

# Pivotal Education

Clive Hulme

Pivotal Education is one of an increasing number of resource suppliers who are using the internet to sell and supply their goods (more of this in future issues). Pivotal deliver behaviour training and assessment seminars as well as a range of drama resources.

Pivotal says that all of the schemes are tried and tested, written by heads of drama departments or the result of collaborative planning. They also say: 'Our schemes are practical and active. You will not find drama schemes designed for the supply teacher, which are packed full of activities to photocopy for students to sit at a desk and work from. Our schemes are designed for motivated secondary drama teachers who want to have a few more good schemes to add to their repertoire.' Currently on offer are two packs, each containing three schemes of work.

The key stage 3 pack contains a Year 7 introduction to drama skills scheme based on the story of Jason and the Argonauts, a Year 8 vocal and script work scheme using *Under Milk Wood* by Dylan Thomas and a Year 9 physical theatre scheme.

For key stage 4 there is an improvisation scheme focusing on creating and developing character as well as other drama skills, an exploration of text scheme, looking at the themes and characters of *Henry IV* by Pirandello, and a scheme that works towards a performance of *Widows* by Ariel Dorfman, using the text and improvising around it.

Resources cost £20 to be emailed to you, £25 if you want them on CD. As they are supplied as Word documents, they can be edited and changes made according to your own desired format. Payment via PayPal will result in almost instant supply, says Pivotal.

For each scheme, there is a brief suggestion of what age group and ability it is aimed at, the aims of the scheme, drama techniques encountered and a generic statement about differentiation. (Steal it and put it in your handbook – it's good.) Lesson by lesson (or unit by unit, as they are called here), objectives are given, as well as key words, the groupings needed in the lesson and

any additional resources. Although most of these are usually to hand in drama departments, the *Under Milk Wood* scheme does require script copies and an audio tape of the original cast performance, so extra expense would be necessary.

The Jason scheme is substantial, running to 15 A4 sides. It contains ten one hour lessons (flexible timings). The English key stage 3 National Curriculum speaking and listening requirements are stated (but not the assessment levels), and 19 drama techniques are listed for the unit. You will need a copy of the legend of Jason and the Argonauts, and lesson-specific resources are listed as you progress. Each lesson's objectives are specified. To pick two lessons at random from this Year 7 scheme: in lesson 1 the students are introduced to the story through teacher narration, produce soundscapes, adopt characters, work in small groups, build drama under teacher direction and experience teacher-in-role. In lesson 5 the activities allow students to make their drama more effective, develop physical character and – get this – evaluate and set targets for their peers. The scheme continues through many other techniques, including an introduction to stage fighting. The timings for each activity within the lesson are given, and they are realistic. The same applies to all KS3 schemes.

In KS4 there are no individual activity timings within the lessons, giving opportunity to develop work at the group's own speed. In a scheme called Junk Shop, which includes photo files as background, students develop a character in depth over the course of the scheme – the junk shop owner, whose body is discovered in lesson 1. There is again a wide range of techniques which should fit with all GCSE specifications (Edexcel Paper 1 Unit 1; OCR Coursework Unit 2; AQA Coursework Options 1 or 3), either as actual exam work or practice. These techniques range from role on the wall, narration and mask work to sound effects and Gestalt. Students are expected to keep a portfolio of work and create in-character diaries for homework.

Based on these two packs, I would say that Pivotal are on to



a winner. They are reasonably priced, thoroughly planned and adaptable resources which would sit happily on most people's computers. Over the next few months, but not available at the time of writing, additional packs will become available. There will be a KS2 drama pack (almost guaranteed to be a hit; there seems to be a dearth of good KS2 material); a KS5 pack; a stand alone KS3 scheme on mask and a citizenship/drama pack. Pivotal are happy to send out samples of their work on request – send them an email.

## need to know

**Pivotal Education**

**Key stage 3 pack £20/£25 (email/CD)**

**Key stage 4 pack £20/25**

**Telephone: 020 7000 1735**

**Fax: 020 7000 1735**

**[www.pivotaleducation.com/drama](http://www.pivotaleducation.com/drama)**

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## Biography

Clive Hulme is head of performing arts at a West Midlands comprehensive school. He is a drama specialist with 25 years' experience and is a trained subject mentor.