

How English and drama classes have shared the two fields of the secondary education in England

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The Education Reform Act 1988 led to the National Curriculum and the national assessment monitored by a reformed inspectorate. The teachers at each secondary school have been teaching Shakespeare, who has been the only obligatory author for the assessment since then. Drama as a school subject also comes under the purview of the Education Reform Act (ERA). Prior to the ERA, assessment of the subjects had been done in the various ways. However, since 1988 the national test of GCSE in secondary school has been established, and its assessment of most subjects is the accepted criterion for both teachers and students. Whereas before 1988, the drama class was one of the art subjects, now, it is a part of the subject English.

Actually, in a long educational association with English and drama, an affinity of purpose between the two fields developed. In this presentation, I will analyse how English and Drama have shared the same educational field with each other. In addition, I will present this analysis through English literature classes, examining Shakespeare plays specifically, because Shakespeare plays are compulsory in the secondary school curriculum and are good examples of the interface between the two fields. Last January, I visited schools in England, and observed some English and Drama classes, focusing on Shakespeare classes.

In order to investigate compulsory Shakespeare classes at the secondary schools, I observed the classes and interviewed teachers in a few schools.

Previously, the teacher would have been expected to teach some Shakespeare plays as the drama work, but ironically, the curriculum, which has been regulated by the Education Reform Act 1988, has prevented the English teachers developing the play script as drama with the children ? with class time allotted to giving children roles to interpret etc. ? thus forcing both teacher and taught to concentrate on the play as if it were merely another kind of English literature text from the margin on their teaching Shakespeare classes. In fact, in many cases, I got the impression that teachers were focused only on the assessment test at the end of the appropriate level, drilling the

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students towards answering questions correctly.

Through these visits, I could get an idea of the various teaching methods at different levels in the schools, and I will continue, based on this research to examine how teaching English and drama in the secondary schools would be affected depending on the assessment the children face at the end of the school year.