Developing historical understanding through role-play: a comparison between the socio-dramatic play area at key stage one and the use of role-play at key stage two.

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Abstract

**Aim:** The aim of this investigation is to examine how role-play helps to develop historical understanding through the comparison of role-play in the socio-dramatic play area (SDPA) at Key Stage One (KS1) and the use of role-play at Key Stage Two (KS2).

**Background:** The background information to this investigation can be found in the literature review (Chapter 2). The literature review highlighted that role-play can play a highly beneficial part in better developing a child’s historical understanding, especially when used in the subject of History. Role-play can act as the umbrella term for all dramatic based activities, including those of hot-seating and freeze-framing. Additionally, KS1 children have the added benefit of an SDPA which can be used to help drive a historical topic and is always available for use. This area is not available in KS2.

**Methods:** This investigation used interviews and a questionnaire in order to accumulate the data. A total of 6 teachers from KS1 and KS2 were interviewed. The questionnaire was completed by 87 teachers who taught a mixture of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), KS1 and KS2. The results were then coded and analysed in order to arrive at a conclusion.

**Findings:** The investigation found that role-play is usually used during History lessons and helps develop aspects of historical understanding, such as empathy with what life was like in the past. Whilst role-play is only used in KS1 and KS2 when applicable to the topic being studied, if used it can benefit children in better developing their historical understanding. However, during KS1, the SDPA area was used to drive the History topic being studied. This allowed for the constant use of role-play throughout the studying of the topic, as opposed to only being used during History lessons in KS2.

**Implications:** To conclude, the investigation has provided data on how often role-play is used during the teaching of History in different Key Stages, how it develops historical understanding and how this can differ depending on whether it is used in KS1 or KS2.
Chapter 1: Introduction

This investigation will examine how role-play helps to develop historical understanding through the comparison of role-play carried out in the SDPA at KS1 and the use of role-play at KS2. This will be achieved through identifying both the benefits and drawbacks to the use of the SDPA in KS1 and the use of role-play in KS2 and how they aim to enhance the different aspects of historical understanding.

Role-play can be defined as being the basis for dramatic activities (Treasure, 2010). Dramatic activities include those such as hot-seating and freeze-framing (British Council, 2014) and role-play can also include the SDPA (Van Ments, 1983). Therefore, role-play can be considered as an approach to learning (Nickerson, 2008). It is believed that role-play offers a style of learning that promotes a deeper understanding alongside better retention of information (Responsible Conduct of Research Role-Plays, n.d.), therefore highlighting its significance in the teaching of History (Turner-Bisset, 2005).

Similarly, role-play in History has been identified as providing a better understanding of the past (Fairclough, 1994). However, it is also noted that a lack of both space in the classroom and time in the curriculum could potentially limit the effectiveness of role-play (Boon, 1991; Bromley, 2009). Additionally, due to the sensitivity of some subjects i.e. Henry the Eighth’s divorces, role-play is not always an appropriate teaching strategy. The SDPA has allowed children to develop new skills and understanding (McDonald, 2003). The SDPA should be fully resourced with real objects that are of interest to the children (Waterhouse, 2006), to allow them to be the owners of the area (Sharkey, 2008, p.iii). A well-planned SDPA can support everyday formal lessons (Sharkey, 2008) and may also be appropriate for older children, as their need to play is no less (Bromley, 2001).

The research was obtained from teachers from three areas of the United Kingdom (UK); Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and North London. The teachers taught Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), KS1 and KS2. The data was gathered through a questionnaire that was emailed to various schools and interviews. There were 87 responses to the questionnaire and 6 teachers were interviewed.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

What is role-play?

Pretend play encompasses role-play, where children use their imaginations (National Council for Curriculum and assessment, n.d.). It can be defined as a basis for dramatic activity (Treasure, 2010), that is used as a way of "stimulating the imagination” (Van Ments, 1983, p.41). Additionally, role-play can "encompass socio-dramatic play and fantasy play” (Williams, 2011, p.1), as well as relating to the term ‘drama’ referring to activities such as hot-seating and freeze-framing (British Council, 2014). Van Ments (1983) highlights that acting is bringing to life someone’s ideas, whereas role-play is experiencing a problem under a set of constraints. Nickerson (2008) states that role-play is not about acting, but more a technique for learning. This is supported through role-play being considered as an active learning technique, that works to promote a deeper way of learning, as well as long-term retention (Responsible Conduct of Research Role-Plays, n.d.), therefore considering it as a "natural vehicle for learning” (Blatner, 2009, l.24). Additionally, through well-planned play activities, a child’s thinking and understanding can progress (Northern Ireland Curriculum, n.d.) For the purposes of this dissertation, role-play will act as the umbrella term for that of drama and activities including hot-seating and freeze-framing. The Home-Corner, or role-play area will be referred to as the SDPA.

Opportunities for role-play in History

It has been recommended that Primary Schools ensure they “capitalise on the powerful contributions of... role play and drama” (Rose, 2009, p.21) within all curriculum subjects. Turner-Bisset (2005) indicates role-play as a valuable approach to teaching History in a primary classroom and Hoodless (2008) states History can be taught through a range of strategies, however, it must cater for all of the children and be suitable to the learning taking place. It is stated that such teaching strategies can include role-play and hot-seating, which have been viewed as a key element in many classrooms, by allowing pupils to imagine different viewpoints, which is an essential factor of learning History (Lomas 2008; The Historical Association, 2008). Additionally, Fairclough (1994) emphasises using role-play in History to enable pupils to gain a more secure understanding of the past, through adopting the personality of someone in the
past. It has been stated that “Good history should give pupils the opportunity to use their structured imagination to imagine themselves in historical scenes” (Lomas 2008; The Historical Association, 2008, p.8), which in turn can help children develop their historical understanding. Historical understanding can be further developed through role-play as ”History and drama beam a light on what it means to be human” (Heathcote, 2008; The Historical Association, 2008, p.36), highlighting that drama is crucial in ”bringing the past to life” (Heathcote, 2008; The Historical Association, 2008, p.36).

Jarvis et al. (2002) emphasise how role-play inspires children to reflect on their knowledge of a subject, although Chilvers (2003) infers how teachers have been scrutinised for focusing too heavily on knowledge of the past and not on the skills of understanding. However, it has been highlighted how the use of artefacts act as a bridge between ”children talking about the past and entering the past through drama” (Bower, 2013a, p.26), allowing children to become ”history detectives” (Bower, 2013a, p.26). Combining artefacts and role-play, allows children to empathise with the person they are becoming, which can be missed in other teaching strategies (Jarvis et al., 2002). Bower (2013b) demonstrates how learning through drama can allow children to retain information for long periods and Ashton-Hay (2005) supports this through indicating that drama has the capability to engage many different learning styles, which can motivate and encourage children to learn. Jarvis et al. (2002) support this through emphasising that participation in role-play promotes deep learning, thus helping to embed concepts. Retention and conceptual understanding can be considered as vital in the learning of History. The National Strategies (2008) asserts how using drama activities effectively across the curriculum, encourages high-quality thinking and written outcomes. This suggests that drama activities could also aid children in their writing. Alongside this, Jarvis et al. (2002) also state, that role-play can play an important part of assessment at the end of a topic.

Additionally, role-play is considered important in subjects other than History. De Silva and Blake (2006) highlight the benefits of using role-play in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), as it allows for high levels of engagement, the practising of life skills and is a powerful stimulus for learning. Similarly, role-play is emphasised as being important in the teaching of English. Moorcraft and
Barker (2000) indicate that drama can help children with the critical features of understanding fiction and non-fiction characters in texts. It has also been stated that Mathematics can be enhanced through role-play in the SDPA, through the setting of a café, allowing a child to use their mathematic knowledge to take money and also give change (Macintyre, 2001, cited in Wood and Attfield, 2005). This suggests that whilst role-play is evidently important in the teaching of History, it is also just as beneficial in the teaching of other curricular subjects.

**Limitations of role-play in History**

Whilst there are many clear benefits in utilising role-play to teach History, there are some limitations. Drama appeals to a variety of learning styles, yet it appears that many teachers are cautious of utilising it in lessons (Ashton-Hay, 2005). Ashton-Hay (2005) highlights these as fear of losing control and an unnecessary rise in noise levels, which will interfere with the teaching. However, Bower (2012) illustrates that if a drama lesson was to get out of control, the teacher should stop the lesson, identify the problems and regain control. A change in atmosphere and decorum in the classroom can potentially cause children to act outside of the set behaviour rules Van Ments (1983), possibly affecting a child’s learning. Van Ments (1983) continues to state that role-play may require more than one teacher, depending on its complexity and number of pupils involved. The lack of staff could affect the effectiveness of role-play in History, or preclude it. Moreover, Van Ments (1983) explains that an additional limitation to employing role-play is the growing concern over the accuracy and relevance of what the children will be learning. In regards to History, this could be that the role-play may not be historically accurate. Therefore further stressing the importance of sufficient staff availability to monitor the learning.

A lack of space in classrooms can be a further limitation (Boon, 1991), as many rooms can be crowded with tables and chairs (Bromley, 2009). Bromley (2009) considers this, but highlights that this can be resolved through careful planning and imaginative arrangement of the classroom. Haydn et al. (2015) highlight that a lack of role-play in the teaching of History in Secondary Schools, is due to time constraints. This could also be an issue in Primary Schools. Boon (1991) supports this by concluding that role-play can be ‘time costly’, if it includes
preparation and follow-up work. It can also be dependent on how well the children understand the activities set. In regards to History, this may be time consuming if the children have not spent enough time learning the topic prior to performing the role-play.

**Issues with using role-play**

Whilst there are many apparent advantages to employing role-play as a means of developing historical understanding, due to the sensitivity of some topics, it may not always be an appropriate teaching strategy. An example of which is divorce (when studying Henry the Eighth), which a child may be experiencing. It has been stated that "schools can play an important role in helping children make a positive adjustment to their parents' divorce" (Leon, n.d., l.10) and this should be taken into consideration during the planning of lessons, to ensure they are taught in the appropriate way.

Topics in History can include "controversial and divisive issues, touching on race and class...which need sensitive treatment" (Hoodless, 2007, p.55) for example, the Holocaust and Slavery. It has been highlighted that there are sensitive issues of teaching children about the Holocaust. Emotional responses can be provoked in children who are of Afro-Carribean descent when learning about the slave trade. Therefore, it is important to understand how these children might feel during lessons (Traille n.d., cited in Cooper, 2013). Role-play has been described as putting yourself into “somebody else’s shoes or... into an imaginary situation” (Budden, 2004, l.14-15). However, in certain situations, it would be unethical to allow a child to put themselves in to ‘someone else’s shoes’.

**The socio-dramatic play area**

The SDPA can be viewed as an essential part of a classroom, especially in the EYFS and KS1. This area should be situated in a part of the classroom that affords children the appropriate space and resources to engage in role play. Role-play situations "allow children to work through real-world and personal situations and experiences“ (Chapman, 2014, p. iv) and within the SDPA, the learning possibilities are limitless (Chapman, 2014). Whilst involving themselves in the variety of roles created through their own imaginations, children adapt their play to suit the chosen scenarios, providing a "very powerful learning for
children [giving] them the opportunity to make sense of their world” (Waterhouse, 2006, p.57). These created roles stimulate and develop a child’s personal, social and emotional wellbeing, as they must negotiate roles and responsibilities with their peers, whilst managing their behaviour and feelings (Chapman, 2014). Childrens’ learning will be most effective when they enjoy what they are doing and the SDPA is vital in the development of new skills and understanding (McDonald, 2003). In order to continue developing skills and understanding, the SDPA should be resourced carefully with the childrens interests taken in to account. Teachers should ask the children what they would like in the SDPA and take this into account when resourcing it, as the childrens’ suggestions could provide the stimulus for “experimenting with social-dramatic play” (McDonald, 2003, p.43). This SDPA should be resourced with ‘real’ objects that coincide with the childrens’ interests (Waterhouse, 2006), providing them with an “ownership of the area” (Sharkey, 2008, p.iii). All areas of the curriculum can benefit from being incorporated into the SDPA. This could vary from measuring recipe ingredients (linking with Mathematics) (Chapman, 2014), to a Travel Agents (linking with Geography), allowing the SDPA to be a “rich environment for cross curricular activities” (Waterhouse, 2006, p.57). Although, it has been suggested that “play is offered as a reward for completed or satisfactory ‘work’” (Bromley, 2011, p.14), Sharkey (2008) suggests that a well-planned SDPA can support formal lessons in the everyday timetable.

Wilkinson (2002) emphasises how History relies on exploring evidence. Therefore, a ‘hands-on’ area alongside the subject, will help the children to develop an understanding about life in the past. Wilkinson (2002) stresses that this ‘hands-on’ area should evolve throughout the duration of the topic and that work completed in this area should be displayed to demonstrate the progress that has been made. This reiterates that “role-play is a method of learning” (Milroy, 1982, p.8). Therefore, an SDPA used for History, helps support the teaching of the topic and to develop a child’s historical understanding (Wilkinson, 2002). Griffiths (2002) indicates that the younger a child is, the more important it is that they have an SDPA to play in. An SDPA may not only be appropriate for young children, as Bromley (2001) suggets that as a child gets older, their need to play is no less. However, whilst play of this kind does promote a child’s learning and independence (Northern Ireland Curriculum, 2008), it has been
suggested that the role-play should be ended when the learning objective has been met (Nickerson, 2008). Therefore, if an element of the curriculum was being used in the SDPA, the play must have a learning objective and be monitored to ensure the children stop once it is achieved. Bromley (2011) states, when play is used in order for children to learn, observable outcomes must be given as much prominence as a written ones. Additionally, Rogers and Evans (2007) highlight that space plays a significant part of the SDPA, which is something that infant classes often lack (Wilkinson, 2002). Furthermore, the SDPA appears to have been abandoned due to time constraints as teachers are pressurised by Literacy and Numeracy demands (Bromley, 2011, p.13).

This Literature Review summarises that there are plenty of opportunities for the use of role-play as a tool in the teaching of children and that it has many benefits. This is further stressed during the teaching of History, as role-play can greatly enhance a child’s historical understanding and empathy. However, whilst the benefits of role-play have been highlighted, limitations such as time and space constraints and the behaviour of the children, can cause it to be less-effective, or preclude it completely. The SDPA has also been demonstrated as having a significant importance in a child’s education, on both an educational and social level. However, there appears to be a gap in literature about the benefits and drawbacks of using role-play in the SDPA, in the context of historical understanding.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This section will identify the different research methods employed and will illustrate why they were chosen, how they help analyse the results and their appropriateness to the study.

The study was carried out under the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research Guidelines produced by BERA, to ensure that it was ethical. Respect to the participants was vitally important during the study. The BERA guidelines emphasise the importance of respect, stating “This ethic of respect should apply to ...any individuals participating in the research either directly or indirectly” (BERA, 2011, p.5). In keeping with this, the participants were made aware of the study they were partaking in and were promised anonymity and the right to withdraw. All participants were asked to sign a cover sheet agreeing to the terms and all reserved the right to withdraw at any point during the study. The interviewees were also provided with the option as to whether they were happy to be recorded or not.

Two research methods were employed to gather data for this study; a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire was sent to 35 primary, junior and infant schools around Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and one school in North London with an accompanying cover sheet to brief the participants on the nature of the study and why it was being conducted. The questionnaire consisted of 9 questions including multiple-choice, writing in a text box and a Likert Scale. Unfortunately, there was not much response, which then led to the questionnaire being posted on a Facebook page designed for primary school teachers to share ideas and advice. Again, this included a brief on the nature of the study and that any answers given would remain anonymous. Subsequently, 87 questionnaire results were completed, demonstrating a good sample size, which would produce a greater reliability of results (Cohen et al, 2011). The interview was completed by six primary school teachers from across both Key Stage One (KS1) and Key Stage Two (KS2) from Oxfordshire and North London. However, the results gathered from these teachers may not be representative of the teachers from other areas and due to time constraints only 6 teachers were able to be interviewed. This could affect the reliability of results (Cohen et al, 2011).
A Likert Scale was predominantly used to gather data as it did not ask the participants to provide a definite yes or no response, but allowed them to respond to an extent of agreement (LaMarca, 2011). The questions used with a Likert Scale focused on gathering the participant’s opinions on a scale of agreement, or importance and also how often they used role-play in six subjects. These six subjects consisted of English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Religious Education and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). This method is also simple to code (LaMarca, 2011) as each answer represents a single number.

The interviews were conducted with the questionnaire and consisted of 15 definite questions alongside some additional questions that were asked. The interviewees were current and former teachers from Oxfordshire and North London. A variety of question types were used including open-ended questions and closed questions, to which they then elaborated on.

Interviews were beneficial to my study, as they allowed follow-up questions to be asked. This gave a fuller understanding of each interviewees opinions and memories and further questions could then be asked to explore their answers further. When considering the variety of schools this questionnaire was sent to and the participants who were interviewed, it is important to remember that this is only a small sample of schools taken from three areas in the United Kingdom (UK) and therefore cannot be generalised to the other schools and teachers in the UK.

The results collected provided good quality, qualitative data which was then analysed in order to gain a better understanding of what had been obtained and how this would be implemented in the study. The data was reviewed several times to ensure it was fully understood and was then coded through extracting answers that showed the emergence of similar themes or patterns (Taylor-Powell and Renner, 2003). This then allowed the data to be analysed and interpreted more efficiently and effectively.
This chapter will show the findings gathered from the study. The research methods utilised include a questionnaire completed by 87 teachers and the interviewing of 6 teachers. The data will be organised and displayed through tables, graphs and statements to ensure that it is portrayed in a manner that is clear and understandable to the reader. Additionally, the findings will be referenced against current literature, which has been previously discussed, allowing patterns and comparisons to emerge and be established. The analysis of the data will be organised into three different sections; interview results from KS1 teachers, interview results from KS2 teachers and questionnaires results exploring both Key Stages.

**KS1 Interviews**

The results for this section will be gathered from the interviews taken from those teachers who have had experience teaching in KS1. They were asked questions that covered role-play in general across the curriculum; role-play in History and finally the SDPA.

The first question asked which subjects did the teachers use role-play in the most, which subjects the least and why (Appendix 6). Their answers highlighted that all KS1 teachers stated they used role-play the most during Literacy and Topic lessons and the least in Science. The Topic lessons that involved role-play appear to be primarily History and Geography based lessons. This concurs with Turner-Bisset’s (2005) statement that role-play is a valuable teaching approach to History in the primary classroom. When asked why this was the case, they explained that role-play lends itself more to these subjects and its topics compared to the others. Time constraints associated with role-play (Boon, 1991) could offer an explanation as to why role-play is used the least in other subjects, as they may take more time to plan, involve more preparation and follow-up work. Additionally, it was thought that Literacy and Topic are more creative subjects in the curriculum, in which role-play can play a significant part, especially in History, where it is a great aid in assisting the children in remembering the sequences, thus giving them a better understanding of the past (Fairclough, 1994).
The interviewees were then asked to what extent they used role-play in teaching History, how often they used it and why (Appendix 6). All the teachers agreed that role-play in History is used when it is applicable to the topic being studied and this is usually then incorporated into the SDPA, as previously suggested by Sharkey (2008). When the SDPA is incorporated with History, it has been stated that it can help to develop the childrens’ historical understanding, confirming Wilkinson’s (2002) statement. Alongside this, one teacher (Appendix 7) highlighted that they also used hot-seating during History lessons, which could be either herself, or the children. The teacher did however indicate that during hot-seating, not all children contribute, therefore questioning its effectiveness. This contradicts The Historical Associations (2008) statement that hot-seating is a key factor of a History lesson. As mentioned above, the answers given highlighted that role-play was only used when it was applicable. However, one teacher stated that they always had a historical themed SDPA when a History topic was being covered, as it helped the children to understand the lifestyle of people in the past. This is in agreement with Wilkinson (2002).

The question then moved to ask which aspects of History the teachers thought role-play supported the most and why (Appendix 6). The main aspects appear to be a better understanding of why things happened in the past, development of historical vocabulary and awareness of similarities and differences. These findings suggest that a more hands-on approach to the subject helps the exploration of the different types of evidence, therefore helping children to develop their understanding about life in the past (Wilkinson, 2002). Evidence from the past can be further explored through the use of artefacts, costumes, props and scene setting as indicated in the collected data. During KS1, these appear to be predominantly used in the SDPA, where children can become actively involved in their learning. One teacher indicated how they developed the aspect of bringing out similarities and differences through the use of artefacts and costumes in the SDPA and highlighted how they had split a six week topic on Florence Nightingale (Appendix 8). For the first three weeks, the SDPA was set as a hospital during the time of Florence Nightingale. They explained how the SDPA included cloth aprons, enamel bowls and medical paraphernalia in the form of bandages, etc. For the second three weeks, the SDPA was set as a modern
hospital, with modern technology props allowing the children to have a better understanding of what life was like in the past.

The teachers were then asked in which Historical topics they had used role-play; how it was the lessons where planned and what resources were employed (Appendix 6). The results for this were similar, with recurring responses such as case studies of Mary Seacole and the Great Fire of London. Again, artefacts, costumes and props appropriate to the time were used and the role-play of the topic took place both inside and outside of the SDPA. However, as previously mentioned, the SDPA always appears to support the current History topic studied.

The next question asked which teachers were actively involved in role-play and why (Appendix 6). This revealed that the teachers usually lead the role-play. However, sometimes it was arranged for external educators to conduct role-play during History lessons. The use of an external educator could be down to them having more expertise in the topic, or due to a restricted number of staff available in the school to assist the role-play (Van Ments, 1983). However, the use of an external educator has been highlighted as being excitable and memorable for the children, as one teacher indicated that it is more believable for the children because when a teacher goes into role, they are ultimately still the teacher (Appendix 7).

They were then asked what the main opportunities and draw-backs were to using role-play to develop and support History (Appendix 6). The main advantages in regards to the SDPA were unanimous, in that it helps develop historical understanding and allows children to use and apply their historical knowledge. As forementioned by Chapman (2014), it was also found to be beneficial to a child’s social, communication and language skills. As mentioned above, the drawbacks are that of setting up the SDPA, a lack of appropriate space (Boon, 1991; Bromley, 2009) and not completing the role-play activity (Boon, 1991). These findings indicate that whilst the SDPA is highly beneficial, its effectiveness in developing History is jeopardised by lack of time and space.

The interviewees were asked if they have, or have ever had, an SDPA in their classroom and why and to comment on its importance (Appendix 6). They all confirmed they had an SDPA (Boon, 1991; Bromley, 2009) in their classroom. As
noted above, it was driven by the topic they had been studying. Use of the SDPA was highlighted as keeping the topic fresh in the childrens’ mind, whilst allowing them to explore the topic further through being able to ‘live’ it and thus better able to empathise with what it was like in the past. From this, they then described the SDPA as being vitally important in the classroom and again mentioned how it helps drive the topic. One teacher emphasised that only having one History lesson a week does not allow the children time to apply their knowledge and understanding to other areas (Appendix 7). So by having an SDPA that is constantly available for referral, it helps develop a child’s historical understanding (Wilkinson, 2002).

In conclusion, it is suggested that whether role-play occurs inside or outside of the SDPA, its utilisation plays a very important part in the teaching of History as it enhances a child’s historical understanding. Additionally, the SDPA should be used to drive a topic in History as it better supports children in developing their historical and social understanding. This can be further developed by the use of artefacts, props, costumes and scene-setting to give the children a more memorable experience. However, it has certainly been highlighted that time and space constraints can restrict the use and effectiveness of role-play.

**KS2 Interviews**

The results from this section will be accertained from the interviews taken from KS2 teachers. As with the KS1 teachers, they were asked questions that covered role-play in general across the curriculum, role-play in History and finally the SDPA.

Firstly, the teachers were asked in which subjects they used role-play most, least and why (Appendix 6). Their answers concured with the results given by the KS1 teachers, in that role-play was used the most in English and Topic subjects and the least in Science and Maths. Although one teacher stated they do use role-play in Maths, in order to allow the children to become the teacher (Appendix 9). Again, the Topic lessons that were taught using role-play were mainly History and Geography. This agrees with Turner-Bisset (2005). Similarly, role-play in these subjects appears to be the most popular choice for teachers, as they feel it is more applicable, as these subjects are more creative (Appendix 9). In addition, it was also mentioned that it helped the children understand
what they were learning (Appendix 8), remember sequences of a topic (Appendix 9) and helped to inspire the childrens’ writing (Appendix 10). Creative subjects appear to offer more opportunities for role-play to be used in order to consolidate understanding (Fairclough, 1994). There could be similar reasons to those previously given as to why role-play is used less in Science and Maths, such as the need for more preparation and follow-up work (Boon, 1991).

The teachers were then asked to what extent they used role-play in teaching History, how often they used it and why (Appendix 6). They all confirmed that they often use role-play and were in agreement with the KS1 teachers stating that role-play is only used in History when it lends itself to the topic being studied. However, one teacher stated how they had not had the opportunity to use role-play in a History lesson, due to it only being taught on a termly basis (Appendix 10). Another teacher claimed they would always use role-play at the start of a topic. This appears to contradict Jarvis et al. (2002), who states that role-play can be used as an assessment strategy at the end of a topic. The results also confirmed that because role-play makes the lesson more realistic for the children, it gives them a better understanding, more memorable experience which aids their understanding of the time periods being covered. Alongside this, role-play greatly helped children what they were learning (Appendix 9). Unlike the KS1 teachers, KS2 teachers do not have access to an SDPA in their classrooms, so their role-play is carried out in other areas.

The next question was “which aspects of History do you think role-play supports the most and why” (Appendix 6). The answers given were the same as the KS1 teachers, as they stated role-play supported the understanding of why things happened in the past and in the comparing of similarities and differences of different time periods. This demonstrates that a more ‘hands-on’ approach to the teaching of history can help develop a child’s understanding about life in the past (Wilkinson, 2002). However, there was a slight disagreement about whether role-play enhances chronology. This could be due to a different interpretations of the term chronology. Some teachers may have been focusing on a broader approach to time, whilst others may have been referring to a smaller scale in the sequence of a specific event. Once again, all the teachers emphasised the importance of using artefacts, costumes, props and scene-setting to accompany role-play. They stated that when the children are wearing
a costume, it helped them relate to the role they are playing. They also stated that during educational trips, the experience was enhanced by the children wearing costumes. This further emphasises role-play’s importance in children’s historical understanding.

They were then asked what topics in History they had used role-play in, how they had planned the lesson and what resources they used (Appendix 6). The results were similar to that of the KS1 teachers. This could be due to certain topics being better suited for role-play. Role-play was reportedly used to teach the Stone-Age, Bronze-Age, Egyptians, Vikings, Tudors and both World Wars. Again, unlike the KS1 teachers, there was no mention of an SDPA being utilised to support the History topic.

The next question asked who utilised role-play in lessons and why (Appendix 6). From this it was found that, as with the KS1 teachers, the KS2 teachers usually lead the role-play. Two teachers stated that they occasionally book an external educator to come into the school to lead the children in role-play activities. They also mentioned that during educational visits, the staff take an active part in the role-play (Appendix 8; Appendix 9). These teachers are from the same school and have the same approach on this. One teacher stated they always utilised role-play (Appendix 12) and another, that they utilised it in order for them to assess the childrens’ learning (Jarvis et al. 2002) and address any misconceptions that may arise. This is an interesting point when comparing role-play in KS1 and KS2 as, if role-play occurs in the SDPA, there may not be an opportunity for the teacher to address any misconceptions children may have.

The interviewees were then asked what they saw as the main opportunities and draw-backs to using roleplay to develop and support History (Appendix 6). The main opportunities highlighted that it makes learning more memorable, develops a child’s understanding of the topic, helps to give writing a purpose and allows children to consolidate their learning. As with children in KS1, role-play in KS2 also enhances communication and language skills (Chapman, 2014), such as speaking and listening. One draw-back to role-play appeared to be that of the availability and quality of resources. This could be from a lack of costumes and artefacts for the topic being studied, there not being the correct resources available to use and/or the quality of these resources not being suitable. As
previously mentioned, resources, such as costumes and artefacts are considered of vital importance in developing historical understanding. Therefore, a lack of them for a topic could potentially affect the learning of a topic. In addition to these, other drawbacks appeared to be time and space constraints and also that the behaviour of some children in the class can potentially put a hault to a role-play activity.

They were then asked if they have, or have ever had, an SDPA in their classroom and why and also commented on its importance (Appendix 6). All teachers agreed that the SDPA was very important and stated that it allowed children to explore their learning and allows for consolidation to take place. They also commented on its importance for developing leadership and communication skills. However, whilst they commented on the importance of this area, they stated that they had not had the availabilty of the area in their classrooms, to which two of the teachers then stated that they believed an SDPA would be beneficial in a KS2 classroom. Although, the lack of this area was reported to be the time and space constraints of the KS2 classroom and curriculum. However, one teacher only stated that the area was very important for children in the EYFS and KS1. One teacher then continued to state that an SDPA is benefical for older children too, as it allowed the freedom to get into a character when they wanted to and also help them to consolidate their learning (Appendix 9). They then concluded by saying that an SDPA should be included in KS2 classrooms. This further reiterates Bromley’s (2001) view that children will always need to play, not matter what their age. As previously stated, well-planned activites, such as that found in the SDPA, a child’s thinking and understanding can progress (Northern Ireland Curriculum, n.d.)

These findings can conclude that all the KS2 teachers believe that role-play enhances historical understanding and agree that artefacts, costumes, props and scene-setting further contribute to this. As with the KS1 teachers, it has been found that they mainly utilise role-play themselves, although external educators and visits are additionally employed. Similarly, it has again been noted that time and space constraints can potentially restrict the benefits of role-play. Surprisingly, although one does not appear in their KS2 classrooms, the teachers said they saw the benefits of an SDPA and felt it should be available in KS2
classrooms. The results from these interviews reveal some similarities to those from the KS1 teachers.

**Questionnaires**

This chapter will present the results gathered from the questionnaire answered by EYFS, KS1 and KS2 teachers. The questions ranged from; what year group they taught; what their role was in the school; the importance of role-play across the curriculum; how often it is used in different subjects; if role-play helps develop better historical understanding; the importance of the SDPA; the use of artefacts, costumes, props and scene setting during role play.

The questionnaire was completed by 87 teachers from the EYFS, KS1 and KS2, as displayed in Figure 1. These results can be considered reliable as Cohen (2011) highlights, that the minimum sample size to produce reliable results is 30. There is also only a difference of 9 in the returned questionnaires from EYFS and KS1, compared to KS2. This indicates an equal balance in results. Of the 87 teachers who responded, 6 were the History Coordinator in their school.

**Figure 1:** A pie chart showing the year groups taught by the teachers.

The following question asked the participants to determine how important they considered role-play to be across the curriculum. The results show that role-play was deemed the most important in English followed by PSHE and History (Figure 2).
Figure 2: Graph showing the percentage of teachers who consider role-play to be very important and in which subjects.

The results illustrated in Figure 2, are the opinions given by the teachers in the interviews on which subjects role-play is employed the most. Whilst role-play did not appear to be utilised the most in History; English and PSHE can be considered as ‘obvious’ choices for the use of role-play. Both drama and role-play appear in the Primary National Curriculum published by The Department for Education (2013) under the section for the teaching of English. Within this section, whilst it states it is non-statutory, it is stressed how drama and role-play can be utilised to aid the teaching of this subject. However, these suggestions do not appear for the teaching of History. Role-play is also encouraged within the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage published by The Department for Education (2014), to allow children to be expressive and imaginative. De Silva and Blake (2006) praise the benefits of role-play in the teaching of PSHE. PSHE can be considered as being a principal component of this framework (The Department for Education, 2012). It can therefore be suggested, that the promotion of drama and role-play in the teaching of English and PSHE (Silva and Blake, 2006; Moorcraft and Barker, 2000) leads to the inevitability that role-play is considered as having the most importance in these subjects by teachers.
The teachers were then asked how often they used role-play in subjects across the curriculum. The choices were; always, usually, occasionally, never. Figure 3 displays the findings of this question in regards to role-play ‘always’ being used in a subject.

![Role-play is always used in these subjects](image)

**Figure 3:** A graph showing the subjects role-play is always used in.

The results confirm the previous findings above, by stating that role-play is deemed highly important in the teaching of English and PSHE followed by History and that it will always be planned into lessons. Although, there is a difference of 17% and 9% between the results of how often role-play is planned when comparing English and PSHE to History, the reasons behind these results remain similar to those above. The promotion of role-play in these subjects therefore make it more likely to be used during lessons. However, Figure 4 represents the results taken from the subjects that ‘usually’ use role-play during lessons. These results offer a different view than the one above.
Figure 4: Graph showing the percentage of teachers who claim they usually use role-play when teaching these subjects.

From this, it can be seen that although the top 3 subjects remain the same, History is now the most popular choice. This highlights that whilst role-play may not always be used during lessons, this could be due to it not always being applicable. This echoes the views given in the interviews, (Appendix 6) which stated role-play is only applied to History lessons when it lends itself to the topic. Surprisingly, when comparing the answers given by the KS1 (63%) and KS2 (66%) teachers, there appears to be a small difference in percentage who state they ‘always’ or ‘usually’ use role-play during History lessons. The interviews revealed that the KS1 and KS2 teachers agreed role-play is only used when applicable. However, the KS1 teachers continued to state that the SDPA also acted as a place where History can be taught using role-play. With this in mind, it would be expected that KS1 teachers would use role-play in History more often than the KS2 teachers as their classroom appeared to have a role-play resource (SDPA), however, this was not the case.

The questionnaire then focused on role-play and developing historical understanding. The results were similar for the different aspects of historical understanding that role-play develops. The most popular aspect of historical understanding highlighted by role-play, in both Key Stages, was ‘how people lived/lifestyle of the past’. This result appears to confirm the findings of the interviews. Similarly, the least popular aspect of historical understanding to be
developed by role-play, was ‘chronological understanding’. However, this result appeared to only have minor conflict with findings gathered during the interviews. Curiously, some interviewees stated that role-play helped with chronological understanding, whilst others completely disagreed. Although, those who said role-play helped chronology, also mentioned ‘sequencing’. This suggests that whilst role-play may not aid children in developing their understanding of chronology on a broad scale, it may help them with the sequencing of a specific event, subsequently highlighting its importance.

This question asked the participants who it was that utilised role-play during History lessons that aimed to develop historical understanding.

![A pie chart demonstrating who teaches role-play in History](image)

**Figure 5:** A pie chart showing the percentages of who it is that utilisies role-play during History lessons.

It is clear from these results (Figure 5) that the majority of teachers utilise role-play themselves during History lessons, in order to develop historical understanding. However, the interviews indicated that External Educators are employed to utilise role-play to develop historical understanding and one teacher (Appendix 9) felt this person had more of an expertise than themselves. If these External Educators are viewed as being ‘experts’ in the topic covered, it is noted that their limited use may be subject to available budgets (Appendix 10) within schools (Figure 5).
The participants were asked if they used any artefacts, props, costumes, or scene-setting when using role-play to teach History. The results show that 76% of teachers use one or more of these resources during role-play, to help develop historical understanding. This echoes the answers given in the interviews. The interviewees stated they used all of these resources to accompany role-play and the KS1 teachers stressed how these were also included in the SDPA. Thus highlighting, how the use of props can bring the past to life (Appendix 7).

The next question asked in which topics they employed role-play, in order to develop historical understanding. The results appear to show a general agreement. The most popular topics being The Egyptians, Vikings, Romans, Tudors, The Great Fire of London, Victorians, Florence Nightingale, World War 1, World War 2 and local studies. It can be suggested that employing role-play in these topics is highly beneficial in developing a child’s historical understanding and that this is further enhanced by the use of resources, such as artefacts, etc.

The SDPA was the subject of the next question. The participants were asked how important they felt the use of the SDPA was in the teaching of different curriculum subjects. The data gathered subsequently altered the previous top 3 subjects that are associated with role-play.

Figure 6: A bar chart showing how important subjects are considered in SDPA.
The results (Figure 6) show that the top 3 most important subjects in the SDPA area are English, PSHE and Maths, leaving History in fourth place. The appearance of Maths in the top three subjects shows the benefits of integrating Maths into the SDPA (Macintyre, 2001, cited in Wood and Attfield, 2005). As previously mentioned, all interviewees stated, that role-play is only used in History when applicable and that this is also considered when preparing the SDPA. Consequently, if History is only taught termly (Appendix 10), the utilisation of the SDPA may be limited. Therefore, the regular teaching of English and Maths will offer greater opportunities for role-play and therefore highlight why it is considered more important.

During the KS2 teacher interviews, it became apparent that an SDPA would be beneficial in a KS2 classroom, especially in the development of historical understanding. This indicates that an SDPA is not only convenient for KS1 children, but also at KS2, as their desire to play is not decreased (Bromley, 2001). It could therefore be argued that there is a requirement for an SDPA in a KS2 classroom.

These results appear to concur with those of the interviews, as they highlight that History was the most popular subject for the use of role-play outside of the most ‘obvious’ subjects, thus stressing it’s importance. Similarly, History became the top answer for role-play in which it was ‘usually’ used. It was highlighted that role-play only be used when applicable to the topic being taught and it was suggested that it was most effective when carried out in the SDPA. The benefit in the use of artefacts, costumes, props and scene-setting and their obvious ability to develop better historical understanding, have been recommended by these findings. It was also confirmed that most role-play was carried out by the teacher.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

Through interviews and questionnaires, this research has uncovered the significance role-play has throughout a child’s education. Whilst History did not appear to be the most popular subject for the employment of role-play, the subjects that ranked higher can be viewed as ‘obvious’ choices for supporting learning in the subject. The popularity of role-play in English and PSHE can be pinpointed down to the promotion of role-play in both subjects (De Silva and Blake, 2006; The Department for Education, 2013). Therefore, History can be considered as the most popular answer of the subjects that benefit from the use of role-play. However, the effectiveness and availability of role-play can be jeopardised by time Boon (1991) and space constraints Bromley (2009), such as the teacher’s commitments to other subjects and limitations of space in a classroom, for the children to fully benefit from this nature of learning.

When focusing on the use of role-play in History, it has been highlighted that its use helps develop the historical understanding of children across both KS1 and KS2. The main aspect of History that appears to be developed through role-play is that it enabled the children to better understand and empathise with what life was like in the past. However, the benefits to other aspects, such as chronology were debatable. This was possibly due to a misinterpretation as to whether this was a sequence of events’, or timespan on a broader scale. The teachers declared that role-play enables the topic to become more realistic, therefore giving the children a more memorable experience and a better historical understanding. In order to further develop this historical understanding, the use of artefacts, costumes, props and scene-setting is also rated as being important. The use of these resources was claimed as being highly beneficial in ensuring History is made more realistic (Bower, 2013) and allowed children to be able to compare the different time periods being studied with their lifestyle.

It was felt that role-play was restricted in use, as it was only being used when applicable to the topic being studied. This can be seen as espically true in KS2, as the of use role-play in History was only carried out during History lessons. This is in contrast to KS1, where with the establishment of a historically themed SDPA, the teachers could refer to it throughout the school day. This highlights the use of role-play as being a very important part in a child’s education.
(McDonald, 2003) and is mainly used in KS1. Teachers across both Key Stages agreed there were evident benefits of using this area, including allowing children to make sense of the world around them (Waterhouse, 2006), as well as developing a child’s personal, emotional and social well-being (Chapman, 2014). Although the KS2 teachers did not have the facility of an SDPA, they could see the obvious benefits of learning in this area. The benefits of an SDPA can also be seen through it being the vehicle for supporting a curriculum subject and developing historical understanding as the childrens’ need for this area is not lessoned (Bromley, 2001).

It was made apparent that History is a topic that can be supported through the SDPA, encouraging children to explore their learning further. If the SDPA is used in the teaching of History, it is not only beneficial to the development of historical understanding (Wilkinson, 2002) during History lessons, but on a daily basis, as the area is always available for children to use during lessons and free time. Therefore, it can be considered that historical understanding is better developed through the use of role-play both inside and outside of a constantly available SDPA at KS1, in comparison to the occasional use of role-play in KS2. Consequently, it could be argued that an SDPA should be available at KS2.

In conclusion, the importance of the use of an SDPA to drive a History topic seems apparent for better development of a child’s historical understanding. It is also apparent, that the proper resourcing of the SDPA with suitable artefacts and costumes, is of great importance to enhance the learning experience. It would appear to be evident that the availability of a SDPA at KS2, could have the same benefits as that at KS1. Although space can be a limiting factor, it should be borne in mind that this could be something as simple as having the children role-play around a display they have made. This would also benefit the teacher in assessing the childrens’ historical understanding of the topic that had been taught (Jarvis et al, 2002).
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Dissertation log
Appendix 2: Ethical considerations form
Appendix 3: Ethical consent sheet
Appendix 4: Questionnaire sample
Appendix 5: Questionnaire results
Appendix 6: Interview sample
Appendix 7: Interview transcript 1
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Appendix 1

BA (Hons) Dissertation Log

Student: Chloe Williams  Specialism: History
Tutor: Paul Bracey

Proposal Title
Exploring the implications of role play for developing historical understanding.

Broad Area of Study
Role play including the use of the home corner.

Key Features (Interviews, Questionnaires, Classroom Study etc)
Interviews with teachers and children.

Main Literature Sources
Discussed "theme of play" and related approaches, with "qual/interview" and "methodology".
We also discussed "demonstration of role home corner".
Areas of "dramatic play" and "child's role in different contexts".

Ethical Issues
Please confirm the following:
✓ I have completed 2 copies of the School of Education approval form and have given one copy to my supervisor.
First Tutorial
Questions and Issues

Is using the home corner a useful idea?

Will I gain permission from parents/children?

Outcomes (Include revisions which arise from the tutorial)

Explore play and role play
Need permission from parents/children - ethics.

Timetable (for revisions etc to be in place)

September - have research methods, read interview etc.
Speak with Jane Murray and Jo Bolton.
Identify potential contacts before July.
Read 20-30 books and be expert by August.

Second Tutorial – Progress Report
Questions and Issues

... How do I structure my discussion around social play areas and free play...
... How do I get more questionnaires?
... Can I use Facebook?
... How do I code my data...

Outcomes (Include revisions which arise from the tutorial)

- As discussed set out link in introduction
- Then draw link between the play and habit
- Understanding reading around different areas and issues
- Opportunity to debate between suspects, me, and other child focal points
- Different elements and cut again with categories
- Final one or about to go individual stages
- Reliability tests to Helen Cadeluce
- Interviews completed before 30th January 2015.
- Have a go at coding one - not till after placement.
- Carry on with literature review.
Third Tutorial – Progress Report

Questions and Issues

Key Question - how do I structure my literature review and research chapter?

Outcomes (Include revisions which arise from the tutorial)

1. Literature Review - Define role, play and ways it can enhance history.
   - Issues concerned
   - (Age of chn and progression?)

2. Research chapter
   - Draw out patterns and issues

Incidental Support and Advice
Using This Dissertation Log

This Log must be brought to each tutorial. The first part (Questions and Issues) is to be filled out by the student before arrival. Once outcomes have been agreed then the second part (Outcomes) can be filled in by either the tutor or the student and signed by the tutor. This Log must be available when needed by the tutor and must be handed in as Appendix 1 at the back of the dissertation.

The dissertation is one of the major parts of the course and contributes one third of the marks available for Year 3. In order to manage this substantial piece of work it is important that students are aware of both their entitlement to support and advice and also their responsibilities.

**Student Entitlement**

1. Students are entitled to three tutorials between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 3.

2. Dissertations will be marked by their supervisor and at least one other person.

3. Final dissertations will be given detailed written feedback.

In addition to these entitlements, students will normally receive additional incidental support when tutors may, for example, advise on the suitability of texts or proof read questionnaires. Such additional support is at the discretion of the tutor and will be limited to advise about routine progress. In order to maintain fairness to all students, tutors will not offer feedback on substantial drafts as this could be regarded as pre-marking.

**Student Responsibilities**

1. It is up to students to manage the progress and development of their dissertation and this includes negotiating tutorial times and attending tutorials well prepared with questions to raise.

2. Students should negotiate incidental support outside of the formal tutorials when it is convenient and practical for tutors to see them.

3. All documents such as letters and questionnaires which are to be sent to external bodies such as schools must be approved by a tutor. A signed copy must be left with the tutor.

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<th>Any Cause for Concern Regarding Progress</th>
<th>Signed - Date</th>
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35
Appendix 2

Ethics Sheet

Name of Student: Chloe Williams

Course and Module Code: ITC 2051

Proposed Research Area:

Role play in History

The research involves field work [ ]

The research does not involve field work. [ ]

If the proposed research involves field work you must not collect data before you have ethical approval.

The ethics section of my research proposal has been approved by my dissertation supervisor. YES / NO

If ethical problems arise during the collection of data you must discuss this with your supervisor. In cases of uncertainty your supervisor may consult the Research Leader for advice.

Supervisor's name Paul Green

Signature [Signature] Date: 13/11/14

Head Teacher's (or ITE Coordinator tutor) Name

Signature [Signature] Date

Student's signature Chloe Williams Date 13/11/14

If you are conducting empirical research in a school/setting, a second signature is required by the setting, e.g. Head teacher/ITE coordinator.

One copy of this completed form should be attached to your dissertation.

Another copy should be given to your supervisor. This will be lodged in your file.
Appendix 3

Dear Interviewee,

I am a Primary Education Student at the University of Northampton specialising in History. For my dissertation I am looking at role play in history and I would be most grateful for your help with my research. Your memories would help with my work and I would be most grateful to record them if this is acceptable. I will not name you in my dissertation unless you would like me to do this. You can also refuse to allow me to use information from the interview at any time.

Yours sincerely,

C. Williams

Chloé Williams

Please indicate the following

I agree to be interviewed  Yes/No
I agree to it being recorded  Yes/No
I wish to remain anonymous Yes/No

Signed:
Appendix 4

1) **What year group do you teach?**
- FS, year 1, year 2, year 3, year 4, year 5 or year six.

2) **What is your role within the school. E.g. History coordinator.**
Please state.....

3) **How important is role play in the following subjects:**

   **English:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

   **Maths:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

   **Science:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

   **History:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

   **Geography:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

   **RE:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

   **PSHE:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

4) **How often do you plan role play in to these subjects**

   **English:** Always, usually, occasionally, never

   **Maths:** Always, usually, occasionally, never
**Science:** Always, usually, occasionally, never

**History:** Always, usually, occasionally, never

**Geography:** Always, usually, occasionally, never

**RE:** Always, usually, occasionally, never

**PSHE:** Always, usually, occasionally, never

5) **How strongly do you agree that role play develops these types of historical understanding**

**Chronological understanding:** Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree

**Why things in the past have happened:** Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree

**How things have changed in the past:** Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree

**How people in history lived/lifestyle of the past:** Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree

**Skills for enquiry:** Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree

**Representing the past:** Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree

6) **How important is the Social Dynamic Play Area (also known as the home corner) in teaching the following subjects:**

**English:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance,
unimportant

**Math:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

**Science:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

**History:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

**Geography:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

**RE:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

**PSHE:** Very important, important, some-what important, limited importance, unimportant

7) **If you have used role play to develop historical understanding, what topics, or part of topics, have you used it for? Please state...**

8) **If you use role play to develop historical understanding, do you teach it yourself or use an external educator?**

   Myself, external educator, both, neither.

9) **During role play, do you use any of the following:**

   **Artefacts:** Yes/No
   **Costumes:** Yes/No
   **Props/equipment:** Yes/No
   **Stage Setting:** Yes/No
Appendix 5

**What year group do you teach?**

Foundation Stage – 9  
Year 1 – 15  
Year 2 – 16  
Year 3 – 14  
Year 4 – 15  
Year 5 – 13  
Year 6 – 6

**How important is role-play in English?**

Very important - 74  
Some-what important - 13  
Limited importance - 1  
Unimportant – 0

**How important is role-play in Mathematics?**

Very important - 20  
Some-what important - 33  
Limited importance - 26  
Unimportant – 9

**How important is role-play in Science?**

Very important – 19  
Some-what importance – 42  
Limited importance – 22  
Unimportant – 5

**How important is role-play in History?**

Very important – 58  
Some-what importance – 27  
Limited importance – 3  
Unimportant – 0

**How important is role-play in Religious Education?**

Very important – 31  
Some-what important – 48  
Limited importance – 9  
Unimportant – 0
How important is role-play in Personal, Social and Health Education?

Very important – 64
Some-what important – 24
Limited importance – 0
Unimportant – 0

How often do you plan role-play in to Geography?

Always - 2
Usually - 22
Occasionally - 43
Never - 21

How often do you plan role-play in to Religious Education?

Always - 6
Usually - 37
Occasionally - 36
Never - 9

How often do you plan role-play in to Science?

Always - 3
Usually - 18
Occasionally - 49
Never – 18

How often do you plan role-play in to History?

Always - 12
Usually - 48
Occasionally - 28
Never – 0

How often do you plan role-play in to English?

Always - 28
Usually - 45
Occasionally - 15
Never – 0
**How often do you plan role-play in to Maths?**

Always - 8  
Usually - 12  
Occasionally - 34  
Never – 14  

**How strongly do you agree that role-play develops ‘representing the past’?**

Strongly agree – 38  
Agree – 38  
Neither agree or disagree – 7  
Disagree – 4  
Strongly disagree – 0  

**How strongly do you agree that role-play develops ‘skills for enquiry’?**

Strongly agree – 24  
Agree – 39  
Neither agree or disagree – 15  
Disagree – 7  
Strongly disagree – 2  

**How strongly do you agree that role-play develops ‘How people in history lived/lifestyle of the past?’**

Strongly agree – 60  
Agree – 25  
Neither agree or disagree – 2  
Disagree – 0  
Strongly disagree – 0  

**How strongly do you agree that role-play develops ‘how things have changed in the past’?**

Strongly agree – 30  
Agree – 47  
Neither agree or disagree – 9  
Disagree – 1  
Strongly disagree – 0  

**How strongly do you agree that role-play develops ‘why things in the past have happened’?**

Strongly agree – 24  
Agree – 45  
Neither agree or disagree – 16
Disagree – 2
Strongly disagree – 0

**How strongly do you agree that role-play develops ‘chronological understanding’?**

Strongly agree – 17
Agree – 34
Neither agree or disagree – 25
Disagree – 11
Strongly disagree – 0

**If you use role play to develop historical understanding, do you teach it yourself or use an external educator?**

Myself – 54
External examiner – 2
Both – 26
Neither – 3
No response – 2

**How important is the ‘home corner’ in teaching English?**

Very important – 39
Important – 26
Some-what important – 12
Limited importance – 7
Unimportant – 3

**How important is the ‘home corner’ in teaching Mathematics?**

Very important – 27
Important – 23
Some-what important – 22
Limited importance – 12
Unimportant – 3

**How important is the ‘home corner’ in teaching Science?**

Very important – 14
Important – 29
Some-what important – 29
Limited importance – 12
Unimportant – 3
**How important is the ‘home corner’ in teaching History?**

Very important – 23  
Important – 36  
Some-what important – 15  
Limited importance – 10  
Unimportant – 3

**How important is the ‘home corner’ in teaching Geography?**

Very important – 17  
Important – 29  
Some-what important – 26  
Limited importance – 12  
Unimportant – 3

**How important is the ‘home corner’ in teaching Personal, Social and Health Education?**

Very important – 36  
Important – 25  
Some-what important – 15  
Limited importance – 9  
Unimportant – 2

**How important is the ‘home corner’ in teaching Religious Education?**

Very important – 14  
Important – 30  
Some-what important – 25  
Limited importance – 14  
Unimportant – 4

**During role play, do you use artefacts?**

Yes – 75  
No – 12

**During role play, do you use costumes?**

Yes – 77  
No – 10

**During role play, do you use props/equipment?**

Yes – 84  
No – 3
During role play, do you use scene setting?

Yes – 69
No – 18
Appendix 6

What year group do you teach?

What is your role within the school? E.g. History coordinator.

In which subjects do you use role-play the most and least? Why?

Why did you find yourself using role-play more in these subjects than others?

To what extent do you use role-play in teaching History? Why?

How often do you use role-play in your history lessons? Why?

Which aspects of History do you think role-play supports the most? Why?

Which topics in history have you used role-play in? How did you plan role-play into your lessons? What resources did you use?

Who utilises role-play in your lessons? Why?

Do you have, or have you had, a socio-dynamic play area (also known as the home corner) in your classroom? Please explain why.

How important do you consider the socio-dynamic play area (also known as the home corner)?

How far have you used the socio-dynamic play area to develop and support History? How did you achieve this?

When role play is used during lessons, do you use artefacts, costumes, props and equipment or scene setting?
What are the main opportunities and draw-backs to using role-play to develop and support History?

Would you like to add anything else related to role-play and history?
Appendix 7

What year group do you teach?

I don’t teach anymore but I used to teach... I used to be a KS1 teacher and have taught every year group. But specifically I had a Year 1/2 split class.

What is your role within the school? E.g. History coordinator.

At that point I was SENCO and KS1 manager.

In which subjects do you use role-play the most and least? Why?

This is all going to be retrospective because I don’t have a class but the most probably History, English and general topic and RE because I was working in a Catholic school at the time so we did a lot of RE. The least I would say I can’t think I have ever used it in Art or ICT or Computing now or Maths...or even Science. Probably more humanities than anything else.

Why did you find yourself using role-play more in these subjects than others?

Because I think when you use role-play you’re telling a story, it’s about developing your narrative and these subjects lend themselves to narrative more strongly than others. History, obviously RE and English. Some subjects just don’t really have a narrative strand.

To what extent do you use role-play in teaching History? Why?

We used it in for example putting the children in groups and giving them a scenario so it might be that this group are in Pudding Lane at the start of the Great Fire of London and this group is people trying to put the fire out and this group is Samuel Pepys trying to hide his diary so it might be giving groups scenarios so it might be quite structured or it might be hot-seating for example so it might be me putting myself in the hot-seat for example or putting children
in the hot-seat. I’ve used it through dance if I was doing a dance lesson but with a historical setting so for example I did a dance once, we were looking at the space race, and we were looking at creating a dance about going to the moon so in that aspect as well as using the role-play area, the home-corner.

**Did the children enjoy that?**

I think it depends, the good thing about doing it in a structured way is you’ve got control as the teacher about who goes in which group and you can stop the situation of some children dominating and some children taking a back seat and you can think very carefully about who is doing which activity and for example you can give your SEN children a role that will be easy for them to interpret and give your higher ability children something more difficult and in that respect if you’re doing a scenario thing everyone is engaged I think the difficulty if you’re doing hot-seating is you might have some children in the class who don’t like contributing and they might be experiencing it but they aren’t really engaging in it.

**How often do you use role-play in your history lessons? Why?**

So when I had KS1 class we always had a socio-dynamic play area which was always historically themed, if I was doing a History unit that would be historical so to that extent it was kind of threaded in to the curriculum. With KS2 it would be more I would say atleast in every unit there would be something.

**Why did you use role-play when you did?**

Because I think some of the aims of the history curriculum it’s about different interpretations of the past and developing empathy and developing why people behaved in certain ways and why they did and without putting children in that situation they might not understand those situations, so that’s one aspect. And from an assessment point of view, if put children in a position where they are having to use some of the knowledge they have gained in other lessons you can gage as the teacher whether or not they have met the objective because if they suddenly, I was just doing something with Year 5 the other week on the First
World War and if they’re suddenly talking about I don’t know ballistic missiles you know they haven’t really grasped the nature of warfare but if they started to talk about trenches and gas attacks then you think okay they’ve actually got an idea of what it’s about. It’s quite a good assessment opportunity as well as teaching opportunity.

So when you’re assessing them, do you assess them whilst they’re doing it and listen to what they say or when they’re performing it or how do you go about assessing it?

It would depend, if they were doing role-play in the classroom you might go around and assess and you’re circulating or you might give them the opportunity to do a freeze-frame and when you bring them back together you can assess each group as they kind of perform so it’s more about assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning and more about well actually if I know they are not really using the right terminology then I know I can address that in the next lesson.

Which aspects of History do you think role-play supports the most? Why?

Well I think if you’re very clever you could use it for everything you could use it for something like sequencing so you could have, for example, different groups doing things about the Great Fire of London and then you then if you video that you could use it in class and use it to build up chronology sequencing or as I mentioned earlier for historical causation, why did people make the choices they did at certain times. You could use it for teaching historical vocabulary making sure they have the right kind of language making sure the language is appropriate to the period. Or you could use it for bringing out similarities and differences so what you for example if they were using artefacts and costumes you’d like to think they could make comments about how things are similar now or how things are different. And finally, you could also use it as a way of looking at sources of evidence if you’re bringing an artefact in or you’ve got some images you’re role-play might involve using a visitor or visiting somewhere. So if you’re very clever about it you should be able to teach everything.
Which topics in history have you used role-play in? How did you plan role-play into your lessons? What resources did you use?

I’ve used it for, Early Years I’ve used it for like a family ourselves topic kind of how we’ve changed since we were babies, KS1 I’ve used it for Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole, Great Fire of London and seaside holiday’s one that was on the old curriculum then KS2 I’ve used it for the Anglo-Saxon’s and Vikings, First World War, Second World War, and the Tudors.

How did you plan the role-play into those lessons?

So Early Years and KS1 as I mentioned we would have an area of the classroom that was themed around that so that would be like a permanent on-going role-play area with KS2 it was all about threading it in to a particular scheme of work so it might be at a particular point so it would depend on the age of the children I guess.

What resources did you use when you did role-play?

So, I’ve used costumes for hot-seating and artefacts, prompt-cards so if I’m giving the children a particular scenario there would be a prompt card images, vocab cards. I work for Islingborough local authority and they have a library lending service so you just say you’re doing Florence Nightingale and they’ll send you a lamp and they’ll send you things to do with that so I’ve used their library lending service quite a lot and also had like paid for theatre companies to come in and do role-play with the children as well.

Do you find the children are more engaged with the role-play with they have a costume on or artefacts and resources to use or is it just as effective if they were doing it without anything?

I think they’re more excited so in terms of making it more memorable there is something about being Mary Seacole if you’ve got her medicine bag. It’s like a safety blanket like you’ve got something and or it’s much more exciting to be reinacting the great fire of london if you’ve got a bucket, it might be a plastic bucket but you can pretend to do something with it so I thinking having something to hold make its more engaging and yeah it gives them a prop and I
think a child who’s maybe lower ability or hasn’t got much English there’s something reassuring about having something to hold or do something with even if it’s just a hat!

**Who utilises role-play in your lessons? Why?**

It’s a mixture so the school I work in now, all the teachers write off to the local authority, we fill in this form and they send us a box of stuff or we have a theatre company we use quite a lot they’re called Fresh Water and they do loads of historical workshops and sometimes they come in and lead it or sometimes it’s more like a show so we use them quite a lot and sometimes we might ask the children or request a contribution of about £3 or take the money from the history budget so it just depends.

**Why do you use it in that way do you feel sometimes the theatre offer more than what you might be able to do in class or is it just purely based on circumstance whether or not you can get them in or not?**

I think it’s really lovely for the children to have someone else come in because they just get sick of you everyday for five hours a day! So there’s something really nice about having a visitor in and it’s exciting and memorable. Secondly, I presume by bringing someone in that they have a particular specialism in that area so we had some one come in a few weeks ago who was pretending to be a soldier in the First World War and she took the children right through from when she signed up to the end of the war and I guess because she was in role it was slightly more believable for the children because if I go in to role, I’m still the teacher and I’m really aware that when I’m in role I still have to keep an eye on behaviour and make sure someone isn’t misbehaving but when you have a visitor in all they have to think about is the historical experience because I’m still there as the teacher to control so I think it’s just a richer experience.

**Do you have, or have you had, a socio-dramatic play area (also known as the home corner) in your classroom? Please explain why.**

So the school I worked in which was a school in North London all of KS1 we had
an area and we used to link it to whatever topic we were doing so whether it was kind of Puddling Lane the bakery or hospital in Scutari for Florence Nightingale for example that would always be set up to kind of reflect whatever historical period we were doing.

**Could the children just go in there during their own time and conduct something or it always be structured?**

It was sometimes they would go in for example if they finished their Literacy they would say can I go in the hospital and you would let them go in sometimes for example on afternoon it would be the Art afternoon but because it was very difficult doing Art with all of KS1 and KS2 at the same time we used to structure it that I took a group and my TA took a group to do the focus Art and the other children had kind of free access time so that would be time at least once a week they could go in themselves, other times if you were planning a History lesson you might plan for one group to go in there but there was always a kind of limit so it was only about four children at a time and then you would keep an eye on who had been in and how long for etc.

**When they were in there, was it something you watched to make sure they were being historically accurate or was it anything they wanted to do, were they completely free?**

To be honest they just structured it themselves because what was in there it was very obvious how I wanted the play to be like you need to be careful about how you choose to set it up then particularly if they’ve had good experiences like that in Early Years so when I was an Early Years teacher I would model with my teaching assistant so I would be in there making a cup of tea or frying an egg with a plastic bowl so they have it modelled so by the time they come to KS1 they have an idea if what is expected of them and actually if they want to play with cars then they need to find somewhere else to play with cars because that’s actually a hospital.
How important do you consider the socio-dramatic play area (also known as the home corner)?

I thought it was really important because it really enabled children to apply their learning otherwise their History lessons which might only be one a week become like little puddles of History and there isn’t really any opportunity to apply it anywhere else so in terms of making it memorable and helping them to apply all their kind of social skills and History skills I thought it was really useful and in terms of getting them to imagine what it was like in the past it was a good of a setting as you could get I guess in a classroom so in terms of for example Florence Nightingale’s hospital it’s what you’ve got in there what’s it made of and then having a modern hospital and what’s in there and what does it look like. If you’re thinking of that historical concept of then and now and changing continuity it’s a very concrete way of making that apparent.

So it helps develop and support History not only during their lessons but outside their lessons but also outside their lessons when perhaps there not to much aware as to that they are doing?

Yes. And also I think it just makes the subject more... well it kind of keeps its fresh because if you’re just doing History say every Tuesday afternoon they can forget so actually if it’s going on around them and they come in in the morning and there’s Pudding Lane bakery it just reminds them they are learning about The Great Fire of London.

How far have you used the socio-dramatic play area to develop and support History? How did you achieve this?

You mentioned before that you used artefacts and costumes and things, do you use props and equipment or set a scene and things?

Yes, so the Florence Nightingale one we had a six week unit so we had 3 weeks of her hospital in Scutari so I tried very hard to make all the materials very old so we had cloth aprons, no a plastic so we had all enamel bowls, we had glass bottles that obviously had to be out of reach but I wanted everything to be old
so they were on a shelf up high, the writing implements were paper dipped in tea and then I had some images of the Crimean War and I had a writing desk with an old fashioned quill pen so she could write letters home and then I had a very old fashioned map and the soldiers clothes were all kind of cloth and khaki and there was a bed for the soldiers. And all the medical implements, I didn’t have any plastic stethoscopes that you might sometimes get I just had lots of cotton wool and everything was mainly bandages and enamel jugs for pretending to pour water on. So I just wanted them to understand that even though it was a hospital they didn’t have very much. Then after three weeks, that disappeared when they came in and there was a modern hospital there and that was completely different that had like colour photographs, pictures of heart monitor machines, plastic aprons, latex gloves and plastic goggles for doing operations, so lots of plastic there was a computer in there and a telephone for making 999 calls. Also sometimes they can get a bit bored of the same role-play so if you change it it keeps it fresh. It helped them to see that it was still a hospital but hospitals are different now.

**Do you think there is room for a socio-dramatic play area in KS2 or do you think it’s usually just left in KS1 and as they get older maybe they don’t need that area as much?**

I think in an ideal world there still would be one in KS2 because they are still children you know when you’re 7 in year 2 you have access to it but if you’re 7 in year 3 you don’t it just doen’t really make sense and I think the KS2 curriculum is so crowded now that I’m not sure how you could justify squeezing it in. Or I’m sure you could justify it but maybe not find the time to squeeze it in and also the.. I don’t know when I think about the KS2 children in my school I see them doing role-play all the time at break and lunch particularly in year 3 and 4 and they still like doing role-play in lessons, it’s just a space and time problem.

**What are the main opportunities and draw-backs to using role-play to develop and support History?**

The opportunities would be it helps them to use and apply so they’re taking some hopefully historical knowledge and they’re applying it and it’s great for
social communication skills and language skills and so to that extent it’s like a proper umbrella you know History is quite an umbrella subject because it links in with everything else so it’s good seeing it in that context. I think the drawbacks are time and you know it takes time to set that up and if you think that’s not even a lesson that’s just a part of your room, I think another would be resourcing, if you don’t have access to somewhere providing you with resources and you don’t have a school with a healthy budget so you can’t say can I have £50 to go and buy some stuff then it would be difficult because there just aren’t enough hours in the day to go and gather all of these things.

**Would you like to add anything else related to role-play and history?**

I think that for younger children the main thing is that ifd you want them to to have a kind of really really good quality experience you need to make sure that you’ve odeeled it first, between the TA or another child so I would never expect children to hot-seat being Mary Seacole unless they’d seen me do it first and seen what it’s like. Everything has to be modelled with young children particularly something like that because otherwise you just end up with children being either self-conscious or saying things that aren’t really relevant. It’s not going to move learning on.
Appendix 8

What year group do you teach?

Four.

What is your role within the school. E.g. History coordinator.

I am a class teacher and DT Coordinator.

In which subjects do you use role-play the most and least? Why?

Erm, the subject I use role pay the most in is topic and England and the least I would say is maths, science they become the things like we’ve had them being electric currents before which is role play. I tend to use role play in these subjects and as it is more applicable and it helps them to understand what they are learning about more.

To what extent do you use role-play in teaching History? Why?

I use role-play a fair bit when teaching history, like I have had children being hunter-gathers and acting out how they would have killed their prey and things. The children really enjoy this and it helps them to understand it better and also remember it. If they feel they are not good writers acting it out will help show them that they have understood what was being taught.

How often do you use role-play in your history lessons? Why?

Not every lesson but every relevant lesson. It would depend on the topic that was being taught, for example when we did the Tudors we got the children to act out the War of the Roses which we did quite a bit which they really enjoyed and helped them understand better. Not every lesson lends itself to it, especially the stone-age as there is not much else they can act out other than hunter and gathering things. It also depends on the children and their behaviours. When we
did the romans they would act out being in a tortoise shell ready for battle which helped the children to get a feel for what it would be like to be a roman.

**Which aspects of History do you think role-play supports the most? Why?**

Not really chronological order, maybe get them to hold up a time-line and become the time line but I don’t know if that’s exactly role play, I’m not sure how it would lend itself.

I feel it helps them understand why things have happened in the past because then they can be the past and it brings the past to life for them. Instead of just writing down what they have learnt about the past, they can act it out and become it. Say you were learning about the evacuees, you can write down how it felt but you wouldn’t unless you acted it out and then you can experience it. It also help’s children understand how things have changed as they can act it out and compare it to their lives and what they every day. They can experience and feel what a different time period life was like.

This then help them to understand people in the past lived and understand why they taught in the tortoise shell and why it helped them to defend themselves. And they can understand how the War of the Roses happened.

**Which topics in history have you used role-play in? How did you plan role-play into your lessons? What resources did you use?**

We’ve used in for the Vikings and children became Vikings and they got on a ship, they sat two by two on the long ship and they acted out leaving their families as they were going to invade somewhere. This was then followed up by a piece of writing in the form of a diary entry which allowed them to write down how they think those Vikings would have left.

The children have also acted out the War of the Rose; on was the Lancaster and the other was the Tudors. They acted this out, there was a king and a battle and people died.
We have recently done the Stone-Age to the Bronze-Age and the children practiced the four different methods of hunting and they could see how they changed and became better over time. And then they looked at hunter gathering and they had to go round the hall gathering pieces of paper with writing on e.g. nettles.

Then we looked at the transition from the stone-age to the bronze-age and they had to go around the hall and find other pieces of paper and find the right metals in order to make bronze. They learnt how the war started eventually as people wanted their cows, so they had to protect their cows, which were other children, which were under attack from another tribe.

We also did it during the Romans and the tortoise shell. We used this to show the children how the romans would have invaded and they leant how this formation would protect them.

Who utilises role-play in your lessons? Why?

For the stone-age, ‘Portals to the Past’ came in to the school and did a whole day work shop with whole of year four. I did the Vikings when I was on placement when I was at university during my last year for my own dissertation and the rest of the lessons were myself and the other year four teacher.

Do you have, or have you had, a socio-dramatic play area (also known as the home corner) in your classroom? Please explain why.

No I have not, this is my second year of teaching and I have only taught year four.

How important do you consider the socio-dramatic play area (also known as the home corner)?

Very important, as it helps the children with life skills and I remember enjoying it as a child. It also allows them the opportunity to see and handle objects that they might not normally come in to contact with and it helps with their
leadership skills as they will decide who will become what role, also helping with their cooperation skills.

**How far have you used the socio-dramatic play area Area to develop and support History? How did you achieve this?**

Again, I have not had the opportunity to use this. I feel every primary classroom should have this area, however, it is not always feasible due to space and time constraints.

**When role play is used during lessons, do you use artefacts, costumes, props and equipment or scene setting?**

I’ve used artefacts and props and equipment but not really costumes. We are having a topic day where the children must come in either dressed a stone age man or woman or animal, when the portal to the past came in the man taking the session was dressed up which the children enjoyed they felt he was a real caveman. I usually use scene setting were we use close your eyes and picture what’s happening.

**What are the main opportunities and draw-backs to using role-play to develop and support History?**

Drawbacks I would say is behavior as it can sometimes put a halt to the lesson. We don’t have all the costumes, props and artefacts for everything which can sometimes be a drawback.

The positives are the children really enjoy it and they definitely appear to remember it more. There is time for role-play in lessons as it is always planned in to the lesson.

**Would you like to add anything else related to role-play and history?**

I feel it should be done more and that there should be more equipment given to schools to help them do this. Every classroom should have a home-corner,
however, again this is down to constraints. Role-play definitely helps writing as it
gives the children the opportunity to experience it and it brings it to life for
them.
Appendix 9

What year group do you teach?

I teach year four.

Have you always taught year four?

No, I’ve taught a variety. I’ve taught nursery, year one, year two, reception, year three and year four.

Did you do role-play with all those years or just specific years?

Probably more with the younger age group, but erm we do drama and hot seating, things like that with the year three’s and four’s.

What is your role within the school?

I’m a year four teacher, I’m an English coordinator and I lead year three and four as well so I head that department.

How important do you consider role play to be in your teaching?

I think role-play should play a large part in my teaching because I think children need to talk before they can write and kind of think about their ideas. Getting them to write afterwards definitely helps.

Is that why you would consider it more important in younger years?

No, I think it’s equally important and now we’ve got the new curriculum in hopefully it will allow for that a bit more. I think it’s valuable right the way through to year six. It must be planned in the right way.

In which subjects do you use role-play the most and the least?

Erm, English probably the most, Topic we have done it with History when we’ve done the Tudors, they’ve all played a part to get them to remember sequences in History. Erm, I’ve done teaching in Maths where they become the role of the teacher and used it that way but probably more the creative subjects
To what extent do you use role-play in teaching History?

Well again when we’ve done the Tudors and when we do the Romans next term I’ll get them to act out the invasions, especially the Roman invasion on Britain, so they’ll be Julius Cesar on the boats (oh brilliant) and the Celts waiting on the shore so, I tend to use it for introducing the topic or key events and things I want them to remember and they definitely remember it more if they’ve acted it out).

How often do you use role-play in your History lessons?

Erm, not always, certainly in the beginning when we’re launching so probably two or three times a topic I’d say and probably when we go out to Chedworth on our trip they’ll be in role there so that will be good too.

Which aspects of History do you believe role-play supports the most, such as chronological understanding and understanding why things have happened in the past?

Probably the lifestyles we’ve been to Sulgrave Manor and looked at the chronology of the royal family and we’ve kind of acted it out here and gone and dressed up there and gone right through it again erm so yeah lifestyles definitely and probably chronology so they remember the order of things.

Which topics in History have you used role-play in and how did you plan them into the lessons?

Okay, so now the Tudors has gone we’ve done the Stone Age and just recently we’ve had a workshop and the guy who ran it wore bear skin and he had them in role as hunter gatherers. So we use role-play in all really, but Stone-Age and Romans this year and I’ve done Tudors in the past.

And how have you planned this in to your lessons?

As probably a warm up or as a starter, not to the lesson necessarily but a starter to the topic.
What resources did you use during role-play?

We’ve had workshops in and taken them out so they’ve had the costumes provided but otherwise if you ask them they’ll just go in to it.

Who utilises role-play in your lessons? Is it you or an external educator?

Well we’ve booked in a workshop to come in which is ‘Portals to the Past’ but as English coordinator I book workshops for nursery to year two, so they have one about three times a year (okay) and that’s a professional company who come in and do that. These people definitely have more expertise in the area.

Do you do that every time you have a History lesson or do you usually lead it?

Erm, they do do History but the ones they do for lower down the school are just experience and they bring a theme in and it’s not necessarily a historical theme but I usually lead it during my History lessons, unless we’ve been able to get someone in.

Do you have, or have you ever had a socio-dramatic play area or a home corner in your classroom?

I have with the younger children again I still think there’s value for that further up the school, I know our year five’s when studying the Victorians they’ve had a role-play area.

So do you think it’s beneficial when you get to an older year not just when you’re in KS1?

Definitely, it gives them the freedom to get in to character when they want to and help them to consolidate what they have been learning during lessons.

I think as long as you give them role and scenarios so they’re going in with a purpose whereas maybe the younger year groups lead their own and its child initiated learning really.

So with that in hand, do you think it’s very important there is a...

I think it should be included more (in KS2) yes in KS2 and I don’t do it enough and I think there’s a lovely value in it it’s just the constraints.
What types of constraints?

Time and available space I would say are definitely a big drawback and the children need to have an appropriate time and space to complete activities in.

**Would you use that just within a History lesson or if the children had free time could they go in and use it? Would it be set up with a historical theme or just any topic?**

I would say it is usually topic led so if we’re on a Geography topic it might be a travel agents, with our two history topics it would be the History that drove it. I think the children could come and go to the area during free time if they wanted, there could be some scenario prompts in the area or they could use their own.

**How far have you used the socio-dramatic play area to develop and support History?**

Erm, I have to say I haven’t really had the area, we have used it further down the school to do that but I have to put my hands up to say I don’t do it enough really.

**When role-play is used in lessons, do you use things such as artefacts, costumes, props and equipment and scene setting?**

Scene setting because that’s the easiest one to do, but when we take them out we book places that offer the others, such as costumes and artefacts

**Do you think they get into character more when they’re wearing a costume?**

I think so, they will go into character quite easily but obviously it makes you feel more part of it and special if you’ve got a costume on.

**What are the main opportunities and drawbacks to using role-play to develop and support History?**

Erm, I think the positives are that it develops their speaking and listening, I don’t think we do enough of that and that leads onto writing and gives writing a purpose. I think the drawbacks are the time constraints, space in the room, especially in here I mean we’re quite confined to have a book corner and a role-
play area when you still need children to be sat at desks for quite a bit of the time so that’s the only draw back.

**Is there anything else you’d like to add about role-play in History?**

I think it’s a good idea, it definitely takes children forward and just gets them more engaged. They remember more, I think it sticks in their mind rather than reading and writing it.
Appendix 10

What year group do you teach?
I teach Year 5.

What is your role within the school? E.g. History coordinator.
I am an NQT.

In which subjects do you use role-play the most and least? Why?
I would say I use it in English the most as the school I teach in is a story telling school (Map, step, telling based) to learn the stories we teach as a text focus. This is to inspire writing. I would say I use it the least in Geography and History. As of yet, I am yet to teach history properly as we focus on particular subjects and focuses each term.
In our geography topic, we used less drama as it was more of a practical topic (reading and using maps).

To what extent do you use role-play in teaching History? Why?
As of yet I haven’t with my class. In previous placements I used it to help chn understand the time period we were talking about – we did trips to Solgrave manor for example, and the children dressed up as Tudors for the day and acted out a ‘typical’ day of a Tudor.

How often do you use role-play in your history lessons? Why?
As of yet I haven’t.

Which aspects of History do you think role-play supports the most? Why?
From experience, I think History supports children in understanding of the time period a topic is set as well as understanding the culture. It makes it more realistic for them rather than them just being told about it.
Which topics in history have you used role-play in? How did you plan role-play into your lessons? What resources did you use?

I have used it to teach the Tudors and their clothes, food and we went on a trip to a local museum to help. I’ve used it for the Romans where we looked at Art and factual books as well as the internet (BBC has a good history website) and we went on a local trip to Roman baths. These were planned for me as I was a student at the time but assisted in the risk assessment and organization of the trips. The main focus of using trips and drama was to engage children with their learning. Each school wanted to push children’s interests in the foundation subjects and allow them to thrive on what could be a specialty of theirs rather than just have a focus on English and Maths.

Who utilises role-play in your lessons? Why?

The children to portray understanding and teach each other. I use myself as I can assess children’s learning and address any misunderstandings – it is a useful tool in which both teacher and child can see learning and progress take place. External educators are really beneficial to use too but their use can be down to school budgets.

Do you have, or have you had, a socio-dramatic play area (also known as the home corner) in your classroom? Please explain why.

Not in my year 5 classroom – Children tend to be labeled as ‘old enough’ for them not to need a home corner. However KS1 do and it is compulsory for them. In my year 1 placement I had a home corner which I designed and changed accordingly to the topic they were learning in the terms I taught them – this allowed them to explore their learning further.

Did you ever use the socio-dramatic play area when you were on placement at university?

Yes with the year 1 I did - we linked it in with healthy eating where there was a healthy eating café, the second topic was Christmas so we had a Nativity scene
which the children used toys to reinact the christmas story plus have dress up clothes and 'stable' to role play in.

**How important do you consider the socio-dramatic play area (also known as the home corner)?**

I think it is important to allow children to explore their learning – this allows consolidation to take place as well as an opportunity for any misconceptions to be addressed.

**How far have you used the socio-dramatic play area to develop and support History? How did you achieve this?**

I haven’t.

**When role play is used during lessons, do you use artefacts, costumes, props and equipment or scene setting?**

Yes I use all of those things, and they must be relevant to the time period being studied.

**What are the main opportunities and draw-backs to using role-play to develop and support History?**

Not having the correct resources can be a set back as well as the quality of resources available. This can make a difference between an amazing lesson or a draw back to the lesson. Opportunities I would say are exploring, consolidating, assessing learning and understanding.

**Would you like to add anything else related to role-play and history?**

I do plan to do role play with History once History comes up with the topics set. This will be in the Easter term when we study the Plague – again another trip and a drama session has been organised.
Appendix 11

What year group do you teach?

I teach a year two class at the moment.

What is your role within the school? E.g. History coordinator.

I am the Literacy coordinator in the school.

In which subjects do you use role-play the most and least? Why?

I would say I use role-play the most in Literacy, Topic and Maths and the least I would say is Science. For Science we usually use outside areas to help with learning like water trays and things instead of role-play.

To what extent do you use role-play in teaching History? Why?

I only use role-play when it is applicable to a topic. So when we did The Great Fire of London, I had a bakery in the home-corner. Role-play does not always lend itself to topics.

How often do you use role-play in your history lessons? Why?

Only sometimes, it helps children to imagine what they are learning about but again it is only used when it lends itself.

Which aspects of History do you think role-play supports the most? Why?

I think it helps children understand how things happened in the past and how things have changed. They can imagine the real people.
Which topics in history have you used role-play in? How did you plan role-play into your lessons? What resources did you use?

I have used role-play when looking at the stories of people we have studied. I used costumes and props that were appropriate to the time period being studied.

Who utilises role-play in your lessons? Why?

Either myself or the teaching assistant.

Do you have, or have you had, a socio-dramatic play (also known as the home corner) in your classroom? Please explain why.

Yes I have. It helps children use the vocabulary we have been learning. It is also a creative element of Bloom’s Taxonomy and it really helps to develop higher level thinking.

How important do you consider the socio-dramatic play (also known as the home corner)?

I think this area is really important and it enables children to apply their learning. One History lesson a week does not allow them to apply it to any other area so the home-corner is good for this.

How far have you used the socio-dramatic play to develop and support History? How did you achieve this?

I have used it for The Great Fire of London where I had a bakery, WW1 army recruitment area and as a museum for the dinosaur topic.

When role play is used during lessons, do you use artefacts, costumes, props and equipment or scene setting?

I use artefacts, costumes, props or equipment and scene setting. This is spread across role-play inside the home-corner and also outside of it.
What are the main opportunities and draw-backs to using role-play to develop and support History?

The opportunities I would say are that it helps develop children’s historical understanding. So it helps children understand the story that is being told. The drawbacks I feel are that it is not as good for developing chronology.
Appendix 12

What year group do you teach?

I teach year 3.

What is your role within the school? E.g. History coordinator.

I am the Art coordinator.

In which subjects do you use role-play the most and least? Why?

I use it the most in Literacy and History I would say and the least in Maths. These subjects lend themselves more to role-play than the others.

To what extent do you use role-play in teaching History? Why?

I use it in order to act out historical events like the World War One Christmas truce.

How often do you use role-play in your history lessons? Why?

I only use it when the event being studied is suited to role-play. It helps them to remember and understand what they are learning better.

Which aspects of History do you think role-play supports the most? Why?

It helps children to understand the event that took place and why it took place and what happened and things. It just gives them a better understanding of the whole event.
Which topics in history have you used role-play in? How did you plan role-play into your lessons? What resources did you use?

I have used role-play to help teach World War One, the Tudors and Egyptians. We used a camera to record the children’s role-play so they could watch it back to help them remember and learn through themselves.

Who utilises role-play in your lessons? Why?

I always do the role-play myself.

Do you have, or have you had, a socio-dramatic play area (also known as the home corner) in your classroom? Please explain why.

No I haven’t, I teach KS2.

How important do you consider the socio-dramatic play area (also known as the home corner)?

I think it is a very important part of the EYFS as well as KS1.

How far have you used the socio-dramatic play area to develop and support History? How did you achieve this?

It helps develop into the setting of different historical events that the children can then use to help develop their understanding.

When role play is used during lessons, do you use artefacts, costumes, props and equipment or scene setting?

I use all of those things during role-play but they must be from the correct time period to avoid any confusion with the children and also make it more realistic for them.
What are the main opportunities and draw-backs to using role-play to develop and support History?

More resources are always a benefit to role-play and a lack of them I would say could be a serious drawback.