

**UNIT 4**

**LEARNING AIM A**

**Community Theatre – Primary Research Interviews**

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|  | **TINA WILLIAMS****(TW)****Pied Piper Theatre** | **VICKY BARKLAMB (VB)****Theatre Exchange** | Theatre Exchange |

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| **WHAT IS THEATRE IN EDUCATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT** |
| Theatre in education uses drama and theatre techniques in a school or educational environment to help encourage interactive and effective learning. I believe that drama can be used as a great tool in education as it can bring learning from the class room to life and the written word off the page and into people’s imaginations. (VB)We tour theatrical productions to community venues and small scale receiving houses aimed specifically at 2-6 year olds. This is probably this young audience’s first experience of theatre and we have a responsibility to make it amazing – I hate when people say this is good children’s theatre – no, it’s just good theatre – an audience deserves the best work you can make whatever their age (TW)When the wellbeing of children in the UK is measured against that of other countries we come very low in the league of industrialised nations. Could there be a connection between that and our inability to value and nurture the creativity and imaginations of our children? We worry endlessly about exam results and yet squeeze the arts from the curriculum, so that opportunities to learn an instrument or go to the theatre are not an entitlement for every child, but activities that are [only within the reach of the privileged few](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/culture-cuts-blog/2011/feb/15/arts-funding-arts-policy). As one of the characters in Lee Hall's [The Pitman Painters](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/feb/08/lee-hall-pitmen-painters-review) says: "art is the place where you understand your whole life from." If one single child is excluded from art, we are all the poorer for it.We need widespread recognition of Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states: "Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."Our theatre is theatre for now. They deserve it now. We need to be giving children great theatre now, because it's such a great trigger for the imagination." |

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| **What do you see as the social, cultural and economic value of this work?** |
| Theatre in Education allows learning in way that children with less academic ability may thrive in. It encourages team work, role play and can make the participants more confident about speaking in public. This to me holds great value. (VB)It encourages interaction, immersion, suspension of belief, it requires imagination – it is a communal live experience, it is non-judgemental. As we are stuck to our mobiles, constantly comparing ourselves to others, pushing a fake image of ourselves to the public – the communal shared experience of theatre is priceless and valuable. (TW) Official statistics reveal that the UK’s creative industries are now worth £71.4 billion per year to the UK economy. Growth of almost 10% recently, outperforming all other sectors of UK industryAccounts for about 1.68 million jobs 5.6 per cent of UK jobs (TW) |
| **How do you ensure your work responds to your ‘client’s needs’?** |
| At Theatre Exchange we make sure all our history workshops are in line with the national curriculum for Key Stage 1 and 2. We develop workshops to keep them fresh and updated with new information. We listen to our clients’ needs and try to deliver more than their expectations. We understand that as we are going into a very structured environment that we need to fit around those boundaries in a way that doesn’t diminish our product. (VB)We undertake research and development work (R&D) and produce scratch work that we then road test with our specific audience and then go back to the studio to redevelop the work in response to tangible and intangible feedback. (TW) |
| **What sort of venues do you work in ?** |
| Theatre Exchange mostly work in schools and community venues. We structure our work to fit the environment.Piped Piper tour to small scale receiving houses – in this local area this includes; The Mill Studio - Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, GuildfordGulbenkian Theatre, CanterburyBrockenhurst Village Hall, BrockenhurstHawth Studio, Crawley, West SussexHaslemere Hall, HaslemereNuffield Theatre - Campus, SouthamptonThe Lights, AndoverRopetackle Arts Centre, Shoreham-by-SeaWe have also started to develop ‘suitcase theatre’ touring theatre that grows just from a suitcase with two actors enabling us to reach smaller venues, libraries, book groups, playgroups etc |
| .       **Do you undertake R&D for any projects? What form does this take?** |
| When we have a new project we tend to have R&D days. These will be lead with Theatre Exchange actors meeting and rehearsing ideas and improvising scenes to later be written. |
| **How are you funded?** |
| We are a non for profit company and whatever income we have goes straight back into development. We get the occasional grant that we tend to use on individual theatre projects and tours. Theatre Exchange’s schools work is self-financing, we have received grants for R&D work from Arts Partnership Surrey and Farnham Maltings House programme.Piped Piper are an Arts Council funded company – this grant supplements the income from touring. |