

EVALUATION OF THE OLD VIC SCHOOLS' CLUB

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CONTENTS

1	SUMMARY	3
1.1	Background on the programme	3
1.2	Methodology.....	3
1.3	Key points.....	3
1.4	Good practices	4

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1 SUMMARY

1.1 Background on the programme

OVNV Schools' Club works with 40 schools across London for the duration of the theatre's season. Each school receives four onsite pre-show workshops before watching the related production at the theatre. Teachers have four workshops for their own professional development. Charitable support means that this is currently offered to schools for free. 56 schools applied: the demand is greater than the Old Vic can meet.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology consisted of:

- A registration process for students.
- A feedback form for students.
- A programme end survey for teachers.
- A learning seminar for teachers.
- A feedback form for each workshop for facilitators.

Our role was to write the questionnaires and analyse the data, and facilitate the learning seminar.

1.3 Key points

- 84% of students said that they enjoyed the workshop.
- 85% of students said the workshop helped them understand the play.
- 84% of teachers said that the programme increased pupils' confidence.
- 66% of teachers said that the programme increased pupils' communication skills.
- 69% of teachers said that the programme increased pupils' team working skills.
- 66% of teachers said that the programme increase pupils' interest in studying drama GCSE or A level.
- 95% of teachers said that the programme has informed their practice.
- 100% of teachers said that the programme was a success.
- 97% of teachers said they feel they have a relationship with the Old Vic.
- 97% of teachers said they would like to take part in the programme in the future.
- In 83% of occasions facilitators judged that schools were prepared for their visit.
- In 89% of occasions the facilitators judged that the exercises were appropriate for the group of students selected by the teachers.

1.4 Good practices

The Old Vic Schools' Club illustrates many aspects of good practice:

- **Selecting pupils positively.** Schools tend to select their gifted and talented rather than special needs pupils. This reflects their understanding of the programme as a sophisticated learning opportunity.
- **Ensuring attendance is valued.** Some schools select pupils based on an application process, or ask them to audition, which reinforces the idea that the club is a special privilege.
- **Continuity.** The Schools' Club works with the same set of children for four workshops. Each year the Old Vic works with some of the schools who have taken part in previous years as well as taking on new schools.
- **Engaging the teachers.** Benefit to teachers is central to the programme. The teachers attend workshops for their own CPD as well as facilitating in workshops with pupils. Throughout the year the Education Manager keeps in contact with teachers by sending out updates, interesting articles about drama and education.
- **Adding value by encouraging teachers to network with each other.** The Old Vic organises informal Xmas drinks, and is initiating a Facebook group.
- **Integrating evaluation.** The Old Vic runs three evaluation evenings for teachers to comment on the workshops so that amendments can be made as they go along.
- **Matching school planning.** Dates for the whole year are fixed from the beginning. Once the dates are fixed schools can pick any time in that day, so that they have clarity and flexibility.
- **Providing school resources for participating schools.** The Old Vic provides education packs that identify and discuss the key themes of the play, present interviews with the actors and designers, and look at the backstory of the author and explain the plot.
- **Placing school resources on the web.** Resources are available for other schools to download.
- **Running workshops for all plays.** The Schools' Club programme works with all Old Vic plays, it isn't selective. This reflects that Old Vic's philosophy that it should ensure any play is accessible: "It doesn't matter what show it is: we will make it work."
- **Clarifying expectations.** The Old Vic sends teachers a theatre protocol to discuss with pupils. It provides a members' handbook that sets out all the dates, roles and responsibilities. It also provides a student contract, which teachers can use if they wish.
- **Giving facilitators enough time.** Each year facilitators have four days training days before they go into schools. These explain and develop the exercises, deal with child protection and behaviour management, and get the facilitators to play out the workshops for comment. Facilitators are paid for a full day for each workshop, even though the workshop itself only takes two hours.
- **Supporting facilitators.** The Education Manager observes each facilitator.

These practices are designed to ensure that the workshops are of exceptional quality: the pupils and teachers are motivated and have sustained contact; the facilitators have sufficient time for preparation, support and feedback on their work.