



A2.2

Performing to a Commission Brief

Summary of Findings

&

Evidence of Tasks

Education Officer

Summary of Findings – Education Officer

As Education Officer for our production of *The Road Not Taken*, I researched two venues: the Burnavon Arts and Cultural Centre, Cookstown and the Bardic Theatre, Donaghmore. They both have well-developed and structured Education and Outreach programmes. The aim is to get people involved in the Arts at an early age, so both venues offer a full portfolio of workshops linked to productions; schools' projects eg Young Playwrights project and Traditional Music; productions aimed specifically at younger age groups; post-production 'meet-the-cast' opportunities and Study Guides linked to particular productions eg *Macbeth*. In some instances, the theatres take the workshops to schools. The Burnavon also offers a limited number of placement and experience opportunities for young people who may aspire to working in a theatre. The Lighting designer in the Burnavon is a past pupil of our school and she has facilitated a number of lighting workshops for our Performing Arts class.

Our production of *The Road Not Taken* played to a number of audiences from our school's feeder primary schools as well as our own Year 8 students. Our aims in inviting these audiences included encouraging new pupils to choose the school and promoting Drama and Performing Arts to younger pupils. We were keen to get younger pupils engaged in the production and responding a little more deeply to its themes, through workshop and practical activities. The theme of 'decision making' was very appropriate for this age group (11/12 years) and allowed a way in to Frost's poem and our production.

I devised two workshop sessions, informed by Jonathon Needland's *Structuring Drama Work* in which he advocates workshops sessions as being most conducive to pupil engagement and empowerment, with their focus on active learning. One of the workshops was to be delivered before the audience attended the production and the second one, afterwards. This was quite time intensive so we offered feeder primary schools the option of either coming into our school or having a member of the Education Team go to their school to deliver the workshops. After the second workshop, the pupils would be invited to complete the post-production audience evaluation form. The form was designed to get the pupils to start thinking critically about the shape, form and effectiveness of the production so that they could begin to realise and appreciate the processes which allowed it to be created. It is a straightforward form, so that pupils did not feel it was an onerous task to complete it. The Production team and cast of *The Road Not Taken* also found it helpful to receive audience feedback.

Word Count: 432

Practical Workshop Materials

WORKSHOP 1

Time allowed: 60 minutes

Venue: Classroom/Hall

Resources:

- Copies of the poem *The Road Not Taken*, by Robert Frost;
- Video clip of Robert Frost reading *The Road Not Taken*;
- Power point of images of New England scenery and poem;
- Box installation.

Aims

We are learning to: -

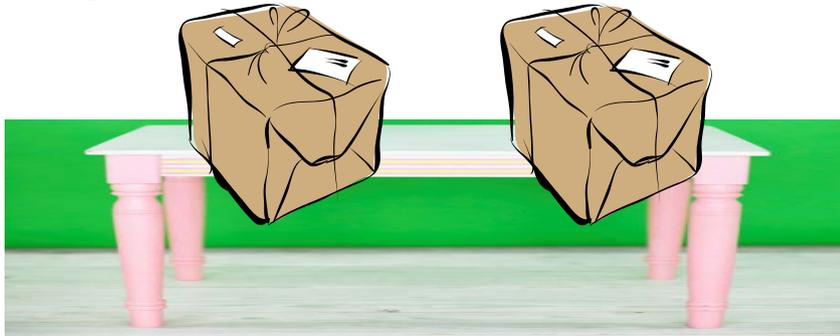
- Understand what *The Road Not Taken* is about;
- Respond to the poem's central theme of decision-making;
- Respond to the poem's language and tone;
- Devise a short piece of drama on a suggested decision.

As the pupils are coming into the room, a power point of New England scenery with the words of the poem is on a loop to set the context for the workshop.

Introduction

Teacher has prepared installation to generate discussion:

- Two large wrapped boxes identical in every way.



Suggested discussion questions:

- Both boxes are identical - how do you choose?
- What dilemma may face you - what is inside each box? For example decisions about friends, school, subjects, members of the opposite sex? How might its contents be important to you?
- What influences your decision?
- How do you feel about your decision?

Development

Activity A: The Poem

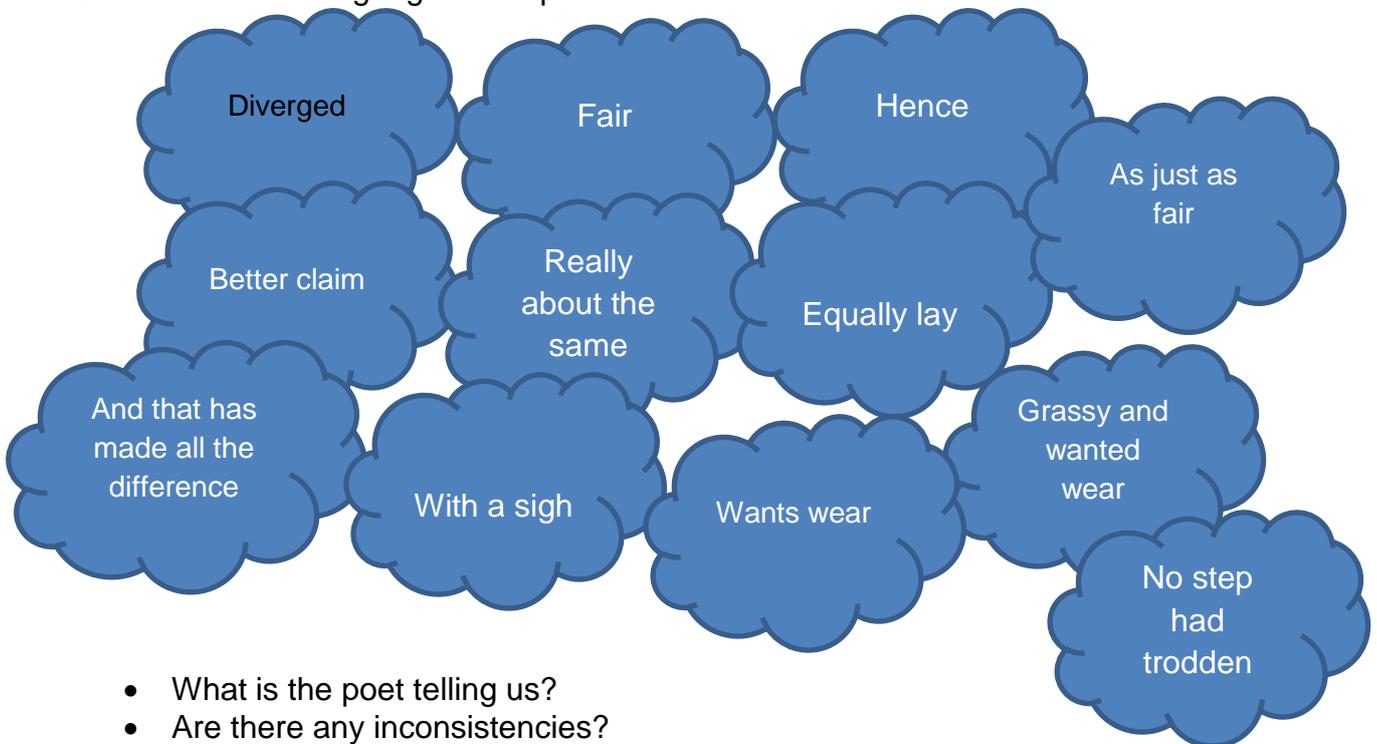
Teacher and students watch/listen to video clip of Robert Frost reading *The Road Not Taken*.

Whole class discussion:

- Who is the speaker in this poem? How can you tell?
- Is the poet speaking in the past, present or future? How do you know?
- What kind of dilemma is the poet facing?
- What do you think he'll do?
- How might he feel about his choice?

Activity B: Language

Let's look at the language of the poem:



- What is the poet telling us?
- Are there any inconsistencies?
- Any irony?
- What is poem's tone?
- "And that has made all the difference" – what does this mean?

Activity C – Improvisation

In groups of 4 –

- Thought shower common dilemmas which face teenagers eg, bowing to peer pressure; making decisions about friends; schools; school subjects; going with the group.
- Each group to select one dilemma and prepare an improvisation focusing on
 - (a) the dilemma
 - (b) the decision taken and
 - (c) the consequences of the decision.



- **Show and Tell / Feedback** – Three Stars and a Wish
- **Plenary** – Think, Pair, Share – What did I learn today?



Sample Post-Production Audience Evaluation

Name: Mary Brown

Date: 12th May 2015

Title of Piece: *The Road Not Taken*

Brief description of the story or narrative:

Who were the characters?

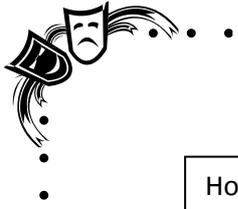
Evaluation of vocal skills used:

e.g. Volume, Pace, Pitch, Tone, Pause, Accent, Silence, Emphasis

Evaluation of physical skills used:

e.g. Movement, Posture, Gesture, Facial Expression, Stillness, Use of Space





How was a sense of mood and atmosphere created in this piece?

What were the most effective moments of the piece?

Evaluation of group performance techniques used:

e.g Banners, Chorus, Flashback, Monologue, Narration, Physical theatre, Repetition and Echo, Slow motion, Synchronised movement

Evaluation of the overall impact the piece made on you:

Areas that you would suggest for development:

