

From Beckton to Bangalore

PARALLEL SPACES

Teachers' Pack

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Parallel Spaces project – From Beckton to Bangalore

Overview

This is an intensive 5-day project, working with the same group of children (up to a maximum of 60) for the whole week, culminating in a performance on the Friday afternoon.

In brief, the aim is to increase understanding of global issues in young people using dance, music and storytelling. This week focuses in particular on the issue of access to education.

This project is a fully packed 5-day week, and each day is fully timetabled. It therefore requires a lot of support and commitment from the school - and the class teachers in particular – to make it happen. We invite the class teachers to really get involved and be a presence throughout. We expect the teachers to support us actively and participate in the tasks where appropriate. This support might be contributing ideas, going round during small group work, helping the children to be creative, as well as maintaining discipline if necessary.

The school needs to be willing to give over the hall space for the week, and be prepared for noise and excitement!

Using stories, slides and cultural objects from India the children will first be introduced to school life in India. This will involve a series of activities and discussions, starting with listening to an initial story about a day at school in India, as told by a schoolchild – if you like, a witness statement.

The next step is for them to respond by writing their own witness statements of a day in their school life. From their stories we will tease out one composite story of UK school life.

These two stories - the UK and the Indian story - will frame the final performance. We will first hear them in their entirety over a soundscape and then as a series of simple sentences (eg I wake up at.... I eat ...My journey to school..) that will punctuate the final performance, and also be jumping-off points for further creative work during the process.

There are obviously many different ways to respond creatively to a starting point and workshop leaders may wish to work to their strengths. We have planned to use the following ideas:

- Tableaux
- Creative movement
- Structured song and dance (learning a pre-composed song and adding to it; learning a dance to go with it)
- Vocalising rhythms
- Creating music
- Slide photography in and around the school
- Creative story writing and presentation

The tasks referred to in the Lesson Plan and Timetable are based on splitting the group into 3 to work with each artist on a different creative task. These can be summarised as:

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C
Task 1 Finale Dance	Task 1 Finale music	Task 1 Overall narrators
Task 2 Story 2	Task 2 Slide dance	Task 2 Slide music
Task 3 Timetable music	Task 3 Story 1	Task 3 Timetable dance

This is explained in detail in the Lesson Plan.

It is worth stating here the role of **Group C** when working with the **storyteller** on **Task 1**. They are responsible for:

- a Performing the voiceovers of the complete ‘witness statement’ stories at the beginning of the show. This has a CD soundscape backing, and we imagine it as single voices using the microphones for an intimate effect.
- b Helping the storyteller with the UK ‘witness statement’, and working on how to present the 4 statements of both UK and Indian stories throughout the performance. Again using the microphone.
- c writing the Wish List that will be called out as part of the finale song. This is a chance to stimulate discussion about how Indian schoolchildren might decide on very different wishes to them. The final list should contain some wishes pertinent to UK and some to India.
This might involve:
 1. Initiate discussion about wishes and get them to write their own as a one word wish on a piece of paper. (At any rate a *short* sentence).
 2. Have pre written wishes on a piece of paper, which will go into a pot along with the new wishes.
 3. Lucky dip wish picking.

4. Deciding which wish is maintained.
 5. Organising the children into an order, and work on delivery. Should some wishes be spoken together?
- The exercise can be as in depth or casual as time permits.

Structure of the Performance

Preset: 2 slides light the space dividing it into 2 areas – India and the UK.

Voiceover: Using microphones we hear the witness statements from the UK and then India with a background soundscape of school life.

(The full Indian witness statement is to be found at the very end of this document. The UK witness statement will be created by the children.)

Scene 1 We hear the **opening statement** of the UK story again, taking us from waking up to the arrival at school.
We watch a changing **tableaux** to animate the above.

Repeat for the Indian story **1st statement:**

“I wake up 5:30, go to the public toilet and then to the water pump in the market where my father and I have our baths in the open and brush our teeth with soft Neem twigs. I have to carry a bucket of water back for my family and then do one hour of homework. I have a very nice uniform but no shoes or books. I have to run to the other end of the village for school in my flip flops with my bag and lunch box.”

Scene 2 We hear the **2nd statement** from the **UK** story dealing with the start of the school day. We see a **story** written and delivered by the children.

We hear the **2nd statement** from the **Indian** story (below) dealing with the start of the school day. We see a **creative movement / sound piece** using the school timetable as source material.

“School starts at 7 a.m. with what you would call an assembly where we all sing the National Anthem and the 4 and 5 times tables. I still don’t know where the National Anthem stops and where the times tables begin.”

Scene 3 We hear the **3rd statement** from the UK and Indian stories (below) dealing with resources within the school. We see a **story** written and delivered by the children.

“We have no books and only 1 teacher and just 4 chairs so most of us have to sit on the floor. We are all taught the same thing, no matter how old we are. Most of the children are sent away to the cities when they are 6 years old to be domestic servants so I am very lucky to be living with my parents and be going to school even at the age of 10.”

Scene 4 We hear the **4th statement** from the UK and Indian stories (below) dealing with after-school life.
We see a series of **movement** sculptures against a backdrop of **slides** from India and slides taken by the children in school, accompanied by **music** created by the children.

“I have to earn money to help the family so I go to the railway station after school every day to help unload cargo. I have to carry it on my back or head one piece at a time because I have no trolley or ropes to tie it with. I can earn as much as Rs.4 if I work for 5 hours. When I get home it is about 8 o’clock at night and I am very tired.”

Scene 5 **Finale song** and **dance**, incorporating a **Wish List** written by the children.

The flexibility in this structure is to allow different creative responses to the lines of the story. Also if you don’t get as far as you have planned to, then you can use only 3 lines of the story. As you can see from the performance structure, we are planning 2 different responses to statements 1 and 2. This could also be simplified to 1 response.

See over for a one-page summary of the Performance Structure.

Lesson Plan for *From Beckton to Bangalore*

Monday

- 9.00** Warm-up and various games including:
Physical warm-up to music
A name game
An alertness game
Statement and Proximity Game, using facts about Indian school life.
Vocal warm-up
Begin to learn song / sargam
- 9.45** Listen to Indian 'witness statement' and discuss.
Play some story-telling games

10.30 Break

11.00 *At this point the group is split in half.*

Choreographer and Musician:

1. Space is laid out with 15-20 different Indian objects like an art gallery. *(These are part of the resource kit provided by Akademi.)*

Indian music plays. Children walk around and look.

Children find a partner (or 2 partners) and an object and create a tableau with the object.

Discuss the tableaux and objects.

2. Watch slides and then use them for creative movement in and out of the slide-light (preparing for the after-school section in scene 4).

Storyteller:

Works with the other half of the group on a writing task to create their own UK 'witness statement' – My School Day.

(This will become the mirror story to the Indian Witness Statement heard in the morning. It should therefore cover the topics of the 4 statements seen in the Performance Structure).

Begin with a short discussion to explain the aim of the exercise. How to write a couple of short sentences on the "everydayness" but include in it something which may be very normal to them and yet stands out somehow. E.g.

Statement 1 *(from waking up to arrival at school)*. I wake up at 7:30 every morning but my mother who helps run the corner shop and works long hours has to get up 5 a.m. because we live in a joint family and she has to cook lunch and dinner before she leaves for work. So I wake up to a house full of lovely food smells but these smells get into my clothes and at school people screw up their noses at me and tell me I smell funny.

Or

Statement 2 (*start of the school day*). When I get to school I look for my friends and play until the bell rings. Then we have to stand in line in silence, which I find very hard. I like it when it's someone's birthday – then we can sing to them and cheer when we get in the classroom, before assembly.

Or

Statement 3 (*school resources*). My favourite part of the classroom is the art corner. Lots of tablets and bottles of paint and thick brushes. I have to be really careful not to get paint on my clothes or I get a big telling-off when I get home.

Or

Statement 4 (*after-school life*). At the end of school Mr Fontaine the headteacher is outside making sure we go home safely. I have to cross a main road, so I walk a block further to use a crossing. Some children run across the road and Mr Fontaine shouts at them. I like to play football with my friends but we're not near a park so we have to play against a wall.

Given the fact that this session gets repeated with the other half of the group after lunch, you may wish to concentrate on 2 statements in each session. At the end of the day the storyteller needs to take all the stories home and create a composite story from them, ready for use on Tuesday!

12.30 Lunchtime

1.30 The two groups swap, and we repeat the previous session.

3.00 Diaries. This will be a winding down time during which the children can reflect and record their responses to the day's work. The activity should be decided in consultation with the teacher. We suggest that it is varied from day to day eg Monday could be a picture, Tuesday a short piece of creative writing based on one of the slides, Wednesday a poem and Thursday their highlights of the project (written/ drawn).

Tuesday

9.00 Warm-up and games. Try the mudra game to cross the circle, as they will be using hand gestures later.

9.30 Everyone learns the Finale song (and starts the choreography)
*At this point the group divides into Groups A, B and C.
Also 6 children (2 from each group chosen in discussion with teacher) leave to work with photographer for the rest of school day.*

Over the course of the week there are 3 Tasks for each group (called Task 1, 2 and 3!); each task is allocated 3 sessions to work on it. Task 1 is re-visited each morning after the warm-up.

Task 1 objectives:

Group A works with **choreographer** on the **Finale dance**.

Group B works with **musician** on the singing and adding instruments to **Finale music**.

Group C (The **Narrators**) works with **storyteller**. They have several tasks as narrators within the performance.

- a presenting the first Voiceovers (UK and Indian Witness statements)
- b presenting the 4 different UK and Indian statements before each scene. (They will need to practise with microphones for both of these).
- c devising and performing a Wish List, which will be part of the Finale song.

Whilst it is up to the storyteller how to best achieve these, we suggest beginning by working on the UK witness statement.

10.30 Break

11.00 *The groups remain the same but move to work with a different tutor.*

Task 2 objectives

Group A works with the **storyteller**. They will work on creating/presenting **Story 2**, in response to the 3rd statement of the UK and Indian stories (dealing with school resources. When you look round your classroom what do you see?).

Group B works with the **choreographer** and **Group C** with the **musician**, on a response to the 4th statement of both UK and Indian witness stories, dealing with After-school Life. This can be any form of creative movement (Group B) inspired by after-school activities, and will be lit by slides and accompanied by live music created by the children working with the musician (Group C).

In more detail a plan for Group A might be:

1. Re-cap on the original stories about objects and resources
2. Discuss the resources from the school here, and in the school in India.
3. Talk about the one object they cannot do without and then discuss what they would do if they had to do without it.
4. Repeat for the Indian school
5. This should lead to discussion and a piece of written work about the real necessity of said objects. How can the stories come together? Is there a dialogue to be had between the objects?

A plan for Group B might be:

Split the group into groups of two's and three's to make moving sculptures of after-school life in India and the UK: playing cricket in the street, doing homework, tending the cattle, watching TV, cooking supper, riding bikes etc.

The moving sculptures can be presented in which ever way the choreographer chooses, bearing in mind that it will be lit by the slide images. Experiment with the positioning of the projectors (try projecting onto the wall, floor or combination). We are going to try fast entries and exits into the slide-light (see Monday's exercise).

Group A's music might take, as its starting point, the drone, and build layers of different sounds. We would explore breathing deeply, and finding ways of playing sustained sounds. These would then be a backing, over which other musical events can take place. How can we bring the sounds of their everyday life into our piece? (bouncing balls, Gameboys, a radio, sirens, ringtones (careful!) etc) Collaborate with the choreographer. Do they need any rhythm or cues included?

12.30 Lunchtime

1.30 **Task 3 objectives**

Group B works with the **storyteller**. They will work on creating/presenting **Story 1**, in response to the 2nd statement of the UK story (dealing with the start of the UK school day).

Group C works with the **choreographer** and **Group A** with the **musician**, on a creative response to the 2nd statement of the Indian story (the start of the Indian school day).

A possible plan for Groups C and A:

The 2 groups will create a vocal/dance piece using an Indian school timetable as source material. We aim to start with a 'chorus' chant, which everyone can learn together. (*The musician should come in with a basic structure and beginning 'chorus' chant. Treat it a bit like a bols, speaking the words in different ways to build up a rhythmic structure.*) Then we divide into Groups A and C to further develop the choreography or the song. We will choreograph a simple piece based on actions from the lyrics of the timetable song/bols. This could be a purely gestural piece that uses only the upper half of the body to emphasise a solid, rigid structure. Choreographers may also choose to introduce the idea of mudras in combination with the gestures created by the children.

The music could use spoken words, sung words, clapping and maybe body percussion to create a rhythmic piece. They may choose to introduce simple tabla/dance bols within it.

3.00 Diaries

Wednesday

- 9.00** Short warm-up and games.
Re-visit **Task 1** (Groups and tutors as before). Group A and B may wish to practise together (dance and music), or Group B and C (putting the Wish List into the song).
- 9.45** Group C continues **Task 1** with the storyteller.
- Groups A and B work with the other tutors on the tableaux.
These are going to illustrate the start of the day for UK and Indian stories.
Start with creating image for the first statement
“I wake up at...to the sounds of...”
Build it up one child at a time, asking the first child to choose an object before entering the space and making a strong image.
Encourage the others to add to the picture with the viewer in mind and with strong positions.
Before the tableau dissolves make sure they remember exactly where they are in it.
Repeat with the opposite group.
- Then do the same for the 2nd statement
“I eat....”
- Then try moving between both tableaux, this could be as fast as possible or within a pre-arranged timing – for instance 16 counts.
Add 3rd statement and try going from 1st to the 3rd.
- 10.30** Break
- 11.00** (Maybe a sharing of the tableaux, with narrators)
then
- Task 3**
- Group B with storyteller (Story 1)
Group C with choreographer
Group A with musician (Timetable piece)
- 12.30** Lunchtime
- 1.30** **Task 2**
Group A with storyteller (Story 2)
Group B with choreographer
Group C with musician (Slides/After-school piece)
- 3.00** Diaries

Thursday

9.00 Warm-up and games
Revisit the Finale song put everything together.
Storyteller can then take Group C if more time is needed for Task 1 (narration).

otherwise

Task 3

Group B with storyteller (Story 1)
Group C with choreographer
Group A with musician (Timetable piece)

10.30 Break

11.00 **Task 2**

Group A with storyteller (Story 2)
Group B with choreographer
Group C with musician (Slides/After-school piece)

If possible share work with each other before lunch.

12.30 Lunchtime

1.30 Rehearsal with slides, mikes, music. This is our first chance to 'put it together' in order, so children start to understand the shape of the performance. Take it slow, with emphasis on entries and exits (the 'nuts and bolts' of the show).

3.00 Diaries

Friday

Should be organised by the tutors around rehearsing individual sections if necessary and then aiming to do a couple of run-throughs before lunchtime, as the sharing will be in the afternoon.

If the project has slides created by the children, they should be ready for use in the morning. It would be good to give the photographer half an hour with his/her group to 'edit' the slides into an order for projection.

It would be good to invite parents and friends, as well as their peers, to the sharing.

Checklist for artists

Resource Kit: When starting this project you will be provided with the following resources from Akademi.

- 1 Indian cultural objects. Approx 15 – 20 (full list in the kit) objects to do with Indian life and school in particular (for the 'object gallery' and tableaux).
- 2 2 slide projectors.
- 3 Approx 10 – 15 slides of Indian and UK life. (Full list in the kit.)
- 4 CD of 'school soundscape' (for opening voiceovers.)
- 5 2 microphones
- 6 GhettoBlaster (unless borrowing one from the school).

The following is a list of things to think about (in no particular order):

Power points for projectors. What will they sit on? Do you need an extension lead?

Make time to try the projectors before you are in front of the whole class – onto what are you going to project? (It needs to be a light-coloured surface). The room should be blacked out as much as possible. (Black bin bags or black sugar paper work well over windows if necessary).

Make sure that you have tested the microphones before use. This means ensuring you can use the school PA system.

Try to leave 15 mins at the beginning and end of the day to meet as a team – include the teacher whenever possible.

Storage for equipment overnight.

Liase with teacher over spaces – are there times when you need more than 1 space? Are they available?

Think about a few words/chat to round off the project after the performance.

Check that all props you require are ready and to hand when you need them.

Pre- and Post-project ideas for teachers

Pre-project ideas

Video

You will be given a copy of the Action Aid video “Living in Chembakolli”. This is in various sections and includes questions on each section. Here is a list of further questions specifically for the 5-minute section, which relates to the school day, which we would like you to discuss with your class.

Watching the video and having the ensuing discussion is the minimum preparation required for this project.

*What time does Mari get up for school?
What time do you get up for school?*

*What is ONE thing that Mari may have to do to help her mum before she sets off for school?
What is ONE thing that you may have to do to help out before you set off for school?*

*How far does Mari have to travel to school each day?
How far do you have to travel to school each day?*

*What does she wear to school?
What do you wear to school?*

*What might she see on her way to school?
What might you see on your way to school?*

*What subjects does she do at school?
What subjects do you do?*

*What things can you see in the schoolroom in Gudalur?
What things can you see in your classroom?*

Can you name five differences between her day at school and yours?

Web-sites

If you have more time you could look at the following web-sites:

www.peopleandplanet.net/
<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye/about.html>
<http://www.geography.org.uk/global/>
<http://www.globaldimension.org.uk>
<http://www.earthday.net>

Link-up

We have begun the process of establishing links with an Indian school in Bangalore, Karnataka, with a view to having a dialogue between the UK and India. We are hoping you will begin this dialogue by working with your class to write a letter from your school to the school in India – a sort of ‘Class Pen Letter’. We hope that a response from the Indian class in a similar vein will give us information that can be used in creating the performance, as well as being the starting point of a developing exchange for your school. We would like to suggest that the letter contain the following information:

- 1 Your school fact file: Name of school; address; no of pupils; when was it built; number of classrooms/halls/outdoor facilities; number of teachers; what subjects are studied; anything else you want to mention
- 2 When you look around your classroom, what do you see?
- 3 What is your school timetable? *(We hope to use this in our performance)*
- 4 What is your favourite school dinner?
- 5 What is your favourite song at the moment? *(This, together with the Indian classes favourite song, may be used in our performance)*
- 6 If your class were granted wishes to change things, what would be your top 10 wishes? *(These will be part of a song)*

Other possibilities for exchange could be photos; art work – maybe self-portraits, a drawn map of the children’s journeys to school, maps of where the school is, how it is laid out in its grounds etc; a story telling us about ‘Your typical day at school?’ or ‘Your suprising day at school?’ Any images would obviously require a higher degree of technological input, scanning and uploading etc, but we can see how the possibilities develop. In the end, the scale of the link-up will in a large part be down to how enthusiastic and time-rich the teachers involved are!

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NB: At this stage we haven’t managed to find an Indian school, but the Pen Letter could still be a useful preparation to the project.

Follow-on ideas for class use

Below are a few ideas from the different disciplines, which you might like to try with your class.

Music

1 **Invented Bols** Following on from the chanted “Timetable” piece, you might like to try your own on different themes. A bols is a spoken rhythm used by Indian musicians and dancers to learn steps/phrases. When learning drums the different syllables refer to different sounds on the drum. However even then there is room for variation, so you don’t need to be too literal.

Firstly, decide on your source material. Then choose some phrases that have a nice rhythmic flow to them. Practice speaking them over a steady count. Try repeating phrases, and arrange them into an overall pattern.

For instance, these came from my phone bill lying next to me:

Customer reference number

OneTelNet

Online payments

Credit card

VAT

I arranged them like this:

Customer Reference Number Customer Reference Number One Tel Net One Tel Net

Customer Reference Number Customer Reference Number Credit Card Credit Card One Tel Net Credit Card

Customer Reference Number Customer Reference Number Online Payments Online Payments

Customer Reference Number Customer Reference Number VAT!

Next split into groups and create your own way of saying/playing the phrase given to your group. I suggest limiting the number of different sounds/notes available to each group.

Put it together!

Other suggestions: Sing it. Play it. Sing and play it. Everybody learn the whole pattern. Create movement phrases to fit. Use it as rhythm and start to create a melody to fit. (Your class will probably have strong suggestions. Encourage a longer flowing melody to contrast the short rhythms of the phrase.) Take one of the phrases and ‘jam’ on it – be playful and inventive. Emphasise spontaneous fun, rather than accuracy. Have some of the class play a drone (see below). Aim

towards a final goal of 3 groups: melody, rhythm, drone. (The 3 main elements of Indian music).

2 **Drone Explorer** Discuss with your class the meaning of 'drone'. (A long note, usually low in pitch, over which other musical events take place.) If possible, listen to examples on CD. What instruments can drone easily? (Organ, digeridoo, string instruments, gong/cymbal roll). What instruments cannot drone? (Woodblock, triangle etc.) What about a shaker/tambourine? What about a recorder/flute? Voice? How could a piano or glockenspiel drone? (Gently repeating the note, or rolling in octaves)

Try a group drone (all at once, having selected a suitable instrument or using voice).

Discuss what it sounds like. Can you create a chosen mood with it? Try all being on the same pitch (as far as possible). Try all being on different pitches. What does this do?

(NB. Indian drones often use 2 pitches in 4ths or 5ths. For instance C, G and high C. Or G, D and high G.)

Structure your piece so that different instruments drone at different times – try conducting the class through it, with agreed stop/start and loud/soft signals. Let different children be the conductor. Can they coax different emotions from the class?

3 **Sargam** This is the Indian word for solfege (Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti Do). In Indian terms it goes:

Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Sa

These can correspond to different pitches of your choice. E.g.

Sa	Re	Ga	Ma	Pa	Dha	Ni	Sa
C	D	E	F	G	A	Bb	C
C	Db	E	F	G	Ab	B	C

are 2 very different scales.

Scales can also use only some of the notes. E.g.:

Sa	Ga	Ma	Pa	Ni	Sa
C	E	F	G	Bb	C

5 note (pentatonic) scales such as the one above are useful. Mark the keys/notes on glocks etc with stickers (or remove the bars you don't need).

Teach them a starting phrase (or chorus). For instance, from the scale above:

Ga	Ga	Ma	Ga	Sa	Ni,	Sa	Rest	
E	E	F	E	C	Bb	C	Rest	

(the , by the Ni indicates a lower octave note. Similarly use ' for the higher octave.)

Use this as a starting point for their own musical replies. Encourage them to write down their ideas using Sargam. As before, there are many ways to shape this into an overall melody. It would sound good over a drone using Sa and Pa, (or you could try Sa and Ma).

Movement and Dance

1 Choreographing as a group (like the “ I went to market and bought a...” idea)

Stand in a circle and put a cd on that has a clear rhythmic base. Most popular tunes are in a 4/4 and as long as you can count 8 beats clearly the track will work.

In a circle clap listen to the music and try stamping every two beats for instance on the 1,3,5,7 on alternate legs.

Once the group has got this you can add a clap in the other beats i.e. on the 2,4,6,8.

This way every beat in the 8 beat cycle will have a stamp or a clap and repeat this until the group is confident with this.

Once this is established you create a simple movement that lasts eight counts. It can be something with your hands/head/ legs/feet/face/fingers/arms/ turning on the spot/moving forward and backwards or jumping but simple enough that everyone can learn it.

You add to this to clap/stamp phrase so it goes

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Stamp	clap	stamp	clap	stamp	clap	stamp	clap
Y	o	u	r	M	o	v	e
Stamp	clap	stamp	clap	stamp	clap	stamp	clap
					m	e	n
							t

When the group have got the idea you can go to next person in the circle and ask them to think of a movement that lasts 8 counts and that can follow on from where you left off. This will avoid them preplanning their movement as they have to start off where the last person finished. Again try repeating both movements together one after the other and then return to the baseline beat, like this:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Stamp	clap	stamp	clap	stamp	clap	stamp	clap
Y	o	u	r	M	o	v	e
Stamp	clap	stamp	clap	stamp	clap	stamp	clap
					m	e	n
							t
N	e	x	t	M	o	v	e
					m	e	n
							t

And so on...you can build on it to for as long as you want it can then be performed simply in lines, diagonals in smaller groups or you can use it as a basic dance phrase to build more creative choreography.

The good thing about this is that it can incorporate a tiny finger or facial movement and does not need any specific dance background as it uses the natural movement, which is already in their bodies . If the movements become repetitive you can encourage them to use alternative parts of their bodies as a starting point.

2 The name dance

Again this can be done with a class and does not require any dance/ movement training.

Tell them all to find a space

Make them visualise the first letter of their name, what is the colour, how big is it? What is it written with? Now imagine it being written? What is the movement like? Is it snaky? Sharp? Harsh? Round? Spiky? Curvy?

Now they choose a part of their body except their hands i.e. arms, legs, bottom, hips, nose, and they try to write out the letter with it. The letter could be painted in the air / on the floor / above them wherever.

It might be nice at this point to watch a few of them. Encourage them to make it as big as possible.

Repeat this with the second letter and so on until they can dance their name in the space.

Often they end up with quite linear phrases.

Then you can get them to listen to some music and draw floor pattern in their minds eye, which they then have to spread their choreography over. I.e. they might start at the wall walk in a straight line, then in a circle, then in a zigzag and in the corner. So their 1st letter might be done in a straight line, the 2nd in a circle, the 3rd in a zigzag and the 4th in a corner.

You can also effect the levels of movement by dividing then space up into: low/ middle/ high so wherever they are in the space they have to move at that level. This is a good warm up for this exercise as well.

Storytelling

Try using the traditional tales as a base. After familiarising the children with a story see if you can encourage them to carry it forward. For most children it is easier to

create adventures rather than a character. So if the Fairy Godmother has done her bit for Cinderella and Cinderella is now settled happily in her new life, what happens to the fairy godmother? Does she go out of business or is there someone else she can help? Can you recommend a person or situation that needs help? Why do they need her help? Can they not help themselves? What does the fairy godmother do?

Use the actual geographical references and a theme that has the possibility of movement. Discuss the journey to school touching on every point of interest or distinction that you pass on the way, e.g. a round about, a surgery, Woolworth, a row of chestnut trees, the colour and type of the flowers on the roundabouts that year, the local flora which is indigenous to the area. Get the children to draw a map of their journey and then write a route from school to the house for a friend to come and visit.

Here's another storytelling game.

STORY GAME

Try using a sound or a syllable as the common denominator for ending each line and an 8 beat or 10 beat rhythm. So each line of the story as it is built up will end with the same sound or syllable and will be approximately the same length. This will make the lines, of necessity, quite short and almost staccato. The result is a great deal more imaginative because one has to break out of the bounds of reality or even of automatic continuity to follow the pattern. E.g.

Though authors are a dreadful clan
To be avoided if you can,
I'd like to meet the Indian,
M. Anantanarayanan.
I picture him as short and tan.
We'd meet, perhaps, in Hindustan.
I'd say, with admirable elan ,
"Ah, Anantanarayanan --
I've heard of you. The Times once ran
A notice on your novel, an
Unusual tale of God and Man."
And Anantanarayanan
Would seat me on a lush divan
And read his name -- that sumptuous span
Of 'a's and 'n's more lovely than
"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan" --
Aloud to me all day. I plan
Henceforth to be an ardent fan
of Anantanarayanan --
M. Anantanarayanan.
-- John Updike

Below are some more stories written by Seema Anand you could share and develop with your class.

STORY 1

I am 12 years old and my name is Meera. I live in the servant's quarters of a very beautiful house in New Delhi. My mother works there as a maid and my father as the gardener. It is my job to look after the baby at night so I get to sleep in the big house which is very nice in the summer because they have air conditioning in the rooms. In return for looking after the baby the family pay for me to go to school at the local Central Government school. They also buy my uniform and books. When you join school in Delhi you have to buy all your own books which are very expensive. I am very lucky to have so many books even if neither my parents nor I can read them. The only problem is that sometimes the baby cries all night and when I get to school I cannot concentrate on my work. When I come back I cannot rest or do my homework but have to help my mother in the kitchen and then take the baby to the park. Our employers have a daughter of 14 but she does not do any work at all.

I love going to school. My uniform is nice and clean and new and my mother got me special ribbons, bright pink, for my hair. I have lots of friends and I love to study. I travel to school in a box rickshaw. A box rickshaw is like a little cage attached to the back of a bicycle. As many as 10 or 12 children can fit into it. But no matter how much work I put into school, by next year I will be sent as a maid to another household as I have to help my family. The school books will be sold to the "Kabari" [he is the man takes away old newspaper to recycle] who will pay per kilo for them and then they will be torn and turned into paper bags

STORY 2

My name is Naresh. I am 5 years old and I live in a village in a mud hut. The roof is made from tarpaulin. We are very poor and have no money to buy food every day. Two of my brothers died last year from malnutrition. My mother died last month at childbirth. She had twin girls. My father sold one of them for Rs.20 [£1 is equal to Rs.70]. The newspapers got hold of the story and many charities and orphanages and rich people came down to provide money for the other twin. They also gave money for my other sister and me to go to the local village school. So now I have to go to the local school but when I come back home there is still no money to buy food.

STORY 3

I am 11 years old and my name is Sunil. I live in the slums in Mumbai and like everyone else here I dream of becoming a famous actor or being married to a rich heiress. In the movies the poor boy is always streetwise hangs out in the local café and one day becomes very rich by becoming a gangster. My mother has registered me in a school but there are no movies about a boy going to a free school and becoming rich so I don't go to school. I am looking for someone who

will pay me to commit a crime. My best friend found one such man but he has disappeared since then. The adults say he was murdered but the youngsters say he made his money and has gone to live abroad. In Mumbai you don't have to go to school if you don't want to. I cannot read or write.

Objects

During our project we are using various objects from India to spark debate. These could be good starting points for creative writing. Below is another story written by Seema Anand that draws together several of the objects in one story.

CULTURAL OBJECT STORIES

The Pilgrims in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales set off on their long journey, their pilgrimage; and to while away the time they told each other stories, some bordering on the real, some entirely imagined. But the stories served their purpose, they kept the other pilgrims amused and they conveyed to us a great deal of information about the life and times of these pilgrims.

In much the same way the 'Objects' belonging to school children in India set off in an aeroplane from India to London to provide an idea of the life and trials of the children they belonged to. The journey was long, 9 hours in the freezing hold of the Air India Jumbo 747, their destination unknown and so to keep the cold and panic at bay they told stories about their lives and their respective masters.

They had been sitting for a while in total silence, the kind that generally never exists between strangers in India, especially if there is a closed box in the company. The inherent and uninhibited curiosity cannot let pass the challenge of a closed box. The box in question was a highly polished, shining, stainless steel tiffin box, made up of 3 upright layers of bowls that fitted tightly one into the other and were tied down with enough buckles to make a Hell's Angel quite envious. It was shut tight and it made the open book [a comic] almost pass out with curiosity. The pencil case which was a sort of open and shut guy opened its mouth to let out a ruler, a rather annoyingly superior creature, very sure of its own authority. The ruler reminisced about the days when many a lunch box had opened under its orders as it walked up to the lunch box and tapped it on the side, confident of its effect. The lunch box knew this ruler of old. Many were the times it had had its side sharply smacked by its horrid wooden edge. Many were the occasions that his little master had felt the same wooden edge on his knuckles. The lunch box ignored every one, but really, what a silly thing to do! No one gives up prying into your life just because you don't want them to.

The lunch box was finally coerced into telling his story. It wasn't a very happy one. He was bought for Naresh when that little boy started school at the age of 5 in the nursery. Naresh's mother had borrowed money for the school gear at a high interest rate from the local moneylender, a thief if you ever saw one, and was very careful of the gear, especially the uniform. Every day she gave Naresh a tiffin full of Daal [watery lentil] and chapatti for lunch. Naresh had to sit on the dusty ground of his school courtyard and eat his lunch and always managed to drop the Daal on his clothes. Every day when he got back his mother would take one look at the soiled shirt, scream with anger and slap Naresh on the cheek. Poor Naresh got to

thinking that the lunch box was responsible for his mother's anger and hated the box ever since. The lunch box had learnt to keep his unhappiness locked tight inside.

"Huh!" snapped the lemon. He had a sour personality and an unattractive yellow skin. "What are you complaining about? I was put into Chhottu's pocket with a hot red chilli by the old grandmother every time there was an exam so that I could bring him good luck. The chilli did nothing for my asthma but what was worse were the expectations of the whole family. They expected Chhottu to pass his exams just because I was in his pocket. Each time he failed and did badly she never held her precious grandson responsible for it. No! It was always my fault! I must have been rotten!"

The lemon had been called rotten so many times according to his own story that he really should have got used to it by now, thought the much loved and slightly smug text book. He was a book of English nursery rhymes. Geeta's mother couldn't read English but had transcribed all the words of the poems into Hindi so she could read to Geeta every night. At first the text book had been very offended with this defacement of its pages and had made it very difficult for the poor lady to read to her daughter and every evening had ended in misery but gradually as the book noticed how well it was looked after and almost revered, it started to look kindly upon mother and child. It made the words come more easily as time passed. Now, 6 years later it was still the most loved thing in the house and kept protected in mothballs in the big steel trunk along with the mother's wedding sari. No one likes a 'Look-at-me-everyone-loves-me' Snow White wannabe and so everyone ignored the nursery rhymes book. Besides, the pencil case was obviously dying to tell its tale. I don't know why, because it had nothing exciting to say. It was just malicious. It had spent all its time swallowing up the pencils and erasers that had been kept inside. The pencil case thought it was very funny that he had made little Minky's life miserable. Every time Minky put one of his beautifully sharpened red and black lined Natraj pencils into the pencil case, the case would find a way of knocking the pencils around so that the sharpened point would break. Or when Minky stored up the little stub that was left of his pencil or eraser he would chew them up and make them disappear. I guess every society has one!

The school bag was a great big muscle bound hulk. Not loud and complaining but thought it was Super Man, that it had carried the weight of the world on its shoulders. Oh, how it talked of the number of books it had carried. It was very well read and could speak fluently. It told every one of how there were no desks in Maya's school. It had to carry all the books back and forth every day. The schools in India believed in lots and lots of books so the job of a school bag was a hard one indeed. The weight of the books made the side straps fray and look tatty. But you and I know what school bags are really like and who really carries the weight of the world, and I assure you its not this huge muscle bound Incredible Hulk look alike.

Warm-ups and Games

At the beginning of a session it's good to warm the group up. Depending on the mood of the group you might like to use ice-breaking/ energising / focussing games. Many of the following games can be altered to fit in with your themes. Whilst the warm-up below is dance-based, the games are a mixture of movement and music, and can be interspersed.

Warm up (accompanied by live music where available)

Self massage exercises: vigorously rubbing with hands from head to toe, scalp, face, neck, arms, lower back, buttocks, legs and feet including toes. If appropriate move on to partner massage for back and neck.

Some simple breathing exercises, placing hands on diaphragm, deep inhalations and long exhalations, add whole body i.e. breathe in for 8 counts and on outbreath let weight of the head roll forward and downwards, whilst keeping knees soft. Breathe and hang in that position. As you reverse movement and roll up the spine keep your head heavy. Relax and breathe. This can be used as a warm-down at the end of a session, after some gentle stretching.

Isolation based warm up, working from head to toe, through neck, torso, spine, hips, pelvis, thighs, knees, calves, ankles, feet. Start with gentle stretching movements, working up to more aerobic actions. Keep the tempo and actions energised. Remember to keep breathing as you move.

Alertness/Awareness/Group-Building games

Sending a clap round the circle as fast as possible. Focus on speed/alertness. Send a sound after the clap. Can one catch the other? Send them in different directions.

Zip/Boom This adds physical actions to sounds. 'Zip' is sent round the circle. 'Boom' bounces it back the other way. 'Zap' sends it across the circle.

All clap at same moment. A focus game, the group attempts to clap as one by watching the leaders hands. Try tricking them with feints.

January February March birthday song/action. A simple song, during which the children make actions as their birthday month is called out.

Stop/Go game – move to opposite command (i.e. stop when you say "Go", or jump when you say "Clap")

Command game – theme-based words (i.e. in *Beckton to Bangalore* these could be 'Ruler', 'Pencil Case', 'Dinner Lady') are commands for different movement motifs / positions in the room / physical tasks. In between commands everyone walks around the space. On command URGENTLY find nearest partner and carry out action.

Secret Love/Hate game. In essence, you choose one person you 'secretly love'. Try to stand close to them, without them guessing you have chosen them. Add in another person whom you 'secretly hate'. Try to stand as far from them as

possible, whilst maintaining your closeness to your 'beloved'. At the end discuss the emotions felt/movement patterns. Did anyone guess?

Stamp Stamp Thigh Thigh Chest Chest Clap A body percussion pattern on 7 consecutive counts, with the 8th being silent. Each time round the pattern drop the beginning action (maintaining the 8 beat feel), until you are left with just the 'Clap'. Then build back up to full pattern. (So 2nd time round it goes "Thigh Thigh Chest chest Clap", 3rd time it goes "Chest Chest Clap")

Count To 10 The group attempts to count from one to ten. If 2 or more people speak at the same time, you begin again from "1".

Leave the Space A similar game, but this time each person leaves the space one by one. If 2 or more people move at the same time, everyone has to come back into the space and start again.

Statement and Proximity Game

The middle of the room is positive and the outer walls are negative. Someone calls out statement and you show your feeling about the statement by positioning yourself in the appropriate place in the room.

Crossing the circle – mudra games, getting some to agree to vacate their place and cross the circle. By making eye contact and an agreed signal (could be a mudra) get some one to agree to 'give up' their space in the circle. As you walk towards them, they must find someone else to agree to give up their space. You cannot move until you have agreement from someone.

Trust games

Leading round the space with hands

Leading round the space with sounds

Wobbly ankles in little circles

Falling in partners (with capable groups)

Sculpting your partner into a shape. Your partner is a block of clay. Sculpt them to create different emotions. Beforehand, agree a signal (touching the back of the knee) if you want the 'clay' to kneel, or lie down.

Vocal Warm-ups

Delectable Object Imagine something 'delicious' on a golden pedestal. Gasp (breathe in deeply) with amazement, point and say "Mmmmm". Each time add a vowel, building to

Mmmm Ooooo Ohhhh Ahhhh Ayyyy (and back down) Ahhh Ohhhh Oooo
Mmmm

Notice how the mouth shape opens out logically.

Copy Cat sounds As it sounds, the group copy you. Get them to be silly, add actions etc. Pass the 'leader' round the circle.

Na Na Na Na A warm-up song that can use all manner of different vowels. Get the group to suggest.

Double Diamond D A more accurate warm-up song, requiring understanding of the major scale. Say:

Double Diamond D, Double Diamond D D, Double Diamond D D D, etc

Sing the letter D, each time going another note up the scale, until you are singing all 8 notes.

Rounds – I Have A Dog, Hey Ho. Rounds are a great way to get people singing and develop independence in a supported way. There are many books of rounds.

Click/ sustain 2 techniques from John Stevens method called ‘Search and Reflect’. **Sustain** is as it sounds – one breath, one note. Change notes only between breaths. This can be a platform for all manner of other sounds. Choose vowel/consonant sounds, instruments, words, even melodies to fit over.

A **Click** is the shortest sound you can make, either with your voice or instrument. Practise clicking. Is it really short? Listen to clicks round the circle, then – with eyes closed – everyone clicks at once, and use your ears to try and ‘search out’ the other group members. Or, try and click only in a gap – you have one minute in which to click as many times as you can IN A GAP.

Or, try and click as one with eyes closed. Etc.

These techniques are useful for building up soundscapes. You can have a loose structure with sound cues to move between sections. ie Start with quiet sustain, when you hear the gong click for 1 minute, back to sustain to finish.

Name Games

Alliterative Names. I am Jon and I can jump/I like juggling. Add sound and action. All copy

Throwing the ball. As you throw the ball, say the name of the person to whom you throw. Aim for smoothness and speed. If you get really good, start to move about the space whilst playing.

Thigh Thigh Clap Name All repeat it back. This ‘party game’ is good for seeing who has rhythmic awareness. Over 4 beats it asks the group to place their name exactly on beat 4. As ever, add emotions or actions to be copied back by the whole group on the repeat.

Storyteller's script

Indian Witness Statement

Below is the full version of the witness statement written by Seema Anand, followed by the 4 statements. The full story will probably require editing with your group (or by yourself) to get it ready for performance. In the end it should probably take 2-3 minutes to deliver it.

The background

My name is Vikram and I am 10 years old. I have 2 older sisters and I am the only son of the house. My father is a Compounder [a man who puts together medical prescriptions]. He works in the small surgery [the only one] in our village and people respect him because he can read big English words and sits on a chair when he works. My mother is in charge of the sweepers at the station. She wears a blue and white sari and always smells of jasmine, which she grows on the gate of the house and wears in her hair and the incense she burns for her prayers early in the morning. My house has 2 rooms. One of the rooms is divided by a curtain. My parents sleep on one side and my sisters and I on the other side. My parents have a bed but I sleep on a sheet on the floor. The other room is the kitchen. This is where we all eat our meals. We are very lucky because we can afford to have meals every day. My mother sits on a small wooden plank, which is about 4 inches high, when she cooks and my father sits on this plank when he has his food. The rest of us sit on the floor. My grandmother lives with us. She is very old and lives on a bed in a corner of the veranda [a covered patio with 3 walls and chic or a curtain for the fourth] outside our house. We do not have a toilet in the house but have to go to the public toilets in the market. Some people just go to the fields behind the bushes. At the end of our street, near the public toilets, a tube well has been dug so we have a hand operated pump for pumping out the water. This is where we get our water supply for the day. We are very lucky to live so close to it.

Waking up

My mother wakes my father and me up at 5:30 in the morning after she and my sisters have had their baths, said their prayers and made the food. I go out to the public toilets, then to the tube well to have my bath out in the open with cold water. My father and I wear dhotis [sarong like garment] while we bathe and share one bucket of water. We brush our teeth at the same time with a Dattan, a soft green twig from the neem tree. Afterwards I have to carry a bucket of water back to the house for my family. As this is the only water pump in the village sometimes the queue for filling up is very long and sometimes the water is finished before it is our turn. That is why we have to get there very early in the morning. My mother and sisters go at 4 o'clock in the morning. I come back and have my breakfast, which is a thick dumpling made of crushed rice and dipped in warm oil and red chilli powder. After this I have to sit in my father's room for one hour and practise my English alphabet and maths while he says his prayers and gets dressed. This is

the part of the day that I hate the most because I am so sleepy and if my father catches me day dreaming or dozing he twists my ear very hard. Then I change into my uniform, which is a pair of blue shorts, a white shirt and a school tie, which is strapped to the neck with an elastic band. I do not have any shoes so I wear rubber flip-flops like most of other children and teachers. My tiffin [lunch box] is ready with 2 rotis, and once a week a banana since fruit is very expensive. The school is at the other end of the village so I have to run very fast after my one hour with my father because if I am late the teacher canes us on the back of the legs.

Start of the school day

My school starts at 7 a.m. We all stand and sing the National Anthem and the 4 and 5 times table all in one long song. If my teacher cannot hear my voice singing 4 times 7 he canes me on my hands.

The School

My school is a one-room building with a sort of extended thatched roof outside where we sit for lessons on all except very rainy days. There is only one teacher who teaches everyone all together. Most of the children leave when they are 6 years old. They are sent to the city to start working as domestic servants so it doesn't matter if they cannot sing the National Anthem or the 4 and 5 times table. There is no black board because at the last election the politicians took it to use as a sign for the next village for the ballot boxes. They promised us a new one but after the election we never got it. We only have slates and chinks for our work so I find it very difficult to remember what we did the day before. We have only 4 chairs in the classroom for the teacher's favourites to sit on. Everyone else sits on the floor. I sit on a chair when the teacher needs a special medicine for his cough from my father.

After school I

Now that I am 10 years old I have to start helping to earn money. After school I have my tiffin and then go to the railway station where I try and get some daily work. There is an engineering plant with huge buildings near my village, which is why the government have built the railway station. The cargo for the plant has to be taken off the trains every day and many children like me come to help. There are no trolleys so we have to carry it on our backs or our heads. If I work for 5 hours I can earn as much as Rs.4. [£1 is equal to Rs.70]. When I get home it is about 8 o'clock at night. Thank God it is not my job to cook or wash the clothes at night before going to bed. That is for my sisters to do.

The four statements.

1. *(From waking to arrival at school.)* I wake up 5:30, go to the public toilet and then to the water pump in the market where my father and I have our baths in the open and brush our teeth with soft Neem twigs. I have to carry a bucket of water back for my family and then do one hour of homework. I have a very nice uniform but no shoes or books. I have to run to the other end of the village for school in my flip-flops with my bag and lunch box.

2. *(Start of the school day.)* School starts at 7 a.m. with what you all would call an assembly where we all sing the National Anthem and the 4 and 5 times tables. I still don't know where the National Anthem stops and where the times tables begin.

3. *(School resources.)* We have no books and only 1 teacher and just 4 chairs so most of us have to sit on the floor. We are all taught the same thing, no matter how old we are. Most of the children are sent away to the cities when they are 6 years old to be domestic servants so I am very lucky to be living with my parents and be going to school even at the age of 10.

4. *(After-school life.)* I have to earn money to help the family so I go to the railway station after school every day to help unload cargo. I have to carry it on my back or head one piece at a time because I have no trolley or ropes to tie it with. I can earn as much as Rs.4 if I work for 5 hours. When I get home it is about 8 o'clock at night and I am very tired.