as everyone else’s, but we can’t find a way to express them. We don’t even have proper control over our own bodies. Both staying still and moving when we’re told to is tricky – it’s as if we’re remote-controlling a faulty robot. (pp. 39-40)

An important factor in this project is supporting students when they feel they are getting it wrong. At times the pain of having ‘got it wrong’ can feel devastating for an ASD person. Higashida describes it as a tsunami, saying, “once I’ve made a mistake, the fact of it starts rushing towards me like a tsunami. And then, like trees or houses being destroyed by the tsunami, I get destroyed by the shock” (pp. 64-66). The approach of Gordon and Von Bulow to failure being part of success (2013) could be very significant in supporting students who feel this tsunami.

Alan indicates Steiner’s suggestion that, “when we see a child with an ‘abnormality’ and we immediately want to ‘fix’ them, trying to get rid of the ‘abnormality,’ we in fact are both not learning the lesson they bring, and might just be driving out a fragment of genius” (Allan, 2013, paragraph 28). Allan concurs with Higashida in emphasising that autism is another level of ‘normal’ which has something unique to bring.

He indicates that even though many people with ASD may lead creative and inspiring lives, there is a rising tide of people being diagnosed with ASD. He warns that an, “autism tsunami is on the way. With the numbers of children diagnosed with autism skyrocketing, we will soon have over half a million young adults eighteen or older in the United States with autism. This is a global wake-up call!” (Allan, 2013, paragraph 39).

Grandin (2005) acting very much in response to the wakeup call insists that the solution is not stopping autism, but living with it, managing it and coming out on top. In order to make the difference she insists on the importance of:

...finding and then developing a talent area in children with ASD that can be turned into a viable profession such as drafting, commercial art, custom cabinetwork, fixing cars or computer programming. These efforts provide an opportunity for a person to have an intellectually satisfying career. My life would not be worth living if I did not have intellectually satisfying work. (Grandin & Barron, 2005, p. 25)

She confirms that talent being turned into skill for work, can be not only intellectually satisfying, but also lead into social interaction. But it is too late to be teaching ASD children, “basic social functioning skills when they’re thirteen or fifteen; that’s the time when educators should be ferreting out students’ interests and teaching them skills such as working in groups, negotiating a request, multitasking, prioritizing several projects, meeting deadlines, etc” (Grandin & Barron, 2005, p. 45). This is particularly relevant in considering the choices that were made in the project to do a large scale theatre production with student working alongside experienced theatre makers.

Flexible thinking and the ability to accept change, and be responsive to changing conditions and the environment; along with the ability to notice and process alternatives to that which is concrete and directly observable is a skill that Ramamoorthi and Nelson (2011) suggest the arts and drama can teach.

2.8 Drama for complex needs

There is general agreement that drama is therapeutic by its very nature; and can help develop self-advocacy, the social self, and purge pupils from affliction. (Jindal-Snape and Vettrano, 2007) However, as Kempe (2011) points out it is difficult for teachers to develop their practices in drama with Special Educational Needs (SEN) with the lack of research in the

field. There was a seminal review of research undertaken by Jindal-Snape and Vettraiño (2007) who conducted a research project on the use and effectiveness of drama for people with SEN. They discovered that, “drama techniques have been used in clinical, school and community settings to promote the social and emotional development of people for a number of years,” and that practitioners have attributed their effectiveness to “story-telling, acting-out, play, group process, etc. However, the research lacked validity as there was a lack of evidence.” They found that, “...of the fifty seven studies located, only sixteen included data, with only two including sufficient data to make it possible to calculate the effect sizes” (Jindal-Snape & Vettraiño, 2007, p. 108). In spite of this, professionals still indicate the effectiveness of drama for developing emotional and social development for people with complex needs.

Despite claims by Ward (1989) on the effectiveness of the arts in SEN education, and by Reid and Bruner that the ‘aesthetic knowing’, implicit in sensate experience that the arts engender, helps people with SEN (Kempe, 2007), there is a distinct lack of empirical evidence to support these general claims which appear thin and insubstantial.

Because the research review by Jindal-Snape and Vettraiño (2007) reveals a dearth of evidence that drama is effective for people with SEN they question the ethics of engaging people in dramatic interventions. They suggest that “multiple perspectives and qualitative findings are very important,” and that:

The participants perspectives were not always sought or presented. The studies in this review that demonstrated the effectiveness best were the ones that had used Observation... Whether the researchers are primarily drama professionals or professionals working with people with special needs, they need to look at ways of collecting data in a more planned and systematic manner. (p. 116)

For successful gathering of empirical data this review recommends the need for more: qualitative methods and methodologies with a suggestion of ‘observation’; the need for drama professionals to be in the field; working with more knowledge of the respondents diagnosis alongside trialling the specific use of different drama techniques; with more systematic data gathering and managing of data (Jindal-Snape & Vettraiño, 2007).

However, in 2011 researchers Ramamoorthi and Nelson undertook a review of their current practice and highlighted some significant developments. They cited the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR (DSM) lists of problem areas for people with

autism diagnosis as being communication, socialization, and restricted play repertoires, “while further describing issues related to emotion expression and recognition, empathy, and group dynamics” (p. 177). They further suggest that acting is a learnt behaviour and can be taught, “and autism-theatre professionals have recognized the connection between autism deficits and what drama can offer” (p. 177). Kempe claims (2011) that as drama is a social art form enabling participants to have positive experiences working in a group, drama “may have particular importance for children who, because of their particular needs, may be excluded from a number of social situations that others take for granted” (p. 115).

Regarding the struggle for teachers to find resources and experience for people with the more extreme forms of ASD, Billington in Kempe (2011) commiserates saying:

There is often an underlying deficit in imagination and the desire for rigidity or patterns of behaviour; the unpredictability of the drama medium can prove difficult for them to accommodate and be challenging for teachers lacking in confidence. This can, in turn, lead to teachers’ prejudice against using this medium for addressing the specific needs of this group. (2006, p. 2). (p. 116)

As true as this may be however, Ramamoorthi and Nelson (2011) have been developing resources and techniques that could help manage some of these challenges, one of which is masks. They suggest that:

Masks are being used with people on the spectrum to improve eye contact and thereby help social interaction skills (Ramamoorthi, 2008). Masks also help to develop attention and focus since the mask-wearing actor with ASD can only look through the holes meant for the eyes, minimizing peripheral distractions. Masks can increase confidence by allowing timid actors on the spectrum to temporarily hide themselves from public gaze and scrutiny. (p. 177)

The drama technique of role play, in which students can rehearse for life, often practiced in the therapy room using psychodrama with autistic young adults, has been taken up successfully by Ramamoorthi and Nelson (2011) in the class room with ASD people. They suggest that, “young people with ASD often have a strong visual memory but may lack the ability to plan and prepare for novel settings or events” (p. 117). Role play techniques to develop rehearsed responses, are not only effective for developing empathy, “but can be used to help prepare for social situations like first dates, greeting a stranger of the same sex and the opposite sex, boarding an aircraft, ordering in a restaurant, coping with stress, and a wide variety of other skills and scenarios” (p.117).

Sigman (2007) a biologist investigating the effects of media on children and young adults, describes how it deadens neurological response. “The findings were described by the World Federation of Neurology as ‘alarming ...computer games stunted the developing mind ...’” (p.14). He emphasised that it was not only entertainment, but the entire effect of any media devices that had the negative affect, not the content itself. He cites Christakis and Zimmerman (2006) as saying, “... [Screen] media need to be recognised as a major public health issue” (p.16).

It is not surprising that RMT are struggling to put a media policy together, least alone supporting it in the performing arts department where the therapeutic education principle is about doing experiential social activities together and not encouraging obsessive tendencies by including media in the practical skills development. However, I am sure this could be considered in a positive light were the project to have the scope to follow this through.

It has become evident that theatre and drama teachers of people with ASD need to be flexible, adaptable and highly creative to be able to meet each person where they are at in order to support their development through drama. As Kempe (2011) reminds us, “in every aspect of drama education, it is an established paradox that the safest lesson is often the one in which the teacher takes the most risks no matter what group is being taught” (p. 116).

This is suggesting that drama has a significant role to play in the education and wellbeing of people with ASD, but what form of curriculum would serve best is still unclear.

2.9 Archetypes and therapy

In this section I will reflect on theories and practice on the theme of archetypes that might be relevant for the performing arts and therapy in the context of RMT. I will further consider the application of archetypes within a therapy approach that is used as a new modality in the Glasshouse College, and could be of benefit to students across the wider reaches of the Trust.

As part of the holistic medicine practiced in RMT the supplementary therapies support students’ development, recreation and wellbeing. Anthroposophical therapies are applied in accordance with and recognition of the whole human being, body, soul and spirit. These therapies seek to support and maintain a balance between thinking feeling and willing (Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013).

Archetypal Souldrama Therapy (AST) is a new contribution to what the Glasshouse College offers the students, and is not as yet understood and acknowledged by the Trust. This review of literature looks to highlight some of the thinking and practice involved in AST. This action therapy incorporates psychodrama as an action method through which to bring archetypes inspired by Rudolf Steiner's spiritual psychology and elements of Joseph Campbell's hero's journey work. I will look at the theories of each in turn.

The archetypes inspired by Steiner's (1910) spiritual psychology include the four temperaments, the three soul forces of thinking, feeling and doing as they differentiated in the seven planets, and the twelve signs of the zodiac as stages on the hero's journey cycle.

In proposing his ideas regarding archetypes, Steiner (1910) suggests that, "...the forces from the world of archetypal images can be brought down in order to make possible the development of clairvoyant consciousness" (Paragraph 42). What is meant by 'clairvoyant consciousness' for Steiner, is what Hillman (1996) would consider as 'soul awoken to full imagination,' or Jung (Campbell, 2005) as individuation. Archetypes, Steiner continues (1910 b), are symbols which do not only need to be pictorial but, "they may also consist of words into which profound cosmic truths are compressed. When cosmic truths are compressed into symbolical sentences we have there a force by means of which we can mould the substance of our soul" (Paragraph 21). What is being indicated is significant in regard to archetypal work being conducted in AST, where image, symbolic sentence and story is used as therapeutic interventions.

Regarding temperament as archetype Steiner suggests that by, "...studying our own being [...] we find certain qualities which belong partly to our soul and partly to our outer constitution; these are the qualities of our temperament. We classify them as the melancholic, the phlegmatic, the sanguine and the choleric" (Steiner, 1919c, paragraph 3). The temperaments are the first category. The second archetypal category employed in AST is of the three aspects of the psyche: thinking, feeling and action (Steiner, 1910; Moreno, 2012), Steiner uses a terminology of soul forces (1910a). The seven planets that are visible to the naked eye including Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn are described as different permutation of our thinking, feeling and willing.

The final set of archetypes arise from the images of the Zodiac. Steiner describes the Zodiac representing twelve different points of view, as aspects of the Ego. Together the twelve

'points of view' suggest wholeness in the ego constitution, where "only after contemplating it [the Ego] from twelve different standpoints have we a complete picture. This view of the Ego from outside corresponds exactly to what is reflected in the relationship of the twelve constellations of the Zodiac to the Sun" (Steiner, 1910e, paragraph, 17).

These propositions will be considered in regard to the views of academic and mythologist Joseph Campbell (2005), the originator of the Hero's Journey. The Hero's Journey gives creative and artistic imagination to the ideas of Steiner, imbuing them with cultural relevance to the special young adult by referencing characters, archetypes and situations from stories, films and games as a foothold into the imagination and biography of the student.

The mono-myth as described by Campbell occurs in all stories from all cultures. He suggests the mono-myth as having different archetypal steps. Vogler (1998) describes Campbell's steps in an abridged version of twelve as: the ordinary world, the call to adventure, the refusal of the call and meeting the mentor. These four are followed by crossing the threshold into the special world, into the step of defining tests, allies and enemies, then Campbell (2005) describes going into the inmost cave which is followed by the supreme ordeal. The reward, the road back, then the big test which he calls the resurrection; and the return with the elixir is the twelfth step (Vogler, 1998).

My proposition is that Campbell's twelve steps of the Hero's Journey are connected to the approach to the twelve signs of the Zodiac as suggested by Steiner. These twelve steps, or world views, as Steiner's suggests are steps of the journey used as a template in AST.

There are seven archetypal characters that the Hero encounters on different stages of the journey. They are the hero, the messenger, the mentor, the oracle, the trickster, the shadow and the threshold guardian (Vogler, 1998). Voytilla (1999) describes archetypes from the hero's journey perspective as, "the function or role a character plays in a story. Think of an archetype as a mask a character wears in a particular scene [...] a story's characters have the potential to wear any of the Archetypal masks depending upon the demands of the story" (Voytilla, 1999, p. 13). The image of the mask is quite fitting, as it has a fixed form that contains vast amounts of energy (Pollock, 1995). Campbell (2005) infers that the images are initiatory, and necessary for the soul or "psyche that if they are not supplied from without, through myth and ritual, they will have to be announced again, through dream" (p. 38).

Jacob Moreno, the founder of psychodrama developed spontaneity and role theory (1980), which operationalizes Steiner's and Campbell's archetypes by offering structures and boundried psychotherapeutic interventions. Moreno, having a spiritual view concurrent with both Steiner and Campbell in a number of ways, said of the spiritual world which he refers to as 'cosmos':

...the cosmos must be so integrated into the therapeutic setting that it has experiential and existential value for the protagonist [...]It is therefore, through man's faith in the infinite creativity of the cosmos that what he embodies in the psychodramatic world may one day actually become true. (Moreno, 1971, pp.11-12)

The infinite creativity of the cosmos appears to follow on from Campbell's idea of the hero's journey bringing a 'dynamic streaming of energy and a spiritual manifestation of grace.' Steiner seems to concur with Moreno's creative cosmos in his indications of the archetypes as 'cosmic truths which mould the substance of the soul.'

Moreno defined a role as, "the functioning form the individual assumes in the specific moment he reacts to a specific situation in which other persons or objects are involved," and described it as, "a unit of behaviour that is observable" (Moreno, 1980, p.23). Moreno describes the life of a role as something which has a beginning, middle and end, suggesting that "every role in which an individual operates has a certain duration, a certain lifetime. Each has a beginning, a ripening and a fading out" (Moreno, 1987, p. 63). He describes how the self emerges, suggesting that, "role playing is prior to the emergence of the self. Roles do not emerge from the self, but the self may emerge from roles" (Moreno, 1946, p. 157). Moreno's idea is that the self emerges from the roles is concurrent with Steiner's view that the ego needs to come into being from the outside through the twelve world views.

Having looked at theories of archetypes, I will consider them in relation to aspects of the performing arts in chapter six. The ideas and processes described comprising the thinking and practice of AST, including masks which are used as artistic tools to introduce new roles and archetypes, position it as a performing arts component that the Trust might consider developing.

2.10 Curriculum

I will look at the history of drama and curriculum, citing its development from Plato through Aquinas, to the Bildung tradition, and on to hard curriculum of Rugg, then to Tyler and Hodt. I will consider the ideas of Alexander on agency, Todd on ego-development, and finally reflect on the development of intersubjectivity through drama as expounded by Wright.

Plato, regarded as the founder of the first Academy and the father of curriculum, is also the staunch opponent of drama in education. By proclaiming drama's "laxity of morals in the young", and the dangers of imitation (O'Toole, Stinton & Moore, 2009) is it not surprising that drama has more often than not, suffered in the hands of curriculum writers throughout history and even to this day.

Curriculum architect Ralph Tyler (as cited in Alexander, 2005), took the emphasis away from the policy makers to the learner and subject in an attempt to free it from Rugg's 'tyranny'. However, according to Alexander (2005) Tyler failed in 'human agency,' which was taken up by Holt in the 1960's who really began to dismantle the straightjacket of curriculum, and along with Freire and Illich developed a radical curriculum by breaking down the class barriers, developing education not only for the privileged, but the working class as well (O'Toole, et al, 2009).

In the 1970's, Elliot Eisner (as cited in O'Toole, et al, 2009) developed an artistic model of curriculum, suggesting that unexpected objectives need to be taken as new goals during the learning process. Amongst other things he asked the key question, what has been left out in the 'Null' curriculum, what knowledge is excluded?

On the question of ethics and values in curriculum, drama has long been a hotbed for challenging behaviours and attitudes and confronting moral questions (O'Toole, et al, 2009). Is this what Plato was afraid of? To the question of designing a coherent curriculum that engages students in the process as well as content, Murdoch (as cited in O'Toole, et al, 2009) counsels for an integrated approach that minimises fragmentation and opens up the possibility for an 'authentic connectedness' between what is learnt and how it is taught.

This approach reflects the European Bildung tradition, described as the "properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities", where; according to Gardamer "the result

of Bildung is not achieved in the manner of a technical construction, but grows out of an inner process of formation and cultivation” (Fleming, 2012, Learning through, paragraph 12).

Bildung is the tradition in which the teacher as mentor imparts knowledge and practice to the pupils in a thoroughly individual manner. The term Bildung refers to the German tradition of self-cultivation, wherein philosophy and education are linked in a process of both personal and cultural maturation. This is a harmonization of the individual’s mind and heart and hand in a unification of selfhood and identity within the broader society. In the Bildung tradition the student is not required to know what or why such decisions are made by the mentor, as the mentor has the pupils’ best interests at heart (Hofmann & Requarts, 2000).

By contrast, in the Anglo-American ‘curriculum’ approach to teaching, the pupil is put in the foreground. This means that the teacher must follow specific rules and approaches which are laid down by policy and the curriculum. Curriculum theory originated with America pragmatist John Dewey (as cited in Hofmann & Requarts, 2000), who embraced the Didaktik Bildung tradition as a psychology, but rejected the philosophy and science of pedagogy. This fragmentation meant the loss of a holistic Bildung approach to pedagogy.

In *Teaching as a Reflective Practice*, Hoffmann and Riquarts (2000) refer to the World Wars’ impact on educational theory:

The history of educational thinking is only one in a bundle of constraints that kept modern Didaktik outside the United States. Other factors include the general ups and downs of US-European and especially US-German relations. Thus the First World War and, even more, the Nazi Reich and the Second World War had a devastating impact on the import of German educational theories (except for those brought in by emigrants). (p.7)

If this conflict is to be resolved, a workable compromise needs to be found. If, as in the Bildung tradition where the primary relationship is between the tutor mentor with all the cultivated maturity and the pupil receiving knowledge, then what is the role of curriculum in the student tutor encounter. Todd (2001) posits that, “curriculum in this view is neither just a cultural or political instrument divorced from the concrete practices of teaching, nor a solipsistic rendering of personal or autobiographical knowledge” (p. 446).

What is of primary importance for vulnerable RMT students is the relationship with the tutor, and the tutors relationship to their practice, the curriculum. What the student learns is not

possible to anticipate, as each student brings, “a host of idiosyncrasies and unconscious associations that enable them to resist, transform and create symbolic attachments which pedagogy cannot predict or control” (Todd, 2001, p. 436). Instead pedagogy swings between the tutor, the curriculum and the learner. On the one hand the encounter of the ‘self’ of the learner with the ‘self’ of the teacher enables learning and change, while on the other hand the tutors relationship with the curriculum is what enthralls the teaching. Todd (2001) posits that, “within this movement, of course, there are many surprises and shifts, and the roles marked out for teachers and students are not so rigid as perhaps they first appear” (p. 438). She suggests that the act of learning is an act of becoming, whereby the learner forms a new identity:

As a feature of such Self and Other interaction, curriculum lends substance to the process of ‘learning to become’: it is the symbolic raw material that students use, discard or rewrite in making meaning for themselves. Curriculum is, thus, fundamental to the symbolic elaboration necessary to ego-formation. (Todd, 2001, p. 446)

In considering the value of drama from a point of identity, invoking the concept of ‘the self as a performative act’ Kempe (1995) takes up this point indicating, “what I am supporting here is a concept of a plural self: what I refuse is the existence of a deep seated natural self” (p. 179). Like Moreno (1946), the founder of psychodrama whose idea that the self emerges from the roles so Kempe, following Hornbrook, sees identity as, “the product of cultural determination [which] allows us to see ourselves as active agents in the making of our own images” (Kempe, 1995, p. 180).

Regarding the vulnerability of the students attending RMT colleges, the question of agency needs be addressed. Alexander (2005) suggests that human agency is an indication that an ethical stance is being taken. This could infer that students’ needs, within reasonable limits to choose their own “beliefs, desires and actions” (p. 343) is the crucial ingredient for freedom, to be able to make mistakes in what they believe, feel and do.

This leads on to the significant concept of intersubjectivity in regard to curriculum. Wright (2011) describes inter-subjectivity as a concept related to agency, “that helps reveal how this process works, and the power that drama has in contributing to young people’s meaning making and the way they construct learning identities” (p. 111). He suggests that it is impossible to participate in drama without relating to other learners. Wright cites Donaldson

who argues for a developmental ‘map’ of the human mind including seeing, acting, thinking and feeling:

What intersubjectivity does is to highlight how we first ‘see’ a situation through the feeling of bodily affect before we are deliberately rational about it, and emotions mark significance, what we care about; all in relation to others. Hence, we act towards others out of feelings first, principles come second. Thich Naht Hanh (1993) helpfully refers to this as ‘inter-being’, a process inherent in drama education. (Wright, 2011, p. 113)

The principle of inter-being seems to resonate with what Gordon and Von Bulow (2013) refer to in managing complex relationships inherent in their principle of applied contemporary apprenticeship learning. Dealing with the complexity of relationships of ‘self’ to the material as curriculum, and the ‘other’ as tutor and fellow learner is an obvious role for drama to play. But it is a risky one as Borden (as cited in Wright, 2011) points out, “it is through drama, for example, that risk can be thought of as engaging and providing opportunities for growth and development - the ‘hard fun’ often associated with the arts” (p. 112). The development of agency and intersubjectivity can be strengthened through drama which can become, “an antidote to despair and hopelessness many young people feel when faced with manifestations of globalisation, instability and change” (Wright, 2011, p. 114). For young people with complex needs this can mean not only hope and understanding, but as enriched way of seeing the world.

2.11 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework serves as an interface between the theorists and theories referred to and developed by the Trust, the commissioning body, in the Practitioners Guide (2013-2014), in relation to Practice Skills Therapeutic Education (PSTE); and the subject specific theories, relevant concepts and manifestations of practice for this project. I will take a conceptual strand underpinning PSTE and extrapolate a proposal which will serve as scaffolding for the subject specific theories discussed so far. I am hoping that the conceptual framework as a research tool will help me organise data so as to understand actions in relationship to concepts.

The conceptual framework arising out of the literature review includes theories from different strands of the project. These include:

The values and principles of PSTE as expounded in ‘Descent into matter’ by Gordon and Von Bulow (2013) of RMT as a guide to aspects of the study. The broad take on drama in the UK is reflected in ‘Drama history and tensions’ arising between Heathcote and Hornbrook, which reveals the need for curriculum including drama classroom processes and plays.

The considerations in ‘Alternative elaborations’ include Steiner’s indications (1959) for speech and Greek gym, and the Waldorf approach is considered alongside Chekhov’s work (1991) with imagination and character. The reflections on theories of ‘Shakespeare in education’ include views by Steiner (1995) in regard to Shakespeare as a dramatist and Martin-Smith (2010) on the positive effect of doing *Pericles* with young people.

Theories on the use of masks include identity and suspension of disbelief as expounded by Pollock (1995), by Wiltshire (2007) on an imaginative approach to theatre, and by Brook (1988) on borrowing from mask traditions. Steiner’s ideas (1959) are considered in regard to the importance of Greek theatre and Commedia dell’arte for the young person.

Theories on the RMT client base of students with ‘Complex needs’ by Alan (2013), Higashida (2013) and Grandin and Barron (2005) are considered in regard to what is behind the learners and their need of understanding, empathic education and support. The theories on ‘Drama for complex needs’ by Jindle-Snape and Vettraino (2007) indicate the lack of research in the field; however, broadly speaking Kempe (2011) recommends drama for this client base and Ramamoorthi and Nelson (2011) make affirmative generalisations including masks.

Looking at the explicit therapeutic approach being developed in the Trust using psychodrama and archetypes in ‘Archetypes and therapy’, theories by Campbell (2005) on hero’s journey, Steiner (1910) on archetypes and the educational development and Moreno (1980) on role development and psychodrama are considered.

Finally, reflecting on the complexity of curriculum development and the need for RMT to consider a fresh approach an historical perspective by O’Toole (2009) is considered. Alexander (2005) is considered on agency and Wright (2011) on intersubjectivity through drama. The theories of Hoffman and Riquarts (2000) on Bildung are taken into account due to the complexities experienced by RMT in curriculum development.

These theories will be taken up in the conceptual framework in the following way: Trust principles and the complexity of the students will be two constants referred to throughout the framework. Alternative approaches, Shakespeare, masks and archetypes will be taken up in specific strands of the framework. Curriculum ideas will be taken up in the discussion and recommendations in the conclusion.

In order to grasp what a conceptual framework is Smyth (2004) cites Reichel and Ramey who propose that “a conceptual framework is described as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation (1987, p.1)” (p. 2). She suggests that the potential of a good conceptual framework is that it can be used as a tool to:

...assist a researcher to develop awareness and understanding of the situation under scrutiny and to communicate this. As with all investigation in the social world, the framework itself forms part of the *agenda for negotiation* to be scrutinised and tested, reviewed and reformed as a result of investigation. (Smyth, 2004, p.2)

As with all tools and schema used to manage ideas and structure understanding, there are pitfalls to consider when utilising a conceptual framework. One is that, “the framework is a construction of knowledge bounded by the life-world experiences of the person developing it and should not be attributed a power that it does not have” (Smith, 2004, p. 2). This could indicate that other concepts could come to light that discredit the validity of those within the framework. Another concern is that the framework could limit the scope of the researcher by, “increasing personal sensitivity to notice particular occurrences,” with an additional concern that some data outside of the framework could, “run the risk of limiting the results from the investigation” (Smith, 2004, p. 3). By bearing these cautions in mind I will use the framework as a structure and indicate where I am stepping outside of it.

In the chapter on ‘Holistic Support and Care,’ the *Practitioners Guide* (Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013) refers to the seven life processes as developed by Steiner (1990). I would like to propose adapting this as a framework in order to structure the theories on theatre, drama and performance development within the RMT. By so doing I hope to develop an understanding of how the different elements relate to each other. Within the framework I will endeavour to evidence the three key principles of PSTE: 1. self-generated conscious action;

2. applied contemporary apprentice learning; and 3. the integration of the seven fields of practice, while bearing in mind the complex needs of RMT students.

Steiner (1990) proposed that all living matter has seven life processes. When each process is fully undergone and leads on to the following process, the organism will develop organically. Steiner goes further to say that when these processes are ‘ensouled,’ through the arts, they do not only have relevance to non-conscious organisms but to conscious human activity. With this in mind, I would like to propose that the seven life processes are also processes of educational and human development.

The performing arts of drama, theatre, music, and eurhythmy, a form of dance; the associated arts of theatre design, lighting and costume; alongside the technical requirements of running a theatre including front of house and stewarding, will be included in this framework as expounded by the theories in this chapter.

Within the Trust, there are a number of manifestations of performance across the spectrum of activities’ defined in this conceptual framework as *seven performance processes* which are: performance therapies; presentations and role play; cultural events; seasonal celebrations; drama classes; large scale theatre productions; and external theatrical tours. These processes derive from Steiner’s (1990) seven life processes which are: breathing; warming; nourishing; secreting; maintaining; growing and re-generating. Steuck (2012) an artist engaged in social contexts’ suggests that the life processes connect to social processes. He proposes that breathing becomes belonging, warming becomes safety, nourishing becomes taking the other in, secretion becomes awakening to responsibility, maintaining becomes sustaining relationships, growing being recognised, and regenerating becomes creative autonomy. This has echoes of Gordon and von Bulow’s self-generated conscious action (2013).

The Oxford Dictionary (2014) definition of performance that I am utilising is threefold. Firstly, **performance** related to the theatre: [noun] *an act of presenting a play, concert, or other form of entertainment*. Secondly **performance** related to acting: *an act of performing a dramatic role, song, or piece of music; and finally **performance**: [mass noun] the action or process of performing a task or function*. The meaning of ‘processes’ is described in the Oxford Dictionary (2014): **processes**: [noun] *a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end*.

The term 'performance processes' describes: performing a role or task; or presenting or witnessing a play; in a developmental series of activities undertaken to support therapeutic education through the performing arts. Steiner's seven life processes are indications for the seven performance processes outlined below.

1. Breathing- Performance Therapies: The performance processes connected to breathing are about the relationship the individual has with the world (Steuck, 2012). In Archetypal Souldrama Therapy (AST) as referred to in 'Archetypes and therapy,' a welcoming sense of belonging is engendered which helps support the development of emotional intelligence through psychodramatic action methods including masks and role-play.

2. Warming- Presentation and Role Play: By entering into the organisation, the student needs to adapt and adjust (Steuck, 2012). The performative process of presentation supports general communication; role play as expounded by Moreno (1980) in 'Archetypes and therapy' for job interviews; in student council seminars and college forums; peer presentations and end of year presentations. The presentational process is also taken up in staff training as an artistic learning medium.

3. Nourishing- Cultural Events in the Theatre: In eating and nourishment outer becomes the inner (Steuck, 2012), food taken into the body becomes part of us. Culture can nourish and energise the soul and become part of our identity as can be seen in the positive response of school children to Shakespeare as stated in 'Shakespeare in education' (Fleming, 2012). Every week students and staff attend a half hour cultural event. By engaging in the arts students can internalise meaningful archetypes which can support the development of moral substance; experience beauty as nourishment for the soul; and can nourish connections with others in the audience and with the acts on stage.

4. Secretion- Seasonal Festivals in the Rhythm of the Year: Here the student awakens to purpose, where breathing, warming and nourishing lead to discernment (Steuck, 2012); where seasonal performance can kindle a sense of trust through the rhythm of the year. Some Christian festivals could include Michaelmas; Christmas; Easter; Whitsun; other festivals and religious celebrations from different religions include the Hindu Diwali and the Jewish Hanukkah.

5. Maintaining- Drama scenes and presentations, and Stories: A new found sense of self is developed in regular classes throughout the year and taken into the community of peers

(Steuck, 2012). The maintaining process of regular drama classes supports predictability, security, routine, measured responses, informed choice, and coping with change amongst others. Activities include theatre games, improvisations, speech and movement, and mask sessions looking at dramatic archetypes; as cited in ‘Archetypes and therapy’ earlier in this chapter. This would conclude with short presentations of stories, scenes and poems.

6. Growing- Full scale Theatre Productions: Growth is where the student becomes good at what they do. They are given new tasks, new challenges, on the way to becoming a master (Steuck, 2012). The achievement of high standard is uplifting and mind expanding and can include performances of Shakespeare, as Steiner (1995) suggested earlier, Greek tragedies, Indian epic dramas, and contemporary verse drama. Being performed in the main theatre, activities include work experience in front of house, stewarding and back stage.

7. Re-generation- Engaging in other Communities: The student is now ready to enter the world and maintain a sense of autonomy, contributing and existing within a greater social network (Steuck, 2012). By being of service and giving to the greater community encapsulates the PSTE principle espoused by Gordon and Von Bulow (2013) of applied contemporary apprenticeship learning. This includes touring a theatre production to other colleges, other theatres around the country, to festivals in the UK and Europe, and cultural exchanges through which a sense of vitality can be engendered in the students.

2.12 Conclusion

In this review of theories and ideas toward a drama curriculum for complex young adults I noted the RMT principles and key of developing self-generated conscious action. I have considered some views on the role of arts in education, while going into key players in drama history and tensions in the UK. I reviewed some ideas and practices of Chekhov and Steiner and considered the importance of Shakespeare and masks in drama education today. I cited Allan, Grandin and Higashida in regards to complex needs, and reflected on the lack of evidence for effective drama education for complex needs, while citing a small successful review of practice. I have followed by debating ideas on curriculum, looking at history, agency, intersubjectivity, self as a performative act and communication. In concluding I have considered the nature of a conceptual framework, including *seven performance processes* and how it might be relevant for this project. Through this review it is evident that drama and the performing arts for young adults with complex needs arising out of a holistic world view is a

vast field with little theory to guide it. On the one hand this is exciting as it leaves the researcher free to make the most of the vast amount of data available. On the other hand there is little to build on. The question of how to develop inductive theories that are robust and valuable to the field is what this study seeks to answer.

3.0 Methods

Chapter three includes an outline of case study and educational action research methods and why they were chosen. I consider the strengths and limitations of the research indicating the relevance of using both methods. I will continue by reflecting on the study participants and the ethical considerations around vulnerable nature of some of the students. I will finish by looking at the procedures undertaken including data gathering and coding.

A case study was undertaken for generating and gathering data, which was a qualitative ongoing project, with a finite group over a period of time and a specific focus. A strand of the project was required to continue beyond the scope of the thesis for which an action research approach will be used. This will enable me to explore my own practice and see how it could improve and generate recommendations for curriculum.

3.1 Case study

Simons (2009) reflecting on the history of case study cites MacDonald's development of the method in the early 1970's indicating the importance of, "interviewing key players, observing classrooms, capturing images of the context, exploring the surrounding milieu" (p.15). This case study is an exploration in depth, "from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project," of a real-life context within an institution. The primary purpose is to, "generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic" (Simons, 2009, p.21); hence it is evidence-led. Simons indicates an important consideration:

If taking this approach, it is important to stay open to eliciting what the actual theory of the case may be in practice. This is not the same as testing a specific theory or taking a specific theoretical lens to the study. It is determining a specific theory of the programme to guide data collection in the case. (Simons, 2009, pp. 21-22)

With this in mind I will make particular reference to the theory generated in the case study and consider how it interfaces with the theories underpinning the programme.

3.2 Educational action research

As there is an ongoing strand of curriculum development to emerge from this project, based on my own practice, I will include an action research component to the study. Whitehead and

McNiff make a cogent case for the development of practice through self-study, as action research on oneself:

Action research is a term which refers to a practical way of looking at your own work to check that it is as you would like it to be. Because action research is done by you, the practitioner, it is often referred to as practitioner based research; and because it involves you thinking about and reflecting on your work, it can also be called a form of self-reflective practice. (McNiff, 2002, p.3)

By being transparent with my practice, and continually asking questions about how I might have conducted a session differently; directed a scene or run a workshop better, I'm living in a learning relationship with my practice. Not only can my practice be continually developing as I develop, but also is it likely that those around me are lightly to develop as well, as some of what I am doing rubs off onto colleagues.

Hugo (2013) insists on the importance of the practitioner understanding their own thinking in order to master their practice. He quotes Goethe saying, "Animals are educated by their organs, human beings educate theirs, and master them" (p.1), and continues:

In each art and craft, teaching included, thinking penetrates delivery. What we need, however, is to ask in each case *precisely how* thinking operates into and through the specific craft. To the extent we are able to be specific, discern and connect this ecology of situated thinking in action; we are also able to describe the phenomena of mastery in its specificity. (Hugo, 2013, p.1)

As a practitioner, artist and teacher I will consider feedback about my practice from students and colleagues, and see where I can improve by considering their recommendations to develop my practice. By this I hope to develop more 'situated thinking in action,' in order to better 'educate my organs.'

The process of five phases that make up action research as identified by Mathisen (2012) are: 1.Problem identification; 2.Plan of research process; 3.Data collection and analysis; 4.New actions based on research findings; and 5.Evaluation of action. I have identified the problem and planned my research; however, it is important to consider the benefits and challenges of the choice of these methods.

3.3 Strengths and limitations of the research

Some of the strengths of using a qualitative case study method are that it enables complex situations to be studied in depth. It can be flexible with time frames and include other methodologies and methods. It allows participants to explore multiple perspectives explaining how and why things happened; allowing audiences of case study reports to utilise their tacit knowledge, like 'stakeholders' in the trust. The study is able to engage participants in the research process, both on a socio-political and ideological strength (Simons, 2009).

There are dangers, however, that a case study taking place in the lives of others is uncontrollable, and it can give a distorted picture of how things are because as time moves on, the case study does not. Another disadvantage of the case study is that I am close to the study and could lack objectivity and the means to obtain an impartial view at all times. Also there are mountains of deep data to be narrowed down and structured. Case study is also dependent on a level of acceptance of the different way validity is established, a point that might not be agreed upon by all stakeholders (Simons, 2009).

In regard to action research some advantages are that I have many years' experience in the field and know the students, colleagues and institution well. I have a long time to execute the event, with support and consent to undertake the various activities contained within it. The intimacy of context and subject enable great fluidity of communication and practice, enabling the strengths and weaknesses in my practice to become evident.

Furthermore, the recommendations that will be made will not cover the entire spectrum that the curriculum requires. This will need further research and development over time to ensure that stakeholders can contribute to overcoming its shortcomings and review draft curriculum proposals.

Disadvantages of the action research method reveal that the participatory nature of action research can be highly rewarding and productive, but it can also result in sticky issues including: a lack of time to mine the rich data; a lack of control over direction and pace; burden of ethical responsibility for the content of my practice; and what happens when the project is over and awaiting the response to the recommendations (Mathisen, 2012). These points will be considered in the discussion.

3.4 Study participants

Each year at the Glasshouse College the drama department, in collaboration with the rest of the college and the Arts Centre has the opportunity to do a large-scale theatre production. This could be site specific, and be performed only in the Arts Centre or it could tour to other venues. The participants are invited at the beginning of the academic year, because of their stated interest or having been identified by the drama tutors for their enthusiasm, interest and skill.

The *Pericles* production was site specific and was performed in the promenade, a style in which the audience moves from location to location within the new Arts Centre Furnace Auditorium. This was decided on the grounds that the play takes place in different cities around the Mediterranean Sea and that the audience would accompany Pericles on his journeys to and from these locations.

Twenty five participants began the rehearsals in September, twenty students and five staff. Over the first term some students left and others joined the group, and by mid-December we had a committed company of students who were cast in roles. There were three young women and twelve young men. They ranged in age between seventeen and twenty four years. The diagnosis was that all students were ASD, most with additional ‘disorders’ including ADD, ADHD and some with undiagnosed mental health tenancies. Three students were in their first year, five in the second and four in their third year of a three year course at the Glasshouse College. For reasons of anonymity, all names of those involved have been changed.

The staff included Jim, an experienced drama tutor who had been in the college for six years, a second drama tutor Laura, who had been there for three full years; Mick a music tutor who had been there for three years and Rick, a mask making tutor who had been at the College for ten years. I produced and directed the production.

3.5 Ethical considerations

After the first term of rehearsals in January, all students and staff who were involved in the *Pericles* project were invited to be part of a research project (see Appendix 1 for student information sheet; Appendix 2 for invitation and consent form). They were left free to join or not, all agreed to take part in the project in various ways. I wanted to give everyone an opportunity to be involved or not, as it was a group project and being selective did not seem

to give any advantages to the process of data gathering, rather it could have soured the very good ensemble feeling that was developing in the group.

As it turned out all of the cast were willing to be observed, and some of the students and all of the staff were, as I had anticipated, willing to be interviewed. In the beginning of the third term, students and staff who agreed to participate in the interviews were required to sign a consent form in order to safeguard their involvement (see Appendix 2). I asked each potential interview participant in person, indicating that by being involved they would be contributing to the development of drama in the college and Trust, but that if they did not want to take part that their involvement was just as valid a part of the group. One of the students who had agreed while in the group said, when approached individually that he would rather not be in the interviews. The RMT ethics committee indicated that all students, with parents, carers and social workers had signed agreements to be included in activities, including: taking part in photo shoots, research, educational projects, publicity, and public workshops. One student was unable to attend the photo shoots as there was a safeguarding prohibition. All participants were given copies of the transcripts of the interviews for verification.

3.6 Procedures

I followed a number of different data gathering procedures because I wanted more than one source in order to triangulate findings from different perspectives. This would give me more robust findings as I could compare different responses and clarify hunches. In most cases data gathered from one source was found to recur in another source albeit with a different emphasis. There were six different procedures followed in data gathering.

1. Field notes
2. Individual interviews and focus group interviews
3. Letters and feedback to open questions
4. Writing for College Journal
5. Audience feedback

I, the researcher, made weekly journal entries and field notes from my observations of procedures over the nine month period. Half way through the rehearsal period, and following it, three individual interviews were made with two students and staff members in order to

gauge participants' responses before the focus group interviews, and to clarify details from the focus group interviews. Following the production two focus group interviews were conducted; one with five staff and the other with eight students. I was in regular contact with various parents, and one in particular who agreed for her letters and emails to be included in the research. As part of the review of the project students and staff were invited to write about their experiences in the Trust magazine, *Run of the Mill*. Some of these excerpts are included in the empirical data. Finally, feedback forms and emails from audience members have been included.

The interview questions guide (see Appendix 3) was derived from the literature review and conceptual framework to include questions pertaining to:

- Trust principles: development of self-generated conscious action; contemporary apprentice learning, and mentoring.
- Field questions: to look at diagnosis in relation to exercises; (questions arising from the lack of robust evidence in the field.)
- Curriculum questions: to identify relevant contents for curriculum, development of exercises and processes.
- Finally, action research questions on how I could improve my practice.

The students' focus group interview lasted twenty-three minutes, and the staff focus group interview lasted forty-two minutes. Even though a similar guide was used for both staff and students, the students had much less to say, and three students out of the eight had more to say than the others. One student who found the interview process overwhelming began a sentence and left the interview where he was supported by a tutor. During the tutor interview each person responded to each questions and then moved on the next. Having conducted the focus group interviews I listened to the recordings four times, before deciding to transcribe the entire interview in both cases as they were so insightful. At first I included the subtleties of pauses and exclamatory indications, but found in the coding, having consulted my supervisor, that it did not feel necessary to include discursive procedures, as all participants had been in the same process together for the nine months and they all know each other well.

3.7 Coding

The data generated was rich, and was described by my supervisor as a goldmine. I coded responses under three main categories, followed by a series of sub categories: the first to do with exercises and processes which I called (x.p.), with sub categories identifying specific exercises including speech (sp), movement (mo) and imagination (im). The second was about content and language which I coded (c.l.), with sub categories including Shakespeare (sha) and themes (th); and the third was to do with development which I coded as (dev.), with sub categories including cognitive (co), emotional (em) and behavioural (beh). These procedures yielded data which will be presented and analysed in the next chapter.

3.8 Conclusion

The methods chapter included an outline of the case study and educational action research approaches to data gathering, indicating why an action research strand was embedded in the case study in this project. I considered the strengths and limitations of the research indicating the relevance of using both methods. I continue by reflecting on the study participants, considering how and why they were chosen. I followed by looking at the ethical considerations around vulnerable nature of some of the students and how they were invited into the project. I finished by looking at the procedures undertaken including data gathering through observation, interviews, letters and feedback, and lastly the coding arising from the themes in the data and the research questions.

What follows is the process of the production through a narrative perspective in which some of the data and literature will illustrate the journey, followed by the second part of the analysis looked at through the eye of the conceptual framework which part of the RSUC practice.

4.0 Presentation and Analysis of Findings

This chapter is in two parts. The first is the presentation of the data including referencing some of the theory in the form of a narrative, as a bridge to help describe a post-hoc real life happening. This helps to tell the story as part of the findings, while contextualising it with the literature. The second part is the analysis and interpretation of data in more depth, in regard to the conceptual framework.

The question driving this thesis is: How does a theatre production contribute to the development of young adults with learning difficulties? The auxiliary questions are: How would such a production affect the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural development of the participants? What processes and exercises most supported the students in preparation for the play? And: In what way would the project affect the student in regard to preparation for work? In the narrative I consider these questions more generally, and go into them in more depth in part two.

4.1 Presentation as narrative

The questions in the narrative are also to do with the story of a journey over nine months. These are: Who were involved? What was undertaken? When did it take place and why at this time? Why choose Shakespeare's *Pericles*? Where it was it undertaken? How was it undertaken? And what are the conclusions? The narrative includes field notes, theory from the literature review and empirical data. All names of interviewees have been changed to protect anonymity.

4.1.1 Drama and the student

Every year the Glasshouse College undertakes a theatre production with students and staff. These can be of varying sizes depending on who is producing and directing them. Drama and theatre is understood by the College and Trust to have an important contribution to make to the students development in many areas. Referring to indications by Steiner as cited in the literature review (1959), the Trust places an emphasis on the arts reflected in the first charitable objective:

To advance the education of young people with learning difficulties and/or behavioural problems or special educational needs through training in the areas of arts, crafts, agriculture and environmental sciences, with particular reference

being given to the indications and insights of Rudolf Steiner in these areas.
(Gordon, 2013, p. 10)

As with the other Ruskin Mill Trust Colleges, the Glasshouse delivers therapeutic education to vulnerable young adults with special needs. The cognitive, emotional and behavioural development of all of our students has been delayed by many factors. This has led to a vision within the trust of re-imagining the potential of our students. As referred to in the literature review (Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013) “The word ‘re-imagine’ encourages us to work creatively with individuals who have had to embrace a compromised existence due to a physical, emotional or developmental challenge or perhaps have not received the care and attention they required” (p. 19).

The Trust has developed a practical skills curriculum for the students whose purpose is to integrate learning for living and work (ILLW). The practical skills curriculum as indicated in chapter two helps to develop, amongst other qualities, creativity, team work, problem solving and communication. “This process is facilitated through the practical and therapeutic activities offered and culminates with the student’s own experience of having developed skill, gratitude and a sense of service” (Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013, p. 22).

4.1.2 The timing

Over the past ten years the college had put on an annual theatre production, interspersed with outside professional cultural events to which the college and public were invited. In September 2011 the Glasshouse College and Arts Centre rehearsal spaces and classrooms went ‘dark’ and closed for a year. Funding had come through for renovation, and there were no performances in the theatre nor any large scale college productions for that period. In September 2012, the contractors handed over the new and renovated facilities.

On a fresh autumn morning with sun streaming through the new classroom windows, twenty five students and staff sat in a circle, talking about the journey we were about to undertake. Dene, one of the students in the cast, wrote this time line of activities:

In September we all was in the circle and did the golden hoop [a warm up exercise]. We developed our voice by speech exercises *like I can see how link lock who...*[a speech exercise] By Easter we walked through the whole play and as Mark reminded us... *when the going gets though, the tough get going...* After Easter we worked through the play and we was using masks and props and setting, and we had to work on our courage. After June half term, when most of

us had learned all our lines we moved into the Furnace auditorium. When we got into a pickle, some of us had each other's backs...and we started on Wednesday 12th June.

Some cast members fell by the wayside; others joined the journey half way through in order for it to go on. Eventually we arrived at a point from which to reflect on the distance travelled and the price paid for achieving what for some of us seemed the impossible. We finally said farewell as a constellation of cast and crew on 10th July 2012.

4.1.3 The synopsis

I adapted the play *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, by William Shakespeare with the specific cast in mind, adjusting to the needs of the individuals as we went along. When reflecting afterwards on what the play was about, one of the students said it was his story, it was about him. When pushed further he said:

This play is an adventure, romantic comedy about Prince Pericles' travels around the Mediterranean Sea, where he escapes an assassin meets his misses and has a child and loses them both. In the second half, having thought he had lost his wife and child he refuses to cut his hair or wash. But he meets his daughter who is now 18 or 19 and is reunited with her. They go to Ephesus to say his prayers to the great Dianne. He here meets his wife who is a priestess and they get back together. Joy. The End

Pericles, offered an educational vehicle through which to mentor our students through the harrowing story of loss, abandonment, resurrection and reunification, experiences many of the students had gone through. The roles were cast in order of who could play them best. As it turned out after the first term, two students took the title role and second lead, with the rest of the twenty eight roles taken by the other students and staff.

4.1.4 Choosing Shakespeare

Some of the comments a various tutors made about the choice of a Shakespeare play involving young adults with learning difficulties can be summed up as follows: "Why does it have to be a Shakespeare play? Does it have to be something that is so difficult and perhaps so controversial when they can get exactly the same experience from doing something else?"

It is not surprising in this modern technological age to question the use of Shakespeare for students with academic learning difficulties. One has only to consider the poetic language and

ideas seemingly out of date and context of the lives of these young performers. However, even more surprising, is the answer some of the students gave in response to their experiences in the play. Mark, in the title role, indicated that even though the Shakespearian language was difficult and that he struggled with a lot of lines, and that Shakespeare's ideas were sometimes difficult to understand, he kept on because he believed in heroes. In his own words Mark said, "I think Shakespeare really knows how to bring out the shining heroes, also in lines of poetry...and he knows how to give inspiration to many young ones...even though his words did not quite make any sense."

It is interesting to reflect on Flemings finding (2012) cited in chapter two that Shakespeare is more educational and inspirational than EastEnders for some young people. One of the parents wrote about her son's relationship to Shakespeare during the process saying:

During half term, two weeks before the performances, Mark said he wished Shakespeare had never been born. Immediately after production week he said he wanted to work with Mike Chase to put on all Shakespeare's plays. I think this reflection succinctly encapsulates the impact which the project had on Mark!

Mark had struggled intensely with the *Pericles* production to the point of wanting to leave. The language, the characters and the situations were intellectually and emotionally demanding and he with the idea that he could possibly succeed in taking on the lead role and bringing it to opening night. He was filled with self-doubt. Having brought the production to performance before an audience, his parents have indicated that Mark now understands that, "achieving goals requires hard work and that there will be obstacles and challenges along the way."

As cited by Martin-Smith (2010) in the literature review *Pericles* invites us to look at the hidden unspoken things, the fears and longings that can besiege us all. Shakespeare holds a light up to examine the underbelly of humanity. When Marina, Pericles's daughter, is abducted by pirates and sold to a brothel we might squirm and bite our tongue praying for divine intervention. This being Shakespeare it eventually comes as he shows us the counter side. The pimp begins to revere Marina and the brothel going governor falls in love with her purity. The incestuous Antiochus and his daughter die and become nothing but a bad memory and, with his loss and reconciliation, Pericles is more the man for having encountered this trial. Rick, one of the tutors involved in the production said, "I personally don't think it necessary to wrap the students in cotton wool and hide them from harsh realities of the world,

I actually think it is important to talk about things, to deal with them and let people know about them.”

While working on the production the full impact of choosing Shakespeare became increasingly clear. In reflecting on the process one of the students said:

Shakespeare’s plays have an inherent psychodrama to them because the kind of play they are, they have very heroic stories and they relate in some ways to the individual journeys of everybody else, and how we all have our own journeys in our inner selves...and having this experience in the play helps us to take one step further towards becoming our own inner hero and our own Pericles.

Considering the enthusiasm some of the students expressed in doing *Pericles* it is interesting to reflect on Steiner’s indication that, “What lives in Shakespeare works into the soul and mind of the child, and becomes in the child a strong impelling force” (1995, p.12). This impelling force does not arise out of a logic and meaning from a modern psychological point of view, but rather by the images in the play. Steiner as cited in chapter two warned that, “People always try to look for the logic in Shakespeare’s plays. However, they are guided not by logic but by the pictorial element” (p. 216). In spite of the imagistic power in the plays, students were able to engage with the language. Charles said, “I think Shakespeare’s language is an eye opening experience, he helps people explore new meanings.” By engaging with new words and images, a staff member reflected that she believed for the students Shakespeare, “is so alien to them at first, they really have to try and understand a different way of experiencing oneself.” We chose Shakespeare’s *Pericles* in the hope that it would be a meaningful activity for the students and I believe that proved to be correct.

4.1.5 Location

The production of *Pericles* took place in the main auditorium of The Glasshouse Arts Centre. This gave the opportunity to involve the students in all of the processes of theatre making. This included acting, set and costume design, stage-management, lighting, Front of House, marketing and publicity. As the arts centre is a professional operating theatre and the production budget covered professional stage-managers and set designers, the project offered the students work experience and for some of it paid work. This is also a reference to Hornbrook (as cited in Radley, 2002) in the literature review who indicated the essential ingredients of literature, plays, theatre and the audience comprise a rounded learning experience.

The involvement of students in all areas of theatre making not only offers a variety of learning, but also gives the students the experience of the connectivity of life and their role within a bigger context. Gordon (2012), referred to in chapter two, indicated how this can help form identity:

The commercial activities of extracting, refining and preparing the materials add value at each stage, from wood to charcoal, fleece to felt and pit to clay. By participating in this chain of activity the student has a living experience of cause and effect. A newfound identity is reflected in process, product and accomplishment. (p.10)

In some instances working in different areas of theatre making can give special needs students indications of areas of talent that they might take up when they leave. Regarding people on the Autistic Spectrum relevant to recall Grandin and Barron (2005), indicating, as cited in the literature review that "...developing a talent area in children with ASD that can be turned into a viable profession [which] provide an opportunity for a person to have an intellectually satisfying career" (p. 25). Stage-manager Gillian recounted how an aggressive ASD student was required to find respect for an outside professional, indicating that "...she really had to try to find a common ground and respect with me and I think that was an interesting and important challenge for her." For students working in an ensemble alongside experienced theatre makers, they can get an experience of professional work, as tutor Laura reflected:

It gives them that experience of working with what a theatre company would be like. The director treats you as an actor and having the experience of working with a stage-manager and to know the discipline of how a theatre works...and they might not always find that easy, but they have done it and they have pulled off those performances.

Because of the presence of a paying audience, students were required to manage themselves not only on the stage but while waiting for their queues. I reflected in my field notes:

Each performer is alone and yet totally together for the duration of the performance. Following their roles, having left the stage the performer waits for the correct cue before coming back onto the stage. This could be a few minutes after the last time, or even an hour. In this time of waiting they remain quiet, focused and concentrated, attentive to the action on the stage, listening to the audience's response to the actors and living in the moment. It feels as if this activity of waiting, the place of delay of gratification, quiet calm and listening, is

a strengthening of the soul, like swaddling a baby makes the heart grow bigger, so does waiting make us more tolerant and bigger to the needs of others.

When asked what he enjoyed the most about the production student Joe commented, “I know we had to keep quiet when someone else was taking their part in the play...and when you finished the play you had to keep quiet when you were getting changed.” The experience of discipline and resistance are not only educational but enjoyable for some as Nikki, another student, said “I enjoyed the whole of the play and when I had to stand straight...and face the audience...we had to be tidy and not to mess around stuff.”

The theatre context presented the challenge that there was more opportunity for getting it wrong. However, due to the ongoing framework of the schedule and performances, there was time to improve and get it right. As the stage-manager pointed out:

...working in the frame of the performance they can develop trust in themselves and get themselves through it no matter how difficult...because they have that experience of moments of failure, in a structured timeline they can look back on their project and say ‘well, I lost that moment, I will admit that but I still managed to keep going forward.

The student Charles who took a small character role and did the lighting said, “There were times when the lighting did not come on and I held it and I held it and I did not shout. The one quality I have developed is to ignore things and let them go...which is something I don’t do.” As cited in the Practitioners Guide (2013) in chapter two, there are many indications of how important supporting failure is. For example, “The practitioner is responsible for making *failure* part of the *success* by acknowledging with the student the learning and insight that follows” (Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013, pp. 32-33). The importance of the context for learning is significant, as Sigman pointed out in chapter two, “The social and emotional landscape of a college is [...] how a curriculum exerts its fullest effects” (as cited in Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013, p. 37).

I believe the context of the theatre is a vast curriculum resource as yet to be formulated as such.

4.1.6 How was the production undertaken?

The story of how the project was undertaken takes three main headings. Having chosen the play, the raw material of Gordon’s craft (2013), the project team had to prepare the tools of the performer, so the raw material could be moulded and formed into a distinct new artefact.

The first step is an account of the preparation, secondly I will consider the use of masks; and finally I will account for the play from improvisation, casting, reading and bringing it to the stage. Here I will consider the aspects of front of house, back stage, lighting and marketing.

Preparation of the performers: The first objective was to create a safe place where the cast could share how they were in order to work harmoniously as an ensemble. This was advanced through three activities. Firstly creating rules which all agreed to including respect, arriving on time, and focus. Secondly, by 'checking-in' with three words describing how each participant felt emotionally before and after each rehearsal. Regarding the three word check in a tutor said, "It allows the individual to reflect on how they actually feel, but it also allows them to appreciate how everybody else is feeling that day or at that moment. And then it allows them to reassess how they feel afterwards." This offered students the opportunity to get to know each other and, in time, to support each other emotionally. Tutor Laura commented that, "they don't have to keep going out and reaching out to find a friend, they are all there."

The third activity aimed to create a calm inner mood and focus before and after each period of work. For this an exercise developed by Michael Chekhov (1991) referred to in chapter two, called 'the Golden Hoop' was used at the start and end of each session. The entire group stood in a circle and imagined that all the work that had just been undertaken was contained in a golden hoop. Everyone reached up into the air and brought it down and lay it at their feet. At the end of the session this was repeated in reverse and the group reached down in silence, picked up the imaginary golden hoop and lifted it into the air for safe keeping. At first this was a challenge for one and all, students and staff alike, however, in time it began to make more sense and had an unexpected effect. Tutor Rick commented that "in the beginning it was weird, but at the end it was, 'no, let's do the hoop, that's what you do.'" This had an accumulative effect, and prepared participants for entering in and out of an artistic mood, as another tutor, Jim, said "bring it down, this is what we've done adding to it, let that go now and become our selves. I love it, it's great. And I really think the students get a sense of appreciation of it as well."

These processes helped create trust and the basis for an ensemble work, but also, as tutor Laura put it, the students "grew with their confidence and their self-esteem." I believe the golden hoop brought quality to the work which permeated the whole process. Steiner (1959)

as referred to in the literature review spoke of the importance of a religious mood indicating, that, “the actor’s inner life of feeling has to undergo change and development, until he is able to approach the whole of his art in a religious mood,” and later he continued, “this should be the feeling that inspires all we do; it is also the determining sign of true art” (p. 389).

Moving into the preparation of the body and movement, voice, speech and imagination, I will indicate influences to my approach. With bodily movement we did regular mime exercises inspired by Steiner’s emphasis on the Greek Gym. The five Greek gymnastics, the wellspring of the Olympic games comprised originally of running, jumping, wrestling, discus and javelin were considered, according to Steiner (1959) the sum total of all human gesture, derived directly from experiences of the spiritual world. He said, “they had something of genius about them and those who practiced came under an influence that was genuinely artistic, genuinely spiritual” (p.390). I undertook five mime exercises derived from the Greek Gym which were, throwing, from the javelin; pushing, from wrestling; side-throwing, from discus; walking, from running and jumping, as jumping.

In regard to the importance of regular movement Gordon and Von Bulow (2013) quote König saying, “body geography and physical self-awareness is a learned process and it has to be learnt through repetition. Exercising rhythmical repetition within the dimensions of space is foundational for a healthy childhood” (p. 51). The regular mime exercises, focusing on different planes of space, frontal plane, side sagittal plane, and the horizontal plane are significant for the development of the self. König indicates that when these planes of space meet the individual can experience themselves as an ‘individuality,’ “...all three together – sagittal, frontal and horizontal...the result is nothing less than the vertical line of our ego-experience. [...]Only when it is constantly experienced in focusing, grasping and stepping do I experience myself as an individuality” (Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013, pp.54-55).

These physical movements are a good preparation for speech development. We regularly combined speech exercises and Steiner’s speech gestures. Students and staff experienced these in different ways. Tutor Rick felt that what helped the speaking of classical verse drama was “...the rhymes and things that were said through play; they were training themselves. They could get into it because it was a game that they enjoyed, and at the same time a tongue twister that developed the way they spoke.” Nikki, a student who struggles with a speech impediment said she “... struggled with the lines and learning them together...but everybody

helped me... in trying to memorise a few times it helped to vocalise and physicalise it.” ‘Physicalising’, as she put it was when movement was taken into learning the script.

Some students struggled with doing these regularly as I recorded in my field notes:

With some of the speech exercises Mark would take over from me and teach them himself. This was good for his esteem and fun; however it was not helpful for their voices, as it was usually forced, so there was a difficult line to negotiate between accommodating Mark and making sure the company was getting the training they needed.

During the early stages of rehearsals the preparation included improvisation and games on the themes of the play. These were taken up enthusiastically by one and all sometimes too much so, as I recorded in my field notes afterwards:

There were some exercises that Mark, Joe and Andrew were not able to contain themselves. Exercises where the company were asked to make funny faces and walk around the room finding a body shape that fitted. During this they become so extreme, and ended thrashing about on the ground, laughing and shouting. We stopped and they eventually were encouraged to take some time out with a tutor.

On the whole the preparation process brought the company of students and staff together for the task of taking on the script and prepared them as an ensemble. As Laura said regarding students who feel isolated, “it brought them together, and they worked and supported each other as a real company.”

The use of masks: In the production of *Pericles* it was decided to use masks for one main reason, there were twice the amount of characters to the cast. Besides the leads, each performer had to play between two and four characters and using masks would help to facilitate these changes. We used a convention by which choices could be made about styles and appropriateness of masks: different styles of masks were chosen for the different cultures and countries Pericles visited in his travels. A second convention was, depending on the level of ‘personal development’ of each character, masks were apportioned. For example, evil characters, like the incestuous king Antiochus who was not developing in self-awareness, were given bigger and more severe masks, whereas simple characters like the fisherman were given quarter masks and noses.

It was decided to use masks inspired by two European traditions, mainly Greek Tragic Acoustic masks, and masks from the Italian Commedia dell' Arte (Steiner, 1959); countries which were in the setting of the play. Even though this style is from another era (sixteenth century Italy), it still felt contemporary and relevant. As cited briefly in the literature review, Wilsher (2007) has said that, "masks are a folk art for the simple reason that they have an immediacy and connection with their audience that crosses boundaries and leaps centuries" (p. 7). Three Balinese masks were used to complement the Commedia masks, as the styles were compatible (Brook, 1988). For the bawdy scene in Mytilene we used masks inspired by Commedia dell'Arte folk types which Steiner (1959) suggests, "mark the beginning of an interest in what character owes to milieu" (p. 349). This helped to bring objectivity and humour to some of the challenging content of the play. As Jim put it, "I think it is all about the way that you do it; using masks and clowning dealt with it in a very sensitive manner."

A further reason masks were incorporated was to support our special needs students in three main areas: transformation, energy and power, and embodiment. Even though the students were not going into a trance in the masks as sacred ritualistic cultures did, it is interesting to observe that some of their transformations of identity were entire and complete (Pollock, 1995). Referring to the student who played King Antiochus, tutor Jim reflected that not only was he the character on the stage, "...he was the character also behind the scenes, when he was wearing the mask. It would really help him embed who the character was." However, as was observed by Jim, "...to get him out of the character, all he had to do was take the mask off."

The use of masks enabled the actors to embody the characters and not only act from psychological interpretation of the characters. Jim described his journey in preparing for and using a mask, "I have a good look at the mask and explore how to fit the body into what the mask represents. So it's the whole body telling a story, the mask is the thing that kicks it all off."

I observed this to be many of the students' journeys as well, with the masks helping the suspension of disbelief between performer and audience (Pollock, 1995). As an audience member said, "the masks gave the production a sense of magic."

Using masks had the important effect of injecting energy and power on the stage, because the actors found another level of passion and enjoyment in the characters. Jim said, "You have to

become it, then you experience their [mask] power. I notice that with the students when they use them, their whole body language changes, their character changes, and they become empowered.” But it was a threshold to enter into the masks’ world, because, as a student put it, “It feels black in a mask, like you are in another place; like I am in a different world, far away. The mask gave me power.” As referred to in the literature review, Steiner (1959) indicates the importance of studying the traditions of the *Commedia dell’Arte* because, “... the student will be more fitted to undertake the ‘individual’ parts of the modern stage, he will be able to tackle them with elemental force and energy” (pp. 350-356).

The mask not only helped students get in and out of character but also with the transition between rehearsing and acting, and leaving the rehearsal room or theatre. As Jim observed, when students had finished, they “... understood that the mask was only to be used in rehearsals and performances, and once the performance was finished the mask came off and they become themselves again.” It is significant that the masks offered the students a visual image, which helped with the development of character which, as Jim remarked “...helps the students to make the character more convincing. It’s also to do with archetypes and how the mask helps the students to hold those big roles.”

I think the ultimate function of the mask was to free up the actors and create an immediate form of theatre. “I can let myself go behind the mask; it really helps me to be more spontaneous and energetic,” said Jim. Masks change the way the performer is seen by the audience, and offers another identity through which to meet the world. This ‘new identity’ can be very liberating for students who have been struggling with labels of disability. It is important to note that one student had a mask phobia and was not able to use a mask or be in any scenes that incorporated them.

Page to the stage: In September, at the beginning of the rehearsal period, I introduced the characters and scenes, and invited the cast to improvise them. We encountered all the characters in the play, improvised their relationships to each other and performed our own version of the synopsis in our own words and actions. It was undertaken in this manner in order that the cast get familiar with the story and characters before reading the text. Some of the students found it very difficult to read and make sense of the language, and improvising helped experience the play in their body and feeling before going into their thinking. Otherwise, as Watson (2003) indicates “... they will be the thoughts of a wide awake head

imbued with the soul forces of a dreaming heart and the sleeping hands” (p.16), as cited in chapter two.

I believe this approach could offer a possible solution to the problem identified by O’Toole et al (2009), of teachers creating ‘hollow and empty plays’ on the stage. As tutor Laura put it, “...it takes the stress out of it before they get on the stage...without them having to think about the lines and the script, or without them having to worry about delivering the lines initially, because all they do is play.”

We cast the play as a group, each person voting roles, both for themselves and each other, with tutors and the director having the final say due to the logistical issue of so many characters. The script was adapted to the students’ needs and abilities, which continued into the rehearsing period. A student Mark said:

My difficulty was trying to understand Shakespearian language and struggling with a lot of lines, also Shakespeare’s ideas are difficult to understand. But seeing as [the director] shortened the play a bit, I started doing what I could, and in the end it doesn’t matter if you get something right or wrong.

There were however many challenges, most often to do with the pressure and nerves, as were reflected in my field notes:

Sometimes Mark is not able to begin getting into the part or work until he had spent 30 minutes talking and being boosted up in order to get on with it.

Mark’s mother later reflected that some of these issues continued at home as he felt “frustration during process of learning lines. Increased stress and pressure in final run up to performances meant we had to look for ways to relieve pressure at home.” This challenge continued later into rehearsals as I reflected in my journal:

When Mark was not needed for a period in the second half, he vanished from the rehearsal room and was nowhere to be found. Support workers who were looking for him had no success for a good half hour. It turned out that Mark was hiding in an adjacent room as he was angry that we were not rehearsing with him.

His mother once again reflected his feelings of “anger and confusion at what he perceived to be mixed or confusing messages at times both during rehearsals and with his parents while practising lines at home.” However, working with his parents was the key to this student’s eventual transformation.

Martin, a student who was an accomplished improviser found it challenging to learn the script. What was difficult for Martin “was actually bothering to learn the script. I had to slightly suppress the urge to ad lib.” Some of the support for struggling students came from the student group itself. Some students who were ‘perfectionists’ struggled when they did not get it absolutely correct. When asked how this could be improved Martin recommended:

Not to focus on trying to get it perfect, it puts pressure on you guys, and on other people. The point where you were getting the most wound up was where you were making mistakes. I think emphasis need to be made that you are human, you are flawed. Learn from your mistakes, and don’t try too hard.

What proved most helpful were the tutors working alongside the students on an equal basis. Rick described his relationship to the students by saying, “I saw myself as a performer and as pastoral support for the students”, which enabled the students to see how to take direction. He continued, “Its good role modelling because if they see you taking on that direction they have less reason to refuse to take direction themselves because they are seeing other tutors taking direction from a tutor.” By putting themselves on the same level as the students the tutors were able to break down the barriers between the roles of student and staff and encourage a high level of work. As Jim said, “it is a bit more equal; it allows that relationship that no one is above anyone else, we are all in it together.” Laura thought the students, “probably yearn for that [equality] because the experience of it gives them such a sense of pride of what they have done, that they want to recreate that.”

The stage-manager, Gillian observed that the teacher performers brought energy to the role, “even though it can be described as non-tangible, it is felt and experienced in the individuals, and through that, a new way of learning is developed, a felt experience; an exchange in an energetic way.”

The opportunity for staff who had experience in acting to do more than teach brought out another level of enthusiasm for the work. But as the stage-manager reflected about staff involvement that they were both teachers and actors, and it was “...time to show your talent, to show why you do what you do. This is that moment of recognising each other as artists.” This puts Shaw’s critique “those who can, do; those who can’t, teach” (as cited in O’Toole, et al,2009, p. 134) to one side.

When the production was brought to performance in front of an audience many unknowns began to make sense. It became evident that even though students did not necessarily understand every word they were saying they knew from experience what was meant. Regarding the student Nikki playing the character Marina, Jim said “there were some beautiful and magical moments in her performance; her facial expressions indicated she knew the essence of things. I don’t know if she understood entirely what was going on all of the time, but she got the delivery and made sense.” Regarding a student who struggled with immense speech problems Jim commented, “He did it. He didn’t find it easy but he worked on it and he got there and he did much better than I thought.”

During the process of taking the play from the page to the stage, we endeavoured to tell the story together in song, chorus, image and mask; incorporating the creation of set, props, lighting, poster design and front of house. An audience commented on a feedback sheet saying, “I was really impressed with the whole thing and pleasantly surprised. It was far more professional than I thought it would be.”

4.1.7 Gathering data

Following the final performance the cast and crew spent six sessions debriefing, feeding back and reflecting on the experiences of the journey together. This included re-enacting scenes, storytelling, interviews and writing for the college magazine. Some key reflections by students on their development include Nikki who said, “I learnt how to control my emotions; focusing and concentrating well.” Harold, a very shy young man insisted, “I felt confident, not shy. I rehearsed well.” These reflections are significant considering the distance travelled and the level of confidence developed through meaningful activity. By creating functional artefacts Gordon and Von Bulow (2013) indicate that, “the importance of *meaningful activities* is the development of confidence and self-esteem through visible achievement” (p. 48).

It was also noticeable how students developed socially. Martin said, “I think I learned to read people better, somewhat better than I could...I became more gentle with other people, without hitting them over the heads with large giant metaphorical hammers.” There were also indication in the feedback that students had crossed ‘thresholds’ and learnt to manage their behaviours better. Joe said:

I felt nervous at the start. I enjoyed helping Mark. I enjoyed acting. It was hard

work doing the play, we had to put a lot into it, practising our lines and acting out our parts, so I felt tired, but pleased with myself. I felt like I had more concentration as the rehearsals went on.

Charles said “acting and drama is no laughing matter, it’s a really challenging thing to do to stand up upon the stage in front of so many people, to hold a stage presence and be able to keep the audience enticed.” Reflecting on the changes taking place with a student’s behaviour Jim said, “Mark always used to be in the courtyard with his earphones singing to himself. He is a completely different now on the other end of *Pericles* to the Mark I used to see on the courtyard.”

As well as thresholds, there were challenges which may be learnt from. The challenge in some areas of communication was brought up by Jim, who said, “I would have liked, every now and again, to have had a production meeting to check in how you were feeling and finding the process, whether there was anything we could have done in order to assist.” A student picked this up as well saying, “...certain staff didn’t actually hear each other properly, and also staff listening more to students, and students listening more to staff.” There were evidently difficulties in relation to how the college management supported aspects of communication which I will take up in the discussion and recommendations.

Another difficulty arose when the student Mark became very influenced by a film of the production that he had watched at home. He struggled when the director did not do things as they were in the film, saying, “Sometimes I’ve learned that despite my good ideas, you always seemed to have good ideas in the first plays...that’s one of the things I did learn that there are different versions of films or plays.”

In spite of these challenges, or because of them, I believe, the transformation of behaviour was marked. Tutor Jim, who had participated in five full scale productions over the past six years, to say, “They just create such a good feeling with the team coming together. It shows off the talent and creativity that is in this department. I love working with everybody in this department.” I believe the tutor’s love of their work is passed on to the students.

In preparing for the performance in the theatre Charles, a student pointed out that, “you don’t have a production until it is seen by an audience...because nobody knows what is going to happen until you get under the lime light.” It was encouraging for the company to read some of the audience feedback; some comments from the last performance were very confirming:

“To see your players present their play with such presence and engagement, to promenade, to be really caught up in the play with you all was a wonderful experience, equal to RSC in its own way.” And, “It’s the best play I’ve ever seen.”

4.1.8 How deep is change; how permanent is learning?

The final section of this chapter focuses on one student’s experience three months after the production. Mark’s parents were willing to look at the continued effect of the project on their son which contributes to understanding the implications of the work.

In a letter immediately following the final performance Mark’s mother wrote about how he had hated the work, but later he wanted to, “to put on all Shakespeare’s plays.” Regarding immediate positive outcomes Mark’s parents indicated a, “powerful sense of belonging both to the cast and to College, which he had not felt to nearly the same extent before the project.” They reflected that even though Mark realised the success was due to the working of the team, he still had a, “tremendous sense of personal achievement; confidence and increased self-confidence.” As Mark said in his own words, “Pericles is not the only hero, but we are the heroes, doing what we were supposed to be doing, putting smiles on people’s faces, especially little ones and even our proud parents.” In relation to the continued impact of the project it was indicated that Mark had:

...a greater self-belief in his ability to achieve his goals; belief in his ability to perform; and improved confidence in his ability to interact with wider range of people both in and outside college. Formed real friendships with a couple of cast members, one of whom he has met up with over the summer.

One of the most significant lessons for Mark seems to me to be encapsulated in his parents reflection is his, “understanding that achieving goals requires hard work and that there will be obstacles and challenges along the way.” This helps to understand a key Trust principle referred to in chapter two, of self-generated conscious action which is, “the ability to generate personal initiative out of the motivation to contribute positively to the world...The activities offered in the curriculum are designed to transform what may be unconscious, inappropriate or damaging behaviour and to offer positive alternatives” (Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013, p. 48).

What is evident through his parents’ feedback is that Mark has developed significantly through the project, development which I believe other students have also undergone. This

development has a permanence and depth about it, which confirms Eisner's 'individual autonomy', and Mark's inspection of his own ideas; along with the discovery of more of 'the contours' of his 'emotional self.' He is a different Mark now to the one that started the project. Although other students demonstrated progress following the play, it was only Mark's parents who were able to comment.

4.1.9 Conclusion

In concluding, the narrative seems to indicate that this project fulfils some of the key Trust requirements. For example the integrated learning for living and work (ILLW) strand of student curriculum requires, "the development of creativity, team working, problem solving and communication – among other essential qualities." Also that PSTE offers students, "the possibility to develop confidence and a sense of purpose. This process is facilitated through the practical and therapeutic activities offered and culminates with the student's own experience of having developed skill, gratitude and a sense of service" (Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013, p. 22). As one student Charles said, "[Pericles] was a very enjoyable process. It changes things like your inner boundaries; your limits of confidence; the way you approach everyday situations. I think it changed people, allowing people to become more open and susceptible to life."

4.2 Analysis and interpretation of data

In the second part of chapter four, the presentation and analysis of findings, I will consider the data as it arises out of the conceptual framework. As the play *Pericles* has certain logic inherent within it, so does the conceptual framework. I will use the framework to present, analyse and interpret the data.

The play *Pericles* has its own internal logic, a logic that is totally unreal because it is a dramatic logic, not logic of the real world. There is, however, an internal logic created by Shakespeare that we accept for that context (Kelsall, 1985). As a reflective practitioner undertaking action research on my practice I will consider the internal logic of the context in which this project is embedded.

Having worked in the institution for fifteen years I know the kinds of students we provide for, and some of the individual students I have worked with for a number of years prior to the

production. I have an understanding why the Trust does things the way it does, and how this can inform the curriculum of the institution. Having worked as a therapist for some of the participants I am aware of the parallel their lives have taken with the story of Pericles, and how they have striven to make meaning of this. I will link the internal logic of *Pericles* to the situation I am in, with the kinds of young adults I work with, and process the data by linking it to the conceptual framework.

I am going to present and analyse the data from within the conceptual framework outlined in chapter two. The question this thesis is striving to answer is: How does a theatre production contribute to the development of young adults with learning difficulties? In this question there are three strands linking to different sub questions arising out of key principles of the Trust. Firstly: How does this experience affect the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural development of the participants? In Trust terminology, *how does this project support the development of self-generated conscious action?* Secondly: In what way does this affect the student in regard to preparation for work? Trust language would articulate this as *how does the project help the development of applied contemporary apprenticeship learning?* And thirdly: What processes and exercises most supported the students in preparation for the play? In Trust terminology this is articulated as, *how does the project develop the integration off the seven fields of practice?*

In analysing the data through the lens of the conceptual framework I will consider how the production went through the different performance processes in different phases of its execution. Whereas each performance process is an entire field in and of its self, the large scale production went through all of them, to a greater or lesser degree, throughout its duration.

4.2.1 Performance therapy

The manifestation of 'performance therapy' in the *Pericles* case study arises most directly from students who were in AST therapy with me alongside the *Pericles* production. Having spent eighteen months doing AST before and during the production, student Charles said:

It was never intended as a psychodrama, but Shakespeare's plays have an inherent psychodrama to them because of the kind of play they are. They have very heroic stories and they relate in some ways to the individual journeys of everybody else, and how we all have our own journeys in our inner selves. And

having this experience in the play helps us to take one step further towards becoming our own inner hero and our own Pericles.

Tutor Rick said that, “maybe it’s going to push boundaries, like if you’re autistic; you are already going to push against boundaries, like you are really going to experience a different way of being.” The different way of being indicates that a previously upheld boundary or understanding has been changed. It appears evident to me that the two quotations above encapsulate *self-generated conscious action* in their description of being called to do something and doing it freely.

Charles indicated that the personal changes that take place through such an event are transforming in a deep personal way. He suggests, “...it changes things like your inner boundaries, your limits of confidence, the way you approach everyday situations. People will be changed by the play allowing them to become more open and receptive to things.” Martin insisted that therapeutic changes had taken place within him, saying, “I think I learned to read people better, somewhat better than I could,” and that he has learnt to, “become more gentle with other people, without hitting them over the heads with large giant metaphorical hammers.” These statements reflect the basic tenant of *applied contemporary apprenticeship learning* by the indication that the students have learnt to become more tolerant and accepting of each other.

Regarding the care qualities indicated in the Trust principle *integration of the seven fields of practice*, tutor Laura said, “I think [Pericles] is a safe place to do it. [The themes] are issues of things they can come into contact with as they get older; it’s a safe environment for them to learn about these things.”

The implications for curriculum development in Performance Therapies are reflected in the ‘therapeutic safe space’ created in the *Pericles* production, and the direct psychotherapeutic support some students received through AST. One might ask, is it worth developing AST as a modality that could be taken up across the trust? Based on the analysis of the data I would like to recommend that this is taken further as an additional strand of research supported by Trust. I will look into this in the discussion and conclusion chapters.

4.2.2 Role-play and presentation

The manifestation in the *Pericles* case study of 'role-play and presentation,' arose in different spheres. Firstly in a workshop, for eight other staff in the Glasshouse College training week at the start of term. Tutor Jim and I ran a two hour session on the theme of *Pericles*, focusing on the preparation process. I reflected in my field notes:

Jim and I ran a taster session of drama for the staff to see and experience what we had done in the play. This was much appreciated, as no one wanted to sit down and talk, but rather to 'meet and express ourselves' and to 'get to know ourselves and each other better,' as some put it. There was the added sense that it gave some of them a better understanding of what it is we do in the drama department.

This experience reflects the *applied contemporary apprenticeship learning* principle that the trust embraces by supporting meaningful relationships.

Another sphere in which the performance process of 'role-play and presentation' was reflected was in the early stages of rehearsal, when the cast were asked to change roles. Jim commented that, "they have the opportunity to greet someone as a character that they weren't playing, [which] helped other people to understand all the characters apart from just their own." The exchange of roles enabled the cast to warm to each other and present improvisations in a light hearted and creative way.

A further application arose in the development of skills as Jim pointed out. Student Martin was, "remarkable, with his speech problems, he did it. He didn't find it easy but he worked on it and he got there and he did much better than I thought." These simple presentations and role-play exercises enabled a high level of learning to take place; falling into the key Trust principle of *integration of the seven fields of practice*.

Some of the data arising in the performance process 'role-play and presentation' indicate some implications for curriculum development. In regard to staff feedback about how the workshop experience connected them to each other, and to student skill development for more than just drama, I would like to consider the implications of a curriculum strand including: speech, movement and presentation skills; relationship to audience; working together; being seen, being heard and being understood. This could be a stand-alone unit

enriching student and staff development and contributing to participant development in Trust M.Sc. programme.

4.2.3 Cultural events in the theatre

The 'cultural events' performance process manifested in the *Pericles* case study primarily through those students and staff who were not in the production coming into the theatre and seeing the performance. As student Martin said, "I think we needed to have an audience pure and simply so we can say here is what we have massively achieved." This reflects the principle of *self-generated conscious action* through 'autonomy and self-mastery' conveyed in Martin's statement.

Considering the importance of 'cultural events' as a relationship between audience and artist student Charles said, "you don't have a production until it is seen by an audience...because nobody knows what is going to happen until you get under the limelight." This is a good reflection of the values of giving artefacts away and having them seen by others for validation as indicated in the Trust principle of *applied contemporary apprenticeship learning*.

Audience feedback indicates the value of the cultural events programme. Some comments following the *Pericles* production include those from the Principle who said he "loved it; and the play has grown into something amazing; it is like the Ruskin Mill ethos of the 'Seed to Table Process.'" A student in the audience said, "It's the best play I've ever seen." A member of the public praised it saying, "I was really impressed with the whole thing and pleasantly surprised. It was far more professional than I thought it would be," while another wrote, "to see your players present their play with such presence and engagement, to promenade, to be really caught up in the play with you all was a wonderful experience, equal to RSC in its own way." These comments reflect the richness of culture in the 'holistic support and care' field contained in the *integration of the seven fields of practice* principle.

4.2.4 Seasonal festivals in the rhythm of the year

Although the explicit manifestation of 'seasonal festivals in the rhythm of the year' did not occur in the *Pericles* case study, it was implied. One occurrence arose when we ran through the play just before the Easter break, in which the death and resurrection of Thiesia the wife of

Pericles, took place. We missed an opportunity to do this scene as a contribution to a seasonal festival in the rhythm of the year; however it was explicit for some of the college which was reflected in my field notes:

At Easter we did a run through of the play for an invited audience. Some mentioned the death and resurrection aspects of Thesa at Ephesus. Later in the morning meeting I read from The Phoenix by D.H. Lawrence, and the staff and students were very still.

There was a mood of reverence in the morning meeting that resonated in the Easter theme, which, I believe, is the essence of the 'seasonal celebrations'. The final performance of *Pericles* did take place in the other Christian festival of Whitsun on the 24th June. The yield of data implied a powerful Whitsun experience did manifest in *Pericles*. As with many of the different religious festivals, the Christian Whitsun festival of Pentecost can be seen as a meeting of people with a common inspiration. In this regard a student's mother reflected on her son's experience in *Pericles* saying:

[he had a] powerful sense of belonging both to the cast and to College, which he had not felt to nearly the same extent before the project...he had a great sense of loyalty to cast members both students and staff and appreciation that success of project was due to efforts of the whole team.

The key Trust principle that is identified in the performance process of 'seasonal celebrations in the rhythm of the year' is primarily the *integration of the seven fields of practice*. Specifically in regard to bio-dynamic ecology, as the seasons are most clearly manifest on the farm and land work. During rural festivals the telling and enactment of stories and plays from around the world can take place with the College life.

Some recommendations for the development for curriculum include sourcing and adapting content; the development of 'mood and context' within College; and the processes for bringing a cast together in a very short time to develop festive contributions of stories, poems and music.

4.2.5 Drama scenes and presentations

The 'drama scenes and presentations' performance process was a major focus in the *Pericles* case study, especially in the first term during the early stages of rehearsals with drama classes, storytelling, mask work and games and improvisations. These classes were led by

different tutors in singing, movement, speech and improvisation. The development of skills manifested in the data was acknowledged by students and staff alike. Tutor Rick described the success of the speech exercises that were regularly undertaken:

The students really got into the playful rhymes and things that were said, so through play they were training themselves. They could get into it because it was a play or game that they enjoyed doing, and at the same time it was a tongue twister that developed the way they spoke.

Student Nikki talked about what helped her learn lines saying, "I had to remember the lines, I struggled with learning them together, but everybody helped me in trying to memorise a few lines. At times what helped to vocalise was physicalizing it. It was really good." Doing physical movements while speaking sounds, words and sentences was the key for Nikki learning her lines. The skills were not, however, always straightforward for the students learning. Mark, an autistic young man, was not able to contain himself, which I reflected upon in my field notes, "*With some of the speech exercises Mark would take over from the director and teach them to the group himself.*"

Regarding the principle of *applied contemporary apprenticeship learning*, all the tutors agreed that they experienced themselves as mentors to the students' learning experience. Jim said, "I tried to see myself as a performer who was performing alongside the rest of the company of students so that something would rub off,[to show them] this is the way you need to be," and "they see our relationship as tutors, as well as being performers alongside them; so world of tutor and student somewhat disappears." Rick said, "I saw myself as a performer and as pastoral support for the students." Regarding taking direction, this practice of role-modelling was identified later by Rick saying, "It's good role modelling because if they see you taking on that direction they have less reason to refuse to take direction themselves because they are seeing other tutors taking direction from a tutor." Tutor Laura spent many sessions with some of the lead students helping them to access the language. She described her role as follows:

I saw myself as a tutor, but you're also an actor, and also care [...] I spent months and months with Nikki and Mark working lines, thinking of the context of them, the emotional expression and all those sorts of things [...] I think because of the age I am the students see me as a mother. I become mum at college when their

own aren't there, so I've also got that one as well.

This process is also about coming to a sense of self mastery and autonomy, where skills are developed over time, and yet there are playful learning experiences as well. Regarding what he enjoyed most, one student said, "I enjoyed the part when Don and I were practicing our sword fighting for the play, and I liked it when Mark and I came face to face." Don shared his experience playing in a mask saying, "It feels black in a mask, like I am in another place, like I am in a different world, far away. The mask gave me power." The power of the mask and the enjoyable encounter with the swords were highlights for these autistic young men.

Along with the development of practical skills the mentor role modelling reflects a rich opportunity for the curriculum. The following implications for the development of a curriculum that educates the head, heart and hand, with a view to being psychological and spiritual, include:

- Theatre games including balance in gravity and levity; expansion and contraction etc
- Improvisations on themes of myths and legends
- Speech developing breath, articulation, with dynamics out of movement
- Movement incorporating the three planes of space and Greek gymnastics
- Mask exercises including Four Temperaments; Commedia dell 'Arte
- Performance material: dialogues from plays imbued with rich archetypes, rather than modern psychological abstractions

What follows is the main performance process that was the primary focus of the *Pericles* case study.

4.2.6 Full scale theatre productions

The *Pericles* case study was a 'full scale theatre production.' The data indicates five different themes that are manifest in this project. These themes are: working as a company; containment; work experience through an apprentice model; stage-management; front of house and; producing.

The theme of *working as a company* falls into the principle category of *applied contemporary apprenticeship learning*, and was acknowledged by all tutors involved and poignantly expressed by Tutor Laura in the following paragraph:

It gives them that experience of what working with a theatre company would be like. The director treats you as an actor; and having the experience of working with a stage-manager and to know the discipline of how a theatre works [...] they might not always find that easy, but they have done it and they have pulled off those performances.

Jim pointed out how the staff modelled taking direction saying, "I think also the fact that they can see us as performers from time to time getting frustrated, but the fact is that we also take direction as well." The contracted stage-manager, Gillian, described the student learning as an energetic process, suggesting that, "the energy [the teacher performers] bring to a role, even though it's like a non-tangible, can be described as a felt way of learning, a felt experience. An exchange in an energetic way." I think this is a good description of the inner process of *applied contemporary apprenticeship learning* because of the practitioners' role modelling the learning for the students.

The theme of containment manifested in the Trust principle of integrating the field of 'holistic support and care.' An exercise that helps develop containment is the check-in and check-out at the beginning and end of each session which encourages the development of empathy. Laura reflected on this process saying:

They allow the individual to reflect on how they actually feel, but it also allows them to appreciate how everybody else is feeling that day or at that moment. And then it allows them to reassess how they feel afterwards and think about it consciously, but they can reassess afterwards.

Laura reflected further on the benefits of working in a 'company' saying they "work together as a team, as a company, and they support each other." There was evidence that the student Don who struggled with feelings of sadness found that having done this exercise he would become less sad and re-join the group again. For other students Laura suggested that these processes help students to, "all support each other and they make friends."

The containment of time and structure of the schedule of an ongoing performance created safety, and the ability to learn that failure is part of success. Stage-manager Gillian said that by working in the frame of the performance students can develop:

...trust in themselves and get themselves through it no matter how difficult. Because they have that experience of moments of failure, in a structured timeline they can look back on their project and say 'well, I lost that moment, I will admit that, but I still managed to keep going forward.'

There are a set of employability skills that were developed within the context of working in a theatre with a paying audience. This had different focus areas, firstly in the behavioural development, secondly in technical skills and thirdly social skills. Jonny, a student cast member emphasised the importance of having to wait quietly for his queue to go on the stage saying, "I know we had to keep quiet when someone else was taking their part in the play. And when you finished the play you had to keep quiet when you were getting changed." The capacity for a young adult to manage their attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is well illustrated. Charles, a high functioning autistic student who did the lighting under supervision described the challenge of managing his behaviour when things went wrong. He said "there were times when the lighting did not come on and I held it, and I held it and I did not shout. "

Charles, who had a small theatre role in the play, described the challenge of his first time on stage saying, "It's very hard to be able to hold a stage presence and be able to keep the audience enticed. So one of the key lessons I learned was that acting is not just a walk in the park." The pleasure of having to manage herself professionally was clearly articulated by Nikki, a student on the autistic spectrum, who said, "We had to be tidy and not to mess around stuff, and I had to remember the lines. It was really good though." She continued later saying, "I had to scream, but not too loud... I learnt how to control my emotions, focusing and concentrating well." These indications of control of emotions and concentration are manifestations of the Trust principle of *self-generated conscious action*.

Stage-manager Gillian, reflected on the significance for an Asperger's student with an oppositional defiance disorder saying, "she really had to try to find a common ground and respect with me, and I think that was an interesting challenge for her." My understanding is that the student in question had no basis for a conflict which she might have had with other

staff whom she had known longer, and when being put on the spot she overcame her own tendencies to argue, and complied with the request from the stage-manager.

The *integration of fields of practice* including 'overcoming impediments, considering others, and taking on the craft,' are well documented in the following descriptions by students. Commenting on what he enjoyed most Mark said, "What I enjoyed was the fact that we were all trying our best." Martin said he learnt, "To become more gentle with other people, without hitting them over the heads with large giant metaphorical hammers." Harry, a student musician, said, "I felt confident, not shy. I rehearsed well." Regarding what was challenging another said, "I would say for me it was actually bothering to learn the script. I had to slightly suppress the urge to adlib."

Some of the frustrations experienced by students that were challenging for both staff and students were well documented by Mark's mother:

- Frustration during process of learning lines.
- Increased stress and pressure in final run up to performances meant we had to look for ways to relieve pressure at home.
- Anger and confusion at what he perceived to be mixed or confusing messages at times both during rehearsals and with parents while practising lines at home.

She reflected that Mark did not understand many of the production processes and the complexity and challenges of the director's role, which meant, "Mark could not always understand why his worries were not always everyone's top priority or why his ideas could not always be taken on board!" These are examples that were experienced by many students from time to time and identify the complexity and pressure inherent in the case study. However, what is significant is that the conditions manifested an unexpected outcome, as Mark's mother later relayed that he has a better "understanding that achieving goals requires hard work and that there will be obstacles and challenges along the way." In Mark's own words he summed up the meaning he made of the experience saying:

I kept on doing this play because I believe in one thing, Heroes! For example, Pericles is not the only hero, but we are the heroes, doing what we were supposed to be doing, putting smiles on people's faces, especially little ones and even our proud parents....when we embrace this giant step into acting we could go through

anything in life.

I believe that because of the challenges the following developments were noted by Mark's mother three months after the *Pericles* production finished:

- Greater self-belief in his ability to achieve his goals.
- Belief in his ability to perform.
- Improved confidence in his ability to interact with wider range of people both in and outside college.
- Formed real friendships with a couple of cast members, one of whom he has met up with over the summer.
- Tremendous sense of personal achievement.
- Confidence and increased self-confidence.
- Feeling of being respected by far more people in College, which is extremely important to him.
- Demonstrated to us and peers and staff in college what he could achieve with the right support.

Following this major performance process, some recommendations for curriculum development could include: acting in a play; back stage work, including being a stage hand, lighting, stage management; wardrobe, including costumes, textiles and ironing. Hospitality is another curriculum recommendation including front of house, box office, stewarding and refreshments.

4.2.7 Engaging in other communities

The final performance process engaging in other communities did not manifest directly in the *Pericles* case study, as the show did not tour. However, we met with audiences after the performances and got feedback, and engaged with the community of the college and public in a new way. Some students who were not residential had the experience of working in the evenings, away from their families and the home routines. Mark was a case study within a case study in this respect. As Rick said with regard to Mark's family seeing him in a new light, "For instance the level of pride that Mark's family had for him, holding that lead role, they were absolutely gobsmacked by him and the fact that he could pull it off considering his

autism, compared to where he was when he first came to college.” Concluding this performance process of engaging with community, which would normally be on a larger scale with the entire cast touring to another venue, I will cite Mark’s mother saying:

The whole project has been a real journey for Mark with plenty of frustration, anger and self-doubt along the way. But ultimately it has been an amazing learning experience for him, which has ended with a great boost to his self-confidence, a powerful sense of belonging and, above all, a tremendous sense of achievement. On the way home last night he reflected that he would really miss the play when it was over and that he did not want it to end.

Recommendations for curriculum could include: taking productions to other schools in the local area; touring productions to the other RMT colleges; touring productions to communities including sleep overs; touring to professional venues to invite audiences with specialist educational interests; taking productions to festivals: School Shakespeare Festivals, and festivals in other countries.

4.2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have considered the narrative of the *Pericles* production, outlining the different stages the cast and crew went through from inception to gathering data at the end. I followed on by looking at each of the seven performance processes as they manifested within the *Pericles* case study. I have indicated how some of the Trust principles have been met in some of these instances. Examples from the case study have been minimal in some of the processes including ‘role-play and presentation, seasonal celebrations and engaging with communities,’ all of which are significant areas in the Trust artistic performance arena. However, the performance processes of ‘performance therapies, cultural events, drama and presentations, and full scale theatre productions’ were, I believe, significantly validated in the case study.

5.0 Discussion

In this chapter I will summarise the outcomes of the case study in regard to the performance processes, and key educational principles of RMT. I will continue by considering manifestations outside of the case study citing previous productions and situations in which these occurred. PSTE principles in seven performance processes will be considered, to see whether developing further principles for the performing arts could support the curriculum development process. I will go on to consider the tension experienced in the production and general education across the Trust through the views of 'Bildung' and 'Curriculum,' and I will conclude by making recommendations for curriculum including a cross college theatre production.

5.1 Summary of the outcomes of the case study

When summarising the outcomes of the case study, and looking at the main points of impact the production had on particular pupils, while relating it to the theoretical framework, the following becomes evident:

The 'performance therapies process' helps with confidence, encouraging students to become more open and receptive to things, with some students saying they learned how to control their emotions better, understand people better, and become more gentle with others. Another student indicated how the therapy helped him find his inner Pericles, a turn of phrase I connect to the principle of 'self-generated conscious action' through his ability to 'generate personal initiative out of the motivation to contribute positively to the world.'

In the 'presentations and role play process' drama workshops for other colleagues enabled staff to meet and express themselves and get to know each other better. There was the additional experience of giving them a better understanding of what is undertaken within the drama department.

The 'cultural events process' indicated that the positive audience response validated the experience for cast members. Some of the challenging content in the play helped students both in the cast and in the audience to understand and in some instances deal better with difficult life situations. The importance of an audience both for the actors and the audience themselves was significantly demonstrated through being witnesses to a rites of passage for some of the cast members. Through the lens of trust principles, the outcome of giving

meaning to the lives of students indicated once again how ‘self-generated conscious action’ was experienced by some.

The ‘seasonal celebrations process’ revealed a powerful sense of belonging both to cast and college. One student said he had a greater sense of loyalty to both students and staff cast members and the appreciation that the success of project was due to efforts of the team as a whole.

In the ‘drama classes process’ it was indicated that the warm up exercises helped students share and respond to feelings more than they had before the process started. Movement and games proved helpful in doing speech exercises and learning lines. Skill learning was seen to have been most effective when student were encouraged to play and have fun whilst working hard in an atmosphere where it was alright to make mistakes. The principle of integrating the even field of practice is evident here in the field of ‘practical skill.’

In ‘large scale theatre productions’ students enjoyed having to be ‘professional’ in their behaviour. The staff become role models and experienced their roles as fellow actors alongside students, which gave the students the opportunity to witness how staff dealt with challenges. Shakespeare’s language helped some students explore new meanings and different ways of experiencing themselves. Working with big archetypes enabled some of the students to reach beyond themselves and do things that had not been set as targets. Contemporary applied apprenticeship learning is evident here.

The ‘cultural exchange process’ of the external theatrical tour helped a student who felt isolated in being supported by others. During the rehearsals some students became more open and able to socialise with people outside of the production.

Performance processes not well illustrated in the case study include ‘presentations and role-play’, ‘seasonal celebrations’ and ‘cultural exchange’, which will be considered below.

5.2 Manifestations outside of the case study

There have been various contexts outside of the *Pericles* case study in which performance processes have been more developed than in the case study. In the case of ‘role-play and presentations’ there have been a number of situations that give weight to the importance of developing this more consciously. Primarily it is in the field of staff training both as experiential workshops described in 5.1, and more commonly in PSTE staff development. I

am the lead trainer in a staff development unit on: Level four, stage three PSTE entitled *Understanding Human Development*. In this course I have used drama and masks on three occasions to explore different themes. On the first occasion this helped develop an understanding of how thinking, feeling and willing can be brought into balance. In the second instance drama and neutral masks were used to explore the concept of body, soul and spirit. On the third occasion we looked at the theme of the four temperaments through drama and masks. In all three instances participating staff indicated that a threshold was crossed in order to work with drama and masks; however, insights were gained because the themes were explored in a creative, playful and uncritical manner.

These examples, including requests to contribute drama and masks in the Trust MSc programme, suggest the effectiveness of drama outside of the therapy context on the one hand, and the artistic performance on the other.

In the 'seasonal celebrations performance process' there have been regular occurrences outside of the case study, primarily in the religious festivals including Christian, Hindu and Muslim celebrations. In these occasions a mood of reverence and celebration arose, in which story, drama, poetry and music played a part. Examples from different productions include the dramatized stories in the Michaelmas play of the *Dragon*, and the *Kings Play* just after Christmas. In these instances, little time was needed to bring a meaningful contribution together with students who do not necessarily have the ability to undertake a longer and more demanding rehearsal process. This is also where the level of artistic achievement is not the key, rather the celebratory nature of the time and occasion which frames the contribution. These examples suggest that the performing arts have a significant role with in the Trust colleges in making a sizeable contribution to the seasonal celebrations and festivals in the rhythm of the year.

Finally, 'engaging with other communities', the performance process that includes touring a production to other venues, which was not taken up in a significant way in the *Pericles* case study, has manifested in other productions. Over the past fifteen years I have directed five productions that have toured to other venues; on two occasions this included a sleep over. There have also been occasions in which staff from one of the other colleges, have toured shows further afield. Two such occasions include touring Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale* to Ephesus, and another taking a production of *Pericles* to the Globe theatre London. *The*

Servant of two Masters by Goldoni, a show I directed, toured to a prison, and the others to venues up and down the country. On these occasions some of the most significant learning seemed to take place, primarily on the level of rites of passage. I have personally witnessed on three occasions, students move across the threshold from child to ‘adult’, in which they shouldered responsibility and made self-generated conscious decisions. On one occasion this was leaving the college and getting a job, on another it was a day student sleeping away from home for the first time and becoming aware that he could cope and succeed without his parents. In a third it was going to a university, a very rare occurrence indeed. This appears to suggest that Trust colleges would benefit from touring theatre productions and engaging with other communities.

In summarising the impact of both the *Pericles* case study and other examples that contextualise the *seven performance processes*, it is evident that drama, theatre and the performing arts have a vital role to play across the Trust, which would benefit from implementing various strategies that make this consistent both for our young adults with complex needs and staff and tutors working with them.

I will now consider the challenges faced due to differing educational approaches and how this might impact on curriculum development.

5.3 Building bridges between Bildung and Curriculum

Is the Ruskin Mill Trust attempting to broker peace between the warring traditions of curriculum and Bildung? RMT seeks to achieve what Ofsted, the official standards of education regulators require of the Anglo-American ‘Curriculum’ tradition used in mainstream schools in Britain today, while the ‘Bildung’ tradition inspired by Rudolf Steiner in the Waldorf impulse is what Trust leaders are trying to inculcate. The question of war between traditions has long been acknowledged.

The RMT educational paradigm arises out of the Bildung approach to education. This pioneering approach to mentoring of the student by highly skilled crafts people introduces a lawfulness inherent in traditional crafts. Complemented by diagnosing what the student needs, a lesson plan can be created to meet the specific student. This approach is highly effective for young adults with complex needs who tend not to fit into the pre-moulded curriculum of the mainstream school.

What RMT strives toward is a Bildung plantation within the Curriculum field of operating. In relation to practice being developed within the Trust, the response to government policy is to meet quantitative goals with qualitative experiences. Trust policy ensures that tutors deliver content in accordance to the vision and values of the trust. In response to the student voice, management takes the student council mandate and weaves it into the life of the college.

To balance the curriculum based staff training, PSTE seeks to awaken and develop an understanding and practice of the Bildung approach to human development and the holistic education of the head, heart and hands for students and within the staff body.

There is a knife edge between getting the Bildung approach to work with some staff, and the Curriculum requirements for others. Each practitioner has a history with one or another of these traditions within RMT. There is no option to abandon vision and values; one might say they are only becoming formed consciously for the practitioner as I write. In relation to change, this is as much to do with the times in which we live as it is with the Trust itself.

We live in a time of paradox, when the ability of the human being to live comfortably in tension becomes more tenable. I believe this present climate is teaching us something important: in building a bridge between extreme differences, we need interest in the other. I will consider this in the recommendations for curriculum.

5.4 Recommendations for curriculum

I believe the performing arts have a role to play in RMT student development. How can drama and the performing arts become more cohesive across the trust?

Trust leaders have indicated the importance of including more than just drama in curriculum development, which they have indicated could include making and using musical instruments, mask making and using and the educational value of theatre activities including hospitality and back stage in a new curriculum. What follows is a proposal of how some of these ideas may be implemented and indications incorporated into an unrestrictive curriculum of the performing arts.

During this research project it has become apparent that there are various principles inherent in the performing arts which are not clearly articulated in the Practitioners Guide (Gordon & Von Bulow, 2013). What these principles are is not entirely clear, but they would need to concern themselves with the immaterial nature of performance on the one hand, and to the

lawfulness required out of a human development perspective on the other. The question is what are the principles evident in the performing arts which can be interpreted with each person's biography? If the principles are defined, the archetypes inherent in them do not need to be too specific, but rather can be held in the mood of PSTE. This proposal supports the idea that ownership be shared with all stakeholders in the process, as indicated by Murdoch (as cited in O'Toole, et al, 2009) in the literature review. I believe this would also bring about a contemporary Bildung approach by drawing on the individual qualities and abilities of the tutors alongside the ideals of the Trust.

The creation and development of a performing arts practitioner's guide (PAPG) comprised of key principles and general coordinates could help the development of a programme of courses, giving rise to units of PSTE curriculum that can be taken up by practitioners across the Trust. In developing a PAPG the content can be left free for practitioners to develop their own practice, and yet be held with a context of PSTE principles. The guide can serve in articulating drama in this context and might be useful to the Trust at some future point.

In order to develop key principles for a PAPG, a significant piece of consultation and shared practice will need to be undertaken. In my understanding of the context, the primary contributors would initially need to be Trust leaders and policy originators. These stakeholders would be followed by all staff involved in Trust drama, music, hospitality and cultural events, beginning with subject leaders and following through to all practitioners. A further piece of consultation with parents and funders would, I believe, make for a robust approach to an informed curriculum development process. Outside 'subject specialists' will be required to bring specific content to the process, including speech and drama, back-stage, fundraising, play writing, stage-management, stage and costume design.

A two year period of secondment from the Glasshouse College to Ruskin Mill Trust could enable this piece of work to be undertaken. This period could initially be composed of a process of consultation with key trust stakeholders to begin formulating the key principles for the PAPG. This could include sharing of best practice with staff and colleagues across the trust in the different subject areas relating to the performing arts. A further period could take the form of practitioner action research on practice, during which a dialogue with stakeholders could take place regarding best practice arising out of Trust values and early indications of key performing arts principles.

A third phase could consolidate findings from the action research and curriculum development in a cross-college theatre production. Further to role of developing the curriculum in specific subject areas with colleagues across the trust, a cross-college theatre production will enable collaborative learning and sharing practice outside of the classroom. This will require an additional piece of work that could have a significant impact on understanding and embedding PSTE practice.

This could be undertaken by inviting staff and students from Ruskin Mill and Freeman College's performing arts departments to come to the Glasshouse College Arts Centre to rehearse for a day a week. The Glasshouse being located between the other two colleges, and having a well-developed theatre and rehearsal room infra-structure, would offer an ideal venue for the major part of this project

The rehearsal period would put into practice all the things that have been developed over the first year and culminate in a joint production to tour to all Trust colleges and schools and to continue further afield to other associated venues.

The role of undertaking this programme development could be entitled: RMT Performing Arts Development co-ordinator, or Head of Performing Arts for RMT. The processes of collaborative action research on drama curriculum would be undertaken in ten phases. At the final phase we could arrive at a qualification. The first four phases would be for consultation and stakeholder interface; second three phases for developing and evaluating pilot qualifications, last three are delivering and assessing qualifications (For more detail see Appendix 4).

5.5 Conclusion

In this discussion I have summarised the outcomes of the case study in regard to the performance processes, and key educational principles of RMT, highlighting their lack of emergence in 'presentation and role play,' 'seasonal celebrations' and 'cultural exchanges.' I continued by considering manifestations outside of the case study citing previous productions and situations in which these occurred. These gave an overall indication of the relevance not only of the conceptual framework, but also the development of curriculum ideas for the areas cited. I went on to consider the tension experienced in the production and literature of different views of 'Bildung' and 'Curriculum' based education which are inherent in the

Trust; and I concluded by making recommendations for curriculum including a cross college theatre production.

6.0 Conclusion

The question I have been considering throughout this thesis is: How does a theatre production contribute to the development of young adults with complex needs? The auxiliary questions arising are: How would such a production affect the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural development of the participants? What processes and exercises most supported the students in preparation for the play?, a question refereeing to curriculum content; and: In what way would the project affect the student in regard to preparation for work?

In order to answer this question I looked at the problem of the Ruskin Mill Trust collages not having a coherent approach to drama, as there is no curriculum shaping a common practice among practitioners. I have sited a case study in which I consider how a drama production helped the development of young adults with complex needs. In addition to the case study I indicated how a strand of action research was undertaken, reflecting on my practice and how it could improve.

In the literature review I considered the history of drama in education, reflecting on the different strands from *process drama* to *scripted theatre*, and how significant they both are for a holistic approach to teaching drama. I considered the educational principles that the Ruskin Mill Trust works with, and how they aim to develop *self-generated conscious action* in students. I indicated an alternative drama stream inspired by Rudolf Steiner and Michael Chekhov, whose work is in line with the ethos of the trust, and I considered what impact this might have on young adults with complex needs. I reflected on how little research there is on the effects of drama on young adults with complex needs, and what this project might have to offer the field.

In considering the methodology I proposed a conceptual framework arising out of the theories in the literature review within which to situate the performing arts in the Trust. The framework entitled *seven performance processes* inspired by Steiner's *life processes* encapsulates the broad field of practice across the Trust including therapies, role play, cultural events, seasonal celebrations, drama scenes, full length productions and touring and engaging in other communities. I considered the methods of case study and action research, reflecting on the participants, the ethics and procedures undertaken.

In the presentation of findings I looked at the narrative of the case study considering the experience of undertaking the production, *Pericles*, by Shakespeare with the staff and

students in the Glasshouse College. The nine month project underwent a series of different phases which participants reflected on in the interviews. What is revealed is the positive and challenging affect the experience had on the participants, including the effectiveness that various activities, processes and exercise had, and how they contributed to the overall success. In the analysis and interpretation of data I looked at how the case study manifest in the performance processes, and where they did not. What becomes evident is that some of the performance processes were addressed in the case study and others were not. The processes most evident in the case study were performance therapies, cultural events, drama scenes, and full-scale productions.

I followed in the discussion by summering the outcomes of the case study, and making the case for drama with young adults with complex needs. I reflected on other examples outside of the case study in which performance processes not manifest in the case study have arisen in the past. These include role play, seasonal celebrations and, touring and engaging with other communities. I recommended that a form of collaborative research be undertaken in order to develop a Performing Arts Practitioners Guide, which can create a basis from which curriculum can be developoed. This would best be undertaken by the researcher taking two years of secondment to work Trust wide as the next step of the actin research process.

6.1 What worked

I will briefly reflect on some of the key areas where the case study was successful. Exercises and processes that supported the *Pericles* project include:

The ‘Golden Hoop’ exercise created by Michael Chekhov (1991) referred to in the literature review can help develop ensemble. In the golden hoop exercise the cast place an imaginary golden hoop on the ground in front of them before each rehearsal. At the end of the rehearsal the golden hoop is lifted up and thrown into the air, sending it up into the sky, the rafters, the heavens for safe keeping. This brings a ‘religious’ moment together; helps focus and engendering a sense of belonging.

The process of ‘checking in and out’ each day to see how each individual felt before and after each rehearsal helped to create trust, while experiencing themselves as part of a cohesive group who know that their feelings matter and are important.

Speech exercises which have imaginations and movement accompanying them brought in a fun and playful manner worked with all the cast especially with a student with semantic pragmatic disorder (SPD).

The improvisation of all scenes and the entire play before introducing the text was particularly helpful for students with ASD who think more in pictures than in words.

Time needs to be taken to support ASD students in getting in to the emotional truth of the characters and situations. What worked well was working from the outside-in, as Grandin and Barron (2005) indicated in chapter two, for example, showing them how the body behaves when you cry, was a starting point for the character to eventually shed tears.

Large-scale theatre productions which are rehearsed over the period of a year, culminating with a number of performances in a theatre gave the possibility for security and rhythm to be established, for balance and trust to arise, and for reliability and safety to be generated. This was helpful for all involved, and particularly significant for students with ASD, as suggested by Allan (2013) in the literature review, and OCD.

6.2 What did not work

There were occasions, however, during which some of the exercises and processes did not have the anticipated effect. What follows are some of the activities and exercises that did not work as well as intended and needed to be developed:

On a number of occasions students took over running the speech sessions, which although being very self-generated, led to a number of students damaging their voices, indicating a lack of conscious action. This happened a few times when an enthusiastic high functioning ASD young man insisted on taking the class. Even though this was high energy and fun, it was also chaotic and became counterproductive. This was partially ameliorated by bringing consciousness to the initiative through coaching those ‘enthusiastic’ students in running various speech exercises ‘gently.’

During some of the more powerful exercises and processes, some high functioning ASD students got ‘out’ of themselves and collapsed on the floor in fits of shakes, and sometimes uncontrolled laughter. These included lengthy improvisations, speed runs and big character work. In order to manage this behaviour the students in question were offered a ‘time-out’

clause before they got out of control which included sitting out with a tutor, possibly in another room.

When parents and carers were not able for whatever reason, to support the students at home in preparation for the work they became distressed and unfocused. This was particularly strong with ADD students when they were not able to learn their lines at home and their levels of self-esteem could fall very low in rehearsals. In these cases it became evident that contact time needed to be built into the session for line learning for students who could not do so outside of session time. It became clear that some parents and carers were able to support student in this activity at home in the evenings and weekends, which made all the difference.

If the schedule was not sufficiently detailed and worked through, problems involving not being on time, in the right location or being unsupported would undermine productive rehearsals. This was particularly evident with students having high levels of OCD. This problem was overcome by rigorous production meetings with all staff and managers to underpin requirements through the structure of the college organisation.

6.3 What this research was not able to achieve, and what next?

In considering the Trust requirement of developing curriculum for the performing arts, there are three main strands that would need to be developed beyond this project. Even though these processes were successfully reflected in the case study, they are much bigger than the case study was able to demonstrate, and will need more consideration:

- Developing the ‘performance therapies’ beyond my own practice into a form of action therapy supportive of RMT student’s needs.
- How to choose a story or play in the ‘drama scenes and storytelling’ and ‘full length theatre production’ in regard to the given context of students, time of year, college situation and staff interest: basically the genius loci of choosing a play.

It is evident that a good choice of play might be described as one that considers the participants, the situation they are in, the time, and the passion and skills of the project leaders undertaking it. A good choice of play will also need to be considered alongside what has been done before, and what might be required following the production, so a balance might be found in the different dramatic productions over the course of a year or two. This will need to be developed collaboratively.

- The full implications of the educational value and potential of the *cultural events* programme for young adults with complex needs.

These strands, along with the further development of all the performance processes into principles, programmes and units of curriculum, is part of the next phase of the action research strand of the project.

The phases of action research that have been achieved so far are firstly, the identification of the problem: there *is no consistent performing arts curriculum across the Trust*. Secondly, the plan of the research: in which a *case study of a drama production* has been undertaken with the question: how does participating in a drama production affect young adults with complex needs? Thirdly, the data collection and analysis: structured through the *conceptual framework*; and fourthly, the present phase of considering the *new actions based on research findings*, including developing a consistent drama curriculum, reflecting the recommendations arising from the case study. Following this, an evaluation of the action will need to be undertaken, and the new actions reviewed. The new actions proposed as recommendations in 5.5 will need to be taken up as the fifth action research phase.

I will now return to the bigger picture to consider what impact this project might have had on the field as a whole.

6.4 Reflecting on the bigger picture

In considering the bigger picture, and the extent to which this case study could be used to generalise outside of the context of the commission by the Trust, I will follow the recommendations cited in chapter two by Jindal-Snape and Vittrano (2008). In reflecting on seven of their recommendations I will consider where the case study might suggest valid, robust creation of new knowledge.

To substantiate research it was recommended that the researcher has knowledge and experience in the field. This study has a practitioner action research strand, with the question, ‘how can I improve my practice of fifteen years in the field?’ Along with colleagues whose experience ranges from eighteen months to six years, this appears to be an indication of validity. It was further recommended that the period of time for the project to take place would be at least over a few weeks, which in the situation of the case study was longer. The entire process took place during thirty-four weeks over a nine month period, with sessions

lasting between four and twelve hours long. Regarding the recommendation that the group includes more than one participant with special needs being observed, this case study appears to have met the requirement observing fifteen participants, three female and twelve male, ranging between seventeen and twenty-two years of age.

The recommendation that the 'special needs' and 'psychological diagnoses' of the participants be explicitly stated, appears to have been met as follows: In all cases the diagnosis included ASD with additional symptoms such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), attention deficit disorder (ADD), obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), oppositional defiance disorder (ODD), semantic pragmatic disorder (SPD), Schizophrenia, Attachment Disorder, and various physical disabilities including partial sight and hearing.

Jindle-Snape and Vittrano (2005) recommended that the research design be presented clearly to make the claims more credible, allowing the reader to make their own judgment, and for ease of replication. The project was a mixed-method design. The first was using action research method in order to explore the researcher's own practice and see how it could improve. This method was embedded in the second, a case study, centring on a group of students doing a theatre production with staff.

It was further recommended that the research period be broken into specific processes and exercises to enable measurable components, which the *Pericles* case study seems to exemplify. *Pericles* was developed over nine months, from individual psychodrama with some students, to improvisations and early exploratory work, through to working in the theatre, putting the play on the stage and performing before an audience. All these phases are documented.

To the recommendation that the effectiveness of specific drama processes and techniques be recorded, the empirical data appears to have yielded much fruit. I will look at the effectiveness of a number of processes; then some of the key techniques; and finally I will consider specific exercises on particular diagnoses, looking at what worked and what was less effective. What follows is a summary of accounts on the effectiveness of some of the processes:

Trust: With the vulnerable nature of some young adults with ADD, ASD and complex needs, trust is an essential component for a project like this. Trust exercises and social processes including checking in on how each person felt at the beginning and end of each session and

helping students share feelings and listening to the feelings of others. This helped to create a cohesive group who knew that their feelings mattered and were important. This supported students who felt isolated in being brought together and having a group place to belong. A parent remarked that her ASD son had developed a powerful sense of belonging both to cast and college, which he had not felt before the project.

Socialisation: During the rehearsals some students became more open and able to socialise with people outside of the production. It has become evident that participating in a drama production helped students to develop confidence in their abilities and competencies, and to become more open and receptive to others. A number of ASD students said they learned how to better control their emotions, understand people's feelings, and become gentler with others.

Role-modelling: When staff role-modelled as actors with a professional training and experience, it gave students the opportunity to experience how to take direction, manage their feelings, and get on with the work. The tutors experienced their roles as fellow actors alongside students, with an additional strand of pastoral care. The enthusiasm tutors displayed in practicing their craft became infectious for the students, who rose to the occasion to achieve a higher standard than they had expected. The equality and professionalism gave students the experience of being treated as valuable adults.

Professionalism: It became evident that the professional work ethic had a significant impact on the success of the project. Students described enjoying the challenge of professional behaviour like having to wait for their queues back stage, and control their feelings. For most of the student cast who suffered with chronic low self-esteem, this gave them the experience of what working with a theatre company would be like, and the esteem an enthusiastic audience would engender. The experience of working with a stage-manager and the discipline of how a theatre works enabled common ground and mutual respect from a number of ODD students with professional contracted staff. In the year that followed this saw a number of students attending professional courses that would hitherto have seemed highly improbable.

Skills through playful-discipline: Regarding learning lines and speaking in character, students indicated that when they struggled it helped to do physical movements and gestures with words and sounds. This brought the meaning of the text alive, helped with memorising lines,

and speaking the words clearly. The consistent daily speech exercises brought with accentuated sounds and movements in playful rhythmic manner, enabled students, some with SPD who could speak very little, if at all, to gradually take part. This process enabled, on a number of occasions, two of the most inaudible students to lead speech exercises. This would inevitably lead to a round of applause.

Failing as part of success: Regarding the importance of being able to make mistakes three students said, “it’s ok to make mistakes”. Some tutors were able to role-model failure as being acceptable. Students were sometimes encouraged to do things differently, or wrong, like swapping roles temporarily or speed running scenes. This enabled some of the ASD and OCD students to loosen up and enjoy doing it differently or getting it ‘wrong’. It became evident that the frame of doing a number of performances helped students recover from moments of failure and try again and ‘get it right’ in the next one.

Shakespeare goes beyond targets: In working with the challenging classical text of Shakespeare students and staff both indicated how it helped to explore new meanings and understand different ways of experiencing oneself. Two students said that the poetry in the script was as wired as their own thoughts, ‘in other words, normal’. It was revealed that working with big archetypes like kings, queens and princesses enabled some of the students to reach beyond themselves and do things that managers had not set as targets. For example, an isolated ASD student taking on the role of the king came to the realisation that he has an inner Pericles, and that he means a lot to others.

Insight through challenging content: From a psychological perspective, some of the challenging content in the play helped students understand and deal with difficult life situations. A student said the reason he could play a suffering king, was because his story was the characters story. A number of students suggested that Shakespeare helped develop the inner hero by changing their inner boundaries to the world, overcoming limits of confidence, and finding a more positive approach to everyday situations.

These indications suggest that drama has a profound and lasting effect for young adults with ASD, ODD, OCD, ADHD and complex needs. Please see some of the areas that were not successful, and where various techniques did not work in chapter 6.2 and 6.3.

6.5 Summery

In summarising the outcomes of this project in regard to the question: How does a theatre production contribute to the development of young adults with complex needs?, it has become evident that a theatre production can contribute favourably to the development of young adults with complex needs.

Regarding auxiliary question one concerning the cognitive, emotional and behavioural development of students: The production affected the students cognitively in their grammar and vocabulary due to engaging with the language of the play, and in some cases in better understanding situations in their past due to the content. Emotionally, participants were able to develop trust within the milieu of the production, and were able to socialise more both within and outside of the production.

Some students indicated and others demonstrated how they had more control over their emotions. The challenging content of *Pericles* helped students gain insight into their own biographies, and enabled insight into managing challenging situations in the future. Behaviourally participants were able to develop more self-control and manage challenging situations without deferring to previous disruptive behaviour.

Regarding auxiliary question two about processes and exercises that supported students in the work: The processes and exercises that most supported the students in preparation for the play were the ‘golden hoop,’ ‘checking in and out’ and improvisation of the script before getting into the language. It became evident that time needs to be taken to support ASD students in expressing the emotional truth of their characters. Speech and movement exercises proved to be most supportive when brought with creative imaginations.

In respect of auxiliary question three about preparation for work: The project helped students in ‘preparation for work’ when tutors role-modelled acting alongside students in rehearsals and performances. This gives an experience of support and professionalism. It became evident that the professional work ethic had a significant impact on the success of the project. When failing was seen as part of success it took the fear of getting it wrong and encouraged a more relaxed approach to the project by students who were perfectionists. Regarding setting high expectations of students, the use of Shakespeare’s *Pericles* helped students achieve beyond targets set by managers.

However, care needs to be taken with students who might be inclined to ‘take over’ running the speech sessions, which could be unproductive. Additionally high functioning ASD students who can get ‘out of themselves’ with strong exercises including speed runs, big character work and extended improvisations. It appeared that sometimes parents and carers were not able to support students in learning lines and understanding schedules, which needed to be undertaken within the rehearsals themselves.

It became evident that various aspects of ‘my practice’ need to be improved in order to best facilitate the students development including: more explanations and support around movement and improvisation exercises, and in a broader sense developing the ‘performance therapies’ across the Trust, clarifying ‘how to choose a story or play’ and developing more of the potential of the ‘cultural events’ across the Trust.

By venturing out and making *Pericles* a large-scale theatre production proved to be very significant for the students. It gave them the opportunity to experience working as a team in carrying the responsibility for the production; the possibility to ‘try again’ if they ‘got it wrong;’ and to experience the esteem of audience feedback in the end.

6.6 Conclusion

In concluding it is apparent that there is considerable data here, the implications of which would seem to indicate the case for the valid and reliable application of drama for the development of young adults with complex needs. Participating in a drama production had a positive effect on the cognitive, emotional and behavioural development of young adults with complex needs. Important and effective exercises and processes were identified in the case study indicating recommendations for the development of curriculum. The study revealed that in a number of cases participants were better prepared for work because of scheduling, working alongside professionals and performing before an audience.

The performance processes illustrated in the case study and in other contexts make for cohesive recommendations for curriculum including a cross college theatre production. The extent to which these findings meet the requirement of Jindle-Snape and Vittorio’s recommendations in validating the effectiveness of drama for the development of people with ‘special needs’ is positive and open to debate in the field. A student diagnosed with OCD and ASD remarked at the end of the production that, “Pericles is not the only hero, but we are the heroes, doing what we were supposed to be doing, putting smiles on people’s faces,

especially little ones and even our proud parents...when we embrace this giant step into acting we could go through anything in life". I believe this to be an indication that while *Playing with Fire* no one has got to badly burnt. Rather, the study suggests that tutors have been able to harness the power of drama in forging the destiny of some of the Trust's students.

I believe that the essence of vital life giving, transformative drama from Aeschylus to the Mystery plays, through the Commedia dell Arte to Shakespeare, and from Schiller to Oswald offers enrichment of the imagination through relevant and meaningful archetypes. Identity and meaning can be forged through the stories and myths that offer, as Steiner (1910) and Campbell (2005) have indicated, archetypal hero's journeys as maps for navigating the soul with or without a diagnosis.

However, one might argue that today, by comparison, identity, meaning and soul navigation arise through the map of movies, computer games and all that media demands on the autistic young adults in the Trust's care. One might consider that TV, cinema and computer games are today what storytelling and drama were in ancient times, only then one was picturing the stories in the mind, now all the imagining is done in media interpretation, by somebody else, and imagination or soul (Hillman, 2008), is withering away.

I think it is frightening to reflect on what Sigman (2012), cited in chapter two, indicated regarding screen time being increasingly considered a risk factor for disease, and the increased danger this implies for the young autistic person. Allen's indications that ASD is characterized by social-interaction difficulties and communication challenges (2013), highlights the need for a strong and well developed antidote for young adults in RMT Colleges.

The implications would seem to suggest that the *Pericles* case study has highlighted some of these requirements and that various aspects of Trust practice are meeting them in providing resources for students. It follows that some of these implications are valid outside of the trust context, and that various generalisations are sufficiently robust to consider across the field as a whole; indicating the significant role of drama in the development of young adults with complex needs.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Student invitation

Research Project: An invitation to students: This project has been reviewed following the procedures of The Glasshouse College. This study is funded by The Glasshouse College. The research team is: Professor Andy Kempe; Michael Chase

Information Sheet: We are doing a project to help us develop curriculum for drama. We would like you to help us with the project. Your SJM is happy for you to help us.

Do I have to take part? No, not at all. Also, you can stop helping us with our project at any time, without giving a reason. Just ask Mike Chase or your parents to tell us if you want to stop.

What will I have to do if I agree to take part? I will ask you some questions about your experiences of being in the college play and record your answer on a video and voice recorder.

Will anyone know about my answers? Only the people working on the project will know about your answers. We won't tell the college how you answered, it will be anonymous.

Why have I been invited to take part? You have been invited to take part because you have been in The Glasshouse College play, Pericles, Prince of Tyre by Shakespeare.

What are your experiences of being in The Glasshouse College production Pericles, Prince of Tyre by William Shakespeare?

What happens next? Your parents have given their permission for you to take part in this project. We will check with you before we do the tasks that you are happy to help us with our project.

Will it help me if I take part? We think you will find it interesting and fun to do the interview. Your answers will help us develop the best way of doing drama in the different trust colleges.

If you have any questions please speak to Mike Chase, or you can contact him on michael.chase@ghc.rmt.org

Appendix 2: Invitation and consent form

Glasshouse College RMT Gloucestershire and

Rudolf Steiner University College Oslo Norway

Research outline and consent form

Michael Chase, M.Ed. researcher

Thank you for your willingness to consider participating in this research project. I am doing this research with the purpose of finding ways to develop drama curriculum in Ruskin Mill Trust. I am particularly interested in the role of drama in education for young adults with learning difficulties and in the opinions of stakeholders on this matter.

You have been specially selected for interview because of your important role as staff/tutors at The Glasshouse College participating in the College production *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* by William Shakespeare being undertaken between September 2012 and July 2013. The interview would take up to an hour and would be at a time and place of your choosing. I would like to video record the interview so that your contribution can be studied more carefully afterwards but I will send you a transcript of the interview afterwards and give you the opportunity to add or amend any comments.

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept strictly private and confidential. Only my supervisor, Professor Andy Kempe and I will have access to the data, which will be stored securely on a password-protected computer.

When the thesis is complete, a copy will be deposited in the archives of the Rudolf Steiner University College and the Ruskin Mill Trust. On request, I will also send a summary of the findings for any of you who are interested.

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the Rudolf Steiner University College and Glasshouse College RMT.

If you would like more information, you can contact me at michael.chase@ghc.rmt.org or my supervisor, Prof a.j.kempe@reading.ac.uk.

Yours Faithfully

Consent form:

I have read the Information Sheet about the project.

I understand what the purpose of the project is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.

I am happy for the interview to be recorded. YES/NO

..... (signature)

..... (date)

Appendix 3: For Focus Group Interview guide

Questions for Staff:

1. What do you think the students gained from the project?
What are your own feelings about what the project offered the students?
2. How would you describe your own role in the project?
Did you see yourself as a tutor, a performer, an educator?
3. What exercises worked best in developing trust and safety?
4. Which processes helped in developing voice and movement?
5. What helped students understand the play and characters?
6. What exercises supported the relationship to the audience?
7. What was missing in the process and how might it be improved upon?

For students:

1. What did you enjoy?
2. Have they learnt any skills in doing the play?
3. If so, which skills?
4. Have you developed any social skills while doing the play?
5. Have they made any friends?
6. What was difficult for you in the process of doing the play?
7. Have you developed any personal qualities, like self-esteem, self-discipline etc.?
8. What could 'we' do to improve things for the next production?

Appendix 4: A proposal for how curriculum development could be undertaken.

Where: When I am not consulting off site, I would like to retain my office and workshop in the Caves Basement. Following secondment I will require it on my return. I will use the office when I am at The Glasshouse, and I would like to have a person second me in the mask productions internal work placement in my absence. This would make use of the space which I could work around. I would also need use of the arts centre and class rooms for the staff development workshops, meetings and rehearsals.

Contact time: I will require contact time with all staff in the Trust working in the area of the performing arts who would like to be part of this process. This will include three encounters, during which I will meet with practitioners in their colleges for interviews, consultation, and participating in practice. A further group meeting with all the performing arts practitioners from across the trust, a travel day will be ideal for a large group consultation and workshop. In the second year lead practitioners will be invited to join in the cross college production with students.

Travel: for the first year I will require fuel for travel between Sheffield and Nailesworth on a weekly basis. In the second year staff and students will need travel costs up and down to the Glasshouse on a weekly basis.

Fundraising: Money will be required to undertake the cross college production. As we have a good reputation with the Arts Council of England, I propose collaborating with Janine Christly to fundraise for the production. Costs will include: Playwright fees, production costs of design, materials, publicity, travel and accommodation.

Supervision and support: I understand my line manager in this regard will be Chloe Hindmarsh and Aonghus Gordon. I have additional recourse of support through the Field Centre Research Forum headed by Marcello de Vega and run by Fergus Anderson. My present supervisor Professor Andy Kempe has suggested that I would benefit by undertaking a PhD with this project as my thesis. The question would hinge around how to develop performing arts curriculum collaboratively in the context of specialist colleges? I understand this would offer a piece of support if the appropriate supervisor were found.

Personal finance: Both the curriculum development piece and the cross college production would involve a lengthy piece of staff co-ordination and development a role that would give

me more responsibility than I presently hold. (In order to fulfil this piece of work, I would need to get another vehicle and incur other costs to my person.) I would require an increase of my present salary which including royalties for the mask sales amounts to £29,500.

I will also need to consider the cost of a possible PhD. Were this undertaken through Alanus University it would amount to £40 per month. I will have additional travel costs including train and petrol for a weekly visits to Sheffield and Stroud.

Cover: I recommend that the mask production sessions continue to keep making masks for RMT use as well as ongoing outside orders. A support worker has shown significant interest in taking it on in my absence.

I would like to know that I could take up the roles I presently hold, or their equivalent, bearing in mind that part of this exercise is succession. This could include taking up the role of Artistic Director of the Arts Centre, and to work as a therapist with 8 to 10 students a week on my return.

A proposal for how the ten phases of development could be undertaken.

For clarity I will use the term Units when referring to qualifications, these could be PSTE units on different levels.

1. Phase: Consult with key Trust stakeholders about development of PAPG.
2. Phase: Interviews and conversations with different practitioner stakeholders.
3. Phase: Participating in tutor practice.
4. Phase: Consultation with staff group to look at ideas for specific subject areas.
5. Phase: Ideas developed into Pilot Units with learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
6. Phase: Evaluate and create delivery guides for specific areas.
7. Phase: Pilot units tried, tested and validated, and full units created
8. Phase: Units are delivered
9. Phase: Delivered units are assessed by internal quality assurance (IQA)
10. Phase: Unit evaluated and developed

What follows is a recommendation of curriculum areas that could become specific qualifications. Student qualification areas:

First priority:

1. Story Telling through the recapitulation of myths, including epic speech and Greek gym
2. Dramatic Scenes: content, speech, movement, character
3. Hospitality-Front of House: box office, stewarding, refreshments

Second priority:

1. Acting in a Play
2. Music: Recapitulation of music form different historical periods
3. Music: making and using an instrument; performing an instrument
4. Music: Accompanying a play

Third priority:

1. Mask Using: four temperaments, commedia dell arte
2. Back Stage: stage hand and management; lighting; wardrobe: costumes; textiles
3. Mask making for a play

Fourth Priority

Potential staff qualifications:

1. Drama: storytelling and epic speech
2. Drama: choosing material, speech and movement, acting techniques
3. Theatre: producing and directing a play
4. Cultural Events: accessing the arts