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## **Moving Beyond Subject Boundaries: Four case studies of cross-curricular pedagogy in secondary schools.**

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### **Abstract**

Cross-curricular work in schools across the United Kingdom generally involves the use of a cross-curricular dimension or theme that spans the work of several subject teachers. The limitations of this type of curriculum planning have been noted in the research literature both within the United Kingdom and across Europe. The research reported here explores a different approach to cross-curricularity, focusing on cross-curricular pedagogy within the work of individual subject teachers. Drawing on observation and interview in four UK secondary schools, it presents a case study analysis of the ways in which secondary school teachers develop cross-curricular elements within their subject pedagogies in terms of their interface with the micro, meso and macro levels of schooling. Rather than seeing cross-curricularity as primarily a feature of curriculum design, it argues that there are many benefits of relocating it within an individual teacher's subject pedagogy.

### **1. Introduction**

Recent research conducted during 2007 to 2009 (see Savage 2010) has identified that cross-curricularity within schools across the United Kingdom is generally conceived as being related to school-level curriculum design rather than being applied within an individual teacher's pedagogy. Similarly, OFSTED (2008) reported that, for the majority of secondary schools, a cross-curricular approach to curriculum development meant the adoption of a specific cross-curricular theme. Once chosen, this theme was explored by each subject teacher with their pupils for a designated series of lessons, with the skills, knowledge and understanding within each subject being applied to the chosen theme.

This approach is consolidated within the National Curriculum framework itself (QCA 2009a). This document contains various claims about the benefits of cross-curricular ways of working that teachers are encouraged to adopt, and it includes a number of 'cross-curricular dimensions' that, although non-statutory, are promoted to facilitate cross-curricular teaching. These dimensions include:

- Identity and cultural diversity;
- Healthy lifestyles;
- Community participation;
- Enterprise;
- Global dimensions and sustainable development;
- Technology and the media;
- Creativity and critical thinking.

Accompanying guidance from the QCA (QCA 2009b) outlines the purpose of these cross-curricular dimensions as making learning ‘real and relevant’, thus reflecting “some of the major ideas and challenges that face individuals and society” (QCA 2009b, p.1). Additionally, the dimensions approach should have the effect of “unifying areas of learning that span the curriculum and help young people make sense of the world”, while their non-subject focus places them as “crucial aspects of learning that should permeate the curriculum and the life of a school” (ibid). Schools are recommended to use the dimensions to design and plan the whole curriculum, so that they “can provide a focus for work within and between subjects, in personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) and across the curriculum as a whole, including the routines, events and ethos of the school” (ibid).

Once designed, however, the thematic curriculum is then delivered within separately timetabled subject lessons - the vast majority of UK schools use subjects as a key component in their curriculum design, staffing and organisational frameworks. However, the relative importance of individual subjects within schools can lead to difficulties, as can the fact that they are not necessarily compatible in terms of their epistemological, discursive or pedagogic approaches. Subjects may have a range of competing values, definitions and interests (Jephcote & Davies 2007, p.210) that can lead to conflict and tension, both within and across subjects (Bresler 1995, p.34). A recent example of conflict on the level of the perceived value of subjects is reaction to the new English Baccalaureate (EBacc) for pupils aged 14 – 16. The implications of some subjects being seen as more important, or being more highly valued than others by pupils, parents and employers has led to the demise of some subjects and associated staff and resources at the expense of others (Coughlan 2011).

Across Europe, the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) provided further evidence of the limited impact of a thematic approach (CIDREE 2005). It identified a range of factors that influenced the success or failure of a cross-curricular theme (either as a stand alone component within a curriculum or embedded within existing subjects). Having surveyed 27 countries, the research identified the most common problem as teachers’ lack of confidence with respect to their content and pedagogic knowledge in delivering cross-curricular themes:

Many teachers report a lack of self-confidence with respect to cross-curricular themes or they feel themselves ill prepared in addressing these themes. This inadequacy relates to both the lack of content knowledge and to the inability to employ a range of teaching and learning approaches appropriate to the theme (CIDREE 2005, p.8).

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4 Other problems clustered around embedded school cultures, ways of working, and  
5 management structures. Despite targeted teacher development being a ‘top priority’, for  
6 schools, its impact was found to be limited, “because teachers have insufficient time to put  
7 their training experiences into practice” (CIDREE 2005, p.9). Additionally, the new need to  
8 The extent to which teachers were able to motivate, co-operate and collaborate was another  
9 important factor on whether or not a cross-curricular approach was facilitated within a school  
10 hindered by the “lack of a communication culture”, and staff hierarchies:  
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14 Furthermore, members of the school community who are asked to coordinate cross-curricular  
15 work in schools, often find it difficult to motivate colleagues and do not have the same  
16 influence on their colleagues as school directors usually have. (CIDREE 2005, p.10)  
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20 On the basis of the research evidence, the interpretation of cross-curricularity as the adoption  
21 of particular themes within subjects is problematic. As Kelly points out, it is an example of a  
22 form of curriculum organisation that is 'quite inappropriate and which inhibits the attainment  
23 of education for all pupils' (Kelly 2009, p.86). Pursuing this idea, one of the curious aspects  
24 of the focus on cross-curricular themes or dimensions, is that it can deflect teachers' attention  
25 from one of the most powerful sets of concepts and ideas that they possess, i.e. their  
26 individual subject cultures. Many teachers define themselves through their subject, with  
27 research in this area indicating that the opportunity to develop one’s subject and teach others  
28 about it is high up on the list of most teachers’ job satisfaction (Spear, Gould & Lea 2000,  
29 p.52). Subject knowledge (which I take to include the ‘pedagogical content knowledge’  
30 through which the subject is presented and traditionally taught) is a strong, formative  
31 force on the beginner teacher (Shulman 1986).  
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36 Another approach to cross-curricularity is, then, to focus on how individual subject teachers  
37 develop their own subject-based approaches (Fautley et al 2011). Despite the problems  
38 associated with cross-curricular themes, the CIDREE report was able to identify positive  
39 features, many of which focussed explicitly on the individual pedagogy of the teacher. For  
40 example, the report recommended that teachers should adopt a pedagogy that:  
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- 43 • Is characterised by an objective and open-minded approach to controversial issues  
44 with attention for the quality and quantity of evidence;
- 45 • Uses concepts as the intellectual building blocks and as essential aids to the  
46 categorisation, organisation and analysis of knowledge and experiences;
- 47 • Uses participatory and experiential teaching and learning styles;
- 48 • Deals explicitly with questions and issues that enable pupils to explore fundamental  
49 aspects of our lives (CIDREE 2005, p.10)).  
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53 Thus the research presented here primarily focuses on the individual pedagogies of four  
54 teachers working within their own subject areas, on lessons that they had planned themselves  
55 within their standard curriculum time, and which did not adopt any specific cross-curricular  
56 theme or dimension. It relied on a key definition for cross-curricularity, established on the  
57 basis of previous research, as follows:  
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4 A cross-curricular approach to teaching is characterised by sensitivity towards, and a  
5 synthesis of, knowledge, skills and understandings from various subject areas. These inform  
6 an enriched pedagogy that promotes an approach to learning that embraces and explores this  
7 wider sensitivity through various methods. (Savage 2010, pp.8-9)  
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11 The research aimed to explore in detail the pedagogical features that this 'enriched pedagogy'  
12 might contain, by identifying the key elements of a cross-curricular pedagogy within an  
13 individual subject teacher's subject pedagogy, and classifying them in terms of Jephcote and  
14 Davies' (2007) micro-, meso- and macro-level accounts of changes in practice:  
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17 At the micro-level accounts have been concerned mainly with teachers, school classrooms  
18 and subjects and at macro-level with processes of policy-making and its implementation. At  
19 the same time, the meso-level has been taken to comprise of subject associations, local  
20 education authorities and sponsored curriculum projects where there are mediating processes  
21 which provide means to reinterpret macro-level changes and to assess the range of new  
22 choices they present to subject factions. (Jephcote & Davies 2007, p.208)  
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26 Whilst previous research has predominately focused on the meso and macro levels, in this  
27 study I have focused on what Jephcote and Davies call the micro-level, the work of the  
28 individual teacher. In addition to detailing cross-curricularity at an individual pedagogic  
29 level, I wanted to include the teacher's voice which is frequently and peculiarly absent from  
30 many studies. However, this focus does not mean ignoring the meso- and macro-levels that  
31 an individual teacher's work relates to. At the macro-level, Jephcote and Davies point to the  
32 structures of the National Curriculum, examination specifications and the like; at the meso-  
33 level, they highlight subject associations, local education authorities and other types of  
34 curriculum projects. All of these, they argue, have implications for what a subject is and how  
35 it is represented within the structure of the school. They mediate the pedagogy of the  
36 individual subject teacher who works within that context. As I will note in my conclusions,  
37 the meso- and macro-level had varying degrees of impact on the work of the four teachers I  
38 observed.  
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## 45 **2. Research Framework**

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48 The research examined how teachers utilised cross-curricular elements within their pedagogy  
49 whilst teaching Year 9 classes (i.e. pupils aged between 13 and 14). It took place during  
50 October 2009 to January 2010 and encompassed two main phases.  
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### 54 *Phase One*

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56 Phase One, completed in late 2009, involved observation of a range of Year 9 classes (i.e.  
57 pupils aged between 13 and 14) in three comprehensive schools in south Manchester. A total  
58 of 15 lessons were observed across a number of subjects, as detailed in Table 1.  
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7 During each lesson, I took notes using an observational grid (see Table 2). This grid was  
8 specifically designed to help me record any elements of the teacher's pedagogy that  
9 contained a cross-curricular element (e.g. in their use of language, the design of a teaching  
10 activity, the chosen context for a particular lesson, their learning objectives, etc).  
11

12 After general details about the subject, school, date and time of the lesson being observed, I  
13 included a short section about the lesson objectives and scheme of work. In particular, I was  
14 interested to note whether or not the teacher shared the learning objectives at the start of the  
15 lesson with the pupils (and by what means, e.g. verbally or on an interactive whiteboard).  
16 The statement about the unit of work was purely there to help me contextualise the observed  
17 lesson within the broader work being done with that particular class.  
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21 Following these general items of information, I used a time line for my observation  
22 differentiated by five-minute segments and two principle columns (teacher and pupils). This  
23 allowed me to make short notes about any significant elements of a cross-curricular  
24 pedagogy or subject content at the appropriate point within the lesson structure. At these  
25 specific moments, I was interested to note what the teacher was doing and, importantly, what  
26 the pupils were doing at the same moment.  
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30 The potential focus points at the bottom of Table 2 were drawn from a review of published  
31 studies of cross-curricularity in various teaching contexts (e.g. CfBT 2008a & b, CIDREE  
32 2005, Dorion 2009; Harris 2008). They were included as an aide memoire for my  
33 observations.  
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36 INSERT TABLE 2 HERE  
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### 38 *Phase Two*

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41 I conducted the second phase of the case study during January 2010, interviewing four  
42 teachers about the lessons that I had observed in Phase One (see Table 1). I invited these four  
43 teachers for interview because each of their lessons had included what I considered to be  
44 significant cross-curricular elements, either in pedagogy or subject content (or both). I used a  
45 semi-structured interview format for these interviews, with a prepared set of questions that  
46 were common for each interview. The key interview questions included:  
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48

- 49 1. Can you define what a cross-curricular approach to teaching in (*insert teacher's*  
50 *subject*) entails? What do you suppose are the benefits of such an approach?  
51
- 52 2. Describe your planning for the lesson, in particular whether or not you made a  
53 deliberate choice to develop a cross-curricular link at the following moments (*insert*  
54 *reference to key incident(s) drawn from the observational grid*).  
55
- 56 3. If a deliberate choice was made, to what extent did you think that the cross-curricular  
57 approach adopted was successful? Did it add value to the learning and, if so, in what  
58 way?  
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4. If this cross-curricular incidence was ‘accidental’ or ‘spur of the moment’, what impact did it have on the pupils’ learning? Would you use that particular approach again? If not, why not?
  5. If you adopted a collaborative approach to the lesson (i.e. through working with another colleague), can you explain how this approach developed and how long it took? Why did you work with that particular colleague? What has been the benefit of that approach on your own pedagogy and, if applicable, your continuing professional development?

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Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Following the end of Phase Two, I wrote short case studies of around 800 words each about each lesson. These case studies contained the following sections:

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- A brief introduction to the school, the teacher, the unit of work and the lesson observed (i.e. its location within the unit of work);
  - A general description of the lesson drawing on notes drawn from the observational grid and responses to the second key interview question;
  - A more detailed description and tentative analysis of the cross-curricular incidences contained with that lesson. This included an exploration of statements made by the teacher to key interview questions 3 and 4;
  - When appropriate, a detailed description and tentative analysis of any collaborative work undertaken by the teacher in preparation for the lesson I observed. This included references to any explanations given by teachers in response to key interview question 5.

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These case study were emailed to the individual teachers approximately one month after the completion of the interview schedule, together with an invitation for comments about any of the case study’s contents. In particular, I was concerned to ensure that any analytical points I had made within the case studies were shared by the teachers themselves, and justified by the observations I had made or the discussions I had held with these teachers. Two teachers replied (case studies 3.2.1 and 3.2.3); both asked me to stress the wider context of their work (as outlined within their unit of work within which the lesson I observed was contained).

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In the following section I present the key data from the research. I will start with some reflections on the general observations of the classes in Phase One (3.1) and justify my choice to focus specifically on the work of four teachers in Phase Two (3.2). Section 3.2 presents *shortened versions* of each of the four case studies. I discuss my findings in Section 4.1.

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### 3.1 Phase One: General Observation of Year 9 Classes

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Analysis of the fifteen completed lesson observations revealed four significant incidences of a cross-curricular pedagogy. I defined ‘significance’ in this context quite loosely as what seemed, from my perspective, to be a deliberate choice on the part of the teacher to make and sustain a cross-curricular link as part of their pedagogy in that lesson. Within this definition

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4 of 'significance', 'sustain' meant that the link impacted on the lesson for a period of five  
5 minutes or longer. As I will show below, these cross-curricular links were often formed  
6 between subjects, but sometimes extended beyond the subjects included within the  
7 curriculum to other contexts too.  
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10 In addition to these four significant incidences of a cross-curricular pedagogy, I observed  
11 numerous smaller incidences of teachers using elements of a cross-curricular pedagogy  
12 within their lessons. These smaller incidences, and a note of the number of times they  
13 occurred in the fifteen lessons observed, included:  
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- 16 • Short references by teachers to work done in other subject classes (8/15 lessons);
- 17 • Illustrations drawn from other subjects to help introduce a new concept within the  
18 lesson (3/15 lessons);
- 19 • Setting homework that explored an aspect of the lesson in a new context drawn from  
20 another curriculum area (1/15 lessons);
- 21 • Comparisons of technical vocabulary from different subject areas to help inform  
22 pupils' understanding of a new word within the particular subject (3/15 lessons);
- 23 • Humorous references to other members of staff within the school (and their  
24 associated subject area) by way of conversation about a particular topic (1/15  
25 lessons);
- 26 • Using lesson materials that contained a cross-curricular theme or dimension (e.g. an  
27 exercise within a worksheet or text-book) (4/15 lessons).  
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33 Whilst these incidences were smaller in significance than the case studies recounted below,  
34 they are nonetheless important in that they illustrate teachers making connections between  
35 subjects in a basic way. The four case studies described below were significant not just in the  
36 time devoted but, as we shall see, because, as the interviewed revealed, they were initiated  
37 by deliberate choices of various types on the part of the teacher.  
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## 41 **3.2 Phase Two: Interviews with Teachers of Year 9 Classes**

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44 A condensed summary of each case study is presented below. In these broadly descriptive  
45 summaries I aim to give the reader a flavour of cross-curricular pedagogy that each teacher  
46 adopted within the lesson I observed. Detailed analysis of these four case studies, and a  
47 consideration of this analysis in light of the research framework discussed above, will be  
48 carried out in the ensuing discussion (section 4.1).  
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### 51 *3.2.1 Case Study 1: Art & English*

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54 During this [art] lesson the pupils were explicitly asked to 'play' with colours in a way that  
55 correlated to the 'playfulness of language' that had formed part of a previous (unobserved)  
56 English lesson (taught by a different teacher). The teacher drew a connection between the use  
57 of colour (in the art lesson) and language (in the English lesson) that was underpinned by a  
58 common creative process. When questioned about this, the teacher commented that:  
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5 As an art teacher, creativity is central to my work. I wouldn't be where I am today  
6 without it. Creativity is key to my own making practices. I try and utilise every  
7 opportunity to bring creative processes into my own teaching.  
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10  
11 When questioned further, the teacher outlined a deliberate, informal approach to linking her  
12 definition of creativity to those of other colleagues within the school (in this case, her  
13 English colleagues). She continued:  
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16 We'd [her and another art colleague] looked together at some of the cross-  
17 curricular dimensions but this didn't seem to inspire us very much. On the QCDA  
18 website, I noticed that they had a tool for comparing subjects together side-by-side.  
19 This got me thinking. Which other subjects had creativity as a Key Concept? I was  
20 surprised to find that most other subjects did! I quite liked the definition of  
21 creativity in the programme of study for English. So we went to chat to {x} who  
22 taught English to see what he thought about it [creativity].  
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25  
26 The definition of creativity as a 'Key Concept' within the English programme of study  
27 includes the following statements that pupils should be to:  
28

- 29 • Make fresh connections between ideas, experiences, texts and words, drawing  
30 on a rich experience of language and literature;  
31
  - 32 • Use inventive approaches to making meaning, taking risks, playing with  
33 language and using it to create new effects.  
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37 These statements resonated with this art teacher's understanding of her own subject's  
38 approach to creativity. It resulted in a deliberate link between these two subject teachers and  
39 their use of a specific creative process.  
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### 42 *3.2.2 Case Study 2: ICT and English*

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45 During the observed lesson, pupils were editing a short film using digital video editing  
46 software. The ICT teacher was encouraging them to explore different ways of ordering the  
47 video clips to create an appropriate narrative to the film. His instructions to the pupils at the  
48 beginning of the lesson, and his advice to them as he worked with pairs of pupils, made  
49 reference to storyboarding work completed during a previous lesson. Pupils used the  
50 storyboards as an integral part of their work in the observed lesson.  
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54 When interviewed about this lesson, the teacher reflected on similar lessons taught in  
55 previous years:  
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57 Up until this point, I think my approach would have best been described as  
58 'traditional'. We took a standard piece of software like Movie Maker and got pupils  
59 to edit a piece of video that we provided into a short sequence. Although this  
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4 approach taught the pupils some technical skills in Movie Maker, it didn't seem to  
5 tap into their creativity. As part of the new National Curriculum we have been  
6 asked to provide opportunities for pupils to work creatively and collaboratively,  
7 and to try to forge links with other subjects.  
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10 This teacher identified an English colleague to work with. Through discussion, he learnt  
11 about how English teachers use a range of approaches (storyboarding, word-processing  
12 techniques, scaffolding, etc.) to teach pupils how to structure a longer piece of text. When  
13 asked what had changed in the observed lesson, the teacher commented:  
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16 Well, now pupils plan out a short digital video sequence using a word processor-  
17 based storyboard similar to that which they would use in an English lesson. They  
18 use the 'cut, copy and paste' function in the word processor to help sequence their  
19 ideas. Having done that, they shoot some video using a digital video camera and  
20 import it into the new iMacs running iMovie. As before, the editing processes are  
21 undertaken within the software, with pupils making similar choices using the cut,  
22 copy and paste functions. The project involves them collaborating with each other  
23 more than they would have done. They also get more of a chance to be creative  
24 both in their storyboards and in the types of digital materials that they can collect  
25 and put together into their final short video story.  
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### 31 3.2.3 Case Study 3: English 32

33 Throughout the majority of this English lesson, pupils were working independently on  
34 materials drawn together by the teacher. All of these materials (covering music, drama and  
35 film) related to Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*.  
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38 In interview, this is how the teacher described the lesson content:  
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40 Within the lesson, I wanted to create some cross-curricular links using Romeo and  
41 Juliet as a starting point. I chose music, drama and film, specifically Prokofiev's ballet  
42 score for Romeo and Juliet, Bernstein's West Side Story and Baz Luhrmann's film of  
43 Romeo and Juliet starring Leonardo DiCaprio. In the lesson that you came to see, I had  
44 asked the pupils to explore each of these three settings of the Romeo and Juliet story.  
45 They were working in small groups at computers watching and listening to various  
46 clips. Having spent quite a significant amount of time studying the Shakespeare text, I  
47 really wanted the pupils to have some freedom in how they analysed these three  
48 settings of the story. I was intrigued by how they might approach it.  
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52 During the lesson, pupils wrote a short piece related to their explorations. The teacher  
53 encouraged them to identify any similarities or differences that they could find. In interview,  
54 this is what he had to say about their work towards the end of the observed lesson:  
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57 I was pleasantly surprised by their work. One of the things they commented on  
58 extensively was characterisation. This is probably because I go on about it a lot! But  
59 they talked about the ways in which characterisation was portrayed in the Prokofiev  
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4 score (through musical themes), the accompanying ballet (and in the West Side Story  
5 production) through gesture, and, to a lesser extent it seemed, in the film (although that  
6 might be because they spent less time on that). One pupil had obviously understood it  
7 quite deeply. He commented on the way that different types of music accompanied the  
8 different characters in Bernstein's approach, with the Latin American sounds  
9 representing the Sharks and the Jets having a different type of beat. I learnt something  
10 about it from him!  
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#### 15 3.2.4 Case Study 4: Drama 16 17

18 This final case study is slightly different from the previous three, in that it involved the  
19 teacher making an explicit link to a pedagogical device drawn from the world of the theatre,  
20 her 'home' subject. This device is then applied for a new purpose within the classroom.  
21 Whilst this might not be considered 'cross-curricular' in the traditional sense, it does reveal  
22 an approach to teaching a subject that builds upon its wider heritage and the tools or  
23 processes within it. For this reason, it is included here.  
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26 The specific technique used throughout a significant portion of the lesson was called 'freeze  
27 framing'. During the lesson, and as part of a unit of work on developing a character's identity,  
28 pupils were improvising a scene that depicted Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a bus  
29 for a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama. At key moments, the teacher would shout  
30 'Freeze!' and the pupils were required to stop what they were doing and remain absolutely  
31 still and quiet. At this key moment, they are asked to reflect, in character, about their feelings  
32 at that specific moment. In the drama teacher's words:  
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36 I find it a very helpful way to try to understand whether or not the pupil really  
37 understands the role of their character. I make use of a technique called 'freeze  
38 framing'. This is when the action in a particular scene is frozen at a particular point  
39 in time. Normally I will decide when this happens, although sometimes I will let  
40 pupils decide. At the particular moment when I shout "Freeze!", every pupil  
41 involved in the scene has to stop what they are doing or saying and remain  
42 absolutely still. They stop moving, talking or anything else. This allows us to think  
43 together about the situation that the pupils are presenting through their acting. It is  
44 a technique drawn from the theatre and it allows a particular actor to talk about  
45 their perceptions in the situation they find themselves in or to give the audience  
46 further information about how they might be feeling or thinking. Some directors  
47 called this 'thought tracking'.  
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52 In interview, I asked the teacher why she had adopted this tool. Again, in her words:  
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55 As a teacher, I use this technique quite a lot to help my understanding of whether  
56 pupils are really engaging with a particular scene. I would say it is a key part of my  
57 assessment for learning strategy. During the freeze frame moment I will ask  
58 questions to a particular character in the scene. Sometimes I will also ask pupils  
59 who are watching the scene with me to ask questions too. I find it a very helpful  
60 way to try to understand whether or not the pupil is really understands the role of  
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4 their character. Obviously it has limitations. In drama, pupils often feel things that  
5 they can't express in words. But, when used with other assessment devices, freeze  
6 framing is a really useful assessment tool. And I'm pleased that it is an adaptation  
7 of a tool from the theatre.  
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#### 10 11 12 **4. Discussion** 13 14

15 The four case studies presented above and, to a lesser extent, the noted incidences of cross-  
16 curricular in other teachers' work in Phase One, illustrate that there is an undercurrent of  
17 cross-curricular thinking and practice that informed their work with the Year 9 pupils. More  
18 significant incidences were initiated by deliberate choices that teachers made. On occasions  
19 these were justified or explained by curriculum changes, but often they were the result of  
20 teachers working collaboratively and sharing elements of their pedagogical and subject  
21 knowledge. Given the strongly focussed subject frameworks that these teachers worked  
22 within (explored in the Introduction above), this finding surprised me.  
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26 It was interesting to reflect on these case studies further and to try to identify in more detail  
27 the specific motivation or trigger for the adoptions that the teachers had made. In Case Study  
28 1, it seemed to be related to a conceptual question in the teacher's mind about creativity.  
29 This, as the quotations from the interview illustrated, was an integral part of her work and  
30 her curiosity about it drove her to explore what it meant in other curriculum areas. This, in  
31 turn, led to her adopting and adapting specific making techniques within her own subject in  
32 light of that cross-curricular link.  
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36 In terms of Jephcote and Davies' levels or location of analysis (2007), this development is  
37 clearly situated within the 'micro-level' of this individual teacher's pedagogy. However, the  
38 teacher has also made links to both the meso- and macro-levels. Her engagement with the  
39 National Curriculum documentation and frameworks, including her identification of how  
40 creativity was defined in the English Programme of Study, is characteristic of a macro-level  
41 influence; her discussions and engagement with an English colleague who helped her  
42 understand more fully the way in which he adopted creative practices within his English  
43 teaching, could be seen as her engagement with the meso-level, i.e. the subject culture of  
44 English as represented through her colleague's work.  
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48 In Case Study 2 the issue seemed to centre on a teacher's dissatisfaction with her current  
49 pedagogical approach. He considered it to be too traditional, lacking impact and, in his own  
50 terms, 'it needed updating'. He was able to see beyond the specific skills that pupils needed  
51 to learn to accumulate (to edit, structure and revise digital materials), and considered the  
52 context within which they were being utilised (the narrative structure of the film). It was at  
53 this point that his pedagogy needed further support and development. He found this by  
54 working collaboratively with his English colleague, enhancing his pedagogical skills by the  
55 adoption of tools and techniques drawn from the English curriculum. Explicit linking of  
56 these to work done by pupils in their English lessons ensured that his pedagogy became more  
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4 focussed and his observation was that pupils responded more enthusiastically to the specific  
5 tasks within the lesson.  
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8 Although this case study still concerns the micro-level of an individual teacher's work, it is a  
9 good example of a meso-level impact. The explicit borrowing of a set of ways of working  
10 from another curriculum area was a bold move on the part of this teacher, and not without  
11 danger. Tools, pedagogical approaches and ways of working in one curriculum area (English)  
12 may not transfer across to another (ICT). Yet the interview data confirmed that this concern  
13 was ameliorated in his mind by the positive reception the pupils gave to the use of these  
14 approaches. What had been become quite a technical and skill-based exercise in editing  
15 digital video materials, was given a new life through a more creative context.  
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19 Like the teacher in the first case study, this teacher had a general concern about creativity  
20 and what this might mean at the macro-level (i.e. the National Curriculum requirements). But  
21 in this case, the teacher went one step further and adopted specific tools, frameworks and  
22 ways of working from another curriculum area.  
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25 In Case Study 3, there was an explicit focus on the content of the curriculum. The teacher's  
26 decision to choose three related pieces of content (a ballet score, a musical and a film) and  
27 allow pupils to explore the links and commonalities within them in different ways placed the  
28 cross-curricular focus explicitly on their learning as much as his teaching. However, the  
29 freedom that pupils felt to work independently within the task was, to some extent, delimited  
30 by the choices that the teacher had made. The curriculum content was strongly classified by  
31 the teacher in the first instance. He had made the choices as to which film, musical and ballet  
32 score the pupils had access to during the lesson. But out of this apparent restriction  
33 something surprising happened. Pupils were able to draw on their understanding of  
34 characterisation (from their study of Shakespeare's play) and relate this to the curriculum  
35 content they were studying. One pupil explored the Bernstein's musical interpretation of the  
36 Romeo and Juliet story within *West Side Story* in such a way that the teacher himself learnt  
37 something. This process was something that he obviously enjoyed and reflected on positively  
38 within the interview.  
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43 Out of all the case studies, this is probably the strongest example of the teacher adopting a  
44 traditional cross-curricular approach within their pedagogy, in that he had made quite an  
45 obvious selection of curriculum content (made up of the three interpretations of the  
46 Shakespeare play). However he did allow the pupils a considerable degree of flexibility in  
47 how they engaged with these materials, with the result that their learning seemed deeper to  
48 this teacher than he expected.  
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52 In terms of Jephcote and Davies' framework, there was no explicit sense in which this  
53 teacher had chosen to work at the meso- or macro-level. His approach was subject-orientated  
54 and he had made decisions about enriching this through an extended choice of curriculum  
55 materials. But there was no deliberate strategy to draw on cross-curricular themes or borrow  
56 pedagogies or approaches from other subject areas. But, cross-curricular learning still took  
57 place.  
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4 Finally, in Case Study 4 the teacher made explicit use of a tool from her own subject and  
5 applied it in a new pedagogical approach to help her assess her pupils' understanding of the  
6 characters within a specific scene. From the perspective of the individual teacher, this  
7 seemed like a celebration of her own subject's tradition by taking a traditional tool and re-  
8 imagining it for a new purpose. This, for her, was a strong element in its success. She knew  
9 the historical and cultural background behind the tool and could cite its successful use in the  
10 staging of quality dramatic productions. In terms of Jephcote and Davies' framework, this is  
11 an obvious meso-level borrowing. The freeze-framing technique comes from the world of the  
12 theatre and was well known by this individual teacher. She had seen it used in workshops  
13 and had, herself, been put 'under the spotlight' of the freeze-frame within her broader  
14 experiences as an actress. There is a sense in which the tool itself is only meaningful when it  
15 is embodied within a thought and feeling at a specific moment, in a particular scene as a  
16 certain character.  
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21 In that sense, this case study presents what is probably the most ingenious and sophisticated  
22 cross-curricular 'borrowing' although, in one sense, it is not really cross-curricular at all. This  
23 tension of origin is worth pausing on for a moment or two further. Does this tool's strength  
24 within the drama lesson come from the fact that its origins lie in the closely related world of  
25 the theatre? What would a freeze frame technique look or sound like in a geography or  
26 science lesson? This would be an important considerations that teachers would need to  
27 explore together. As a technique, freeze framing may have several benefits. But there are also  
28 limitations to it, even within drama teaching (as the teacher points out in the case study).  
29 These limitations may be exaggerated in the hands of someone who does not understand the  
30 historical and cultural traditions of the technique (as an 'insider' to that tradition). So, the  
31 tool needs to be handled carefully and with due consideration to the context from which it  
32 has been taken.  
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37 At the macro-level, the position of drama within the curriculum is also curious. It is absent  
38 from the National Curriculum itself and, perhaps, this has resulted in teachers demonstrating  
39 a degree of freedom in their pedagogy that other teachers can only aspire to. Further research  
40 would be needed to ascertain whether or not this teacher, or drama teachers as a whole, are  
41 more creative in their pedagogy than those of other subject areas. because of this freedom at  
42 the macro-level.  
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## 46 **5. Conclusion**

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49 Clearly, this study is too small-scale to make generalisations. However, these case studies  
50 demonstrate a range of potential approaches to cross-curricularity within the comprehensive  
51 school which centre on individual teachers' pedagogic practice. These four examples of  
52 significant cross-curricular interventions, together with the more general observations drawn  
53 from the other lessons, show that individual teachers do work productively and creatively, at  
54 various levels, in a cross-curricular way.  
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58 As the analysis shows, cross-curricular pedagogy can be found in many varied aspects of an  
59 individual teacher's pedagogy, including the selection of resources for a lesson, approaches to  
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4 assessment, the types of questions that a teacher might ask, and their use of metaphor to  
5 encourage new ways of thinking about a creative process. There were also examples of  
6 teachers adopting metaphorical language from another curriculum area to assist the  
7 introduction of new concepts within their own subject, explicit linking of technical  
8 vocabulary across subject areas, and using a general awareness about what pupils were  
9 studying in other curriculum areas to frame their own lessons.  
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13 My presentation of the case studies and the ensuing discussion suggest a journey through  
14 Jephcote and Davies' micro-, meso- and macro-levels. The first two case studies illustrate  
15 how teachers have drawn on the meso- and macro-levels to help develop their own pedagogy  
16 (the micro-level). The third case study, despite the adoption of curriculum content from  
17 outside the 'home' subject area, provides an example of a teacher's pedagogy facilitating new  
18 forms of pupil-led learning within that subject. Finally, the fourth case study is about a  
19 pedagogical embodiment, starting with the meso-level, going beneath the micro-level in  
20 returning a subject (drama) to its origins (in this case, the theatre). In recontextualising a  
21 specific tool (freeze-framing) for a new purpose (assessment) it reasserts a link to that  
22 teacher's pedagogy (the micro-level).  
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26 As a piece of educational research, the study is too small to draw large-scale  
27 implementations from. However, I can assert that there are examples of teachers working  
28 creatively at a cross-curricular pedagogy in what are strongly framed, subject orientated  
29 school contexts. Since this research was completed, the days of central curriculum control  
30 for schools in the United Kingdom seem numbered. Increasingly, individual schools are  
31 opting out of National Curriculum frameworks and determining their own curriculum  
32 arrangements. Within the deregulated curricula that result from these policy changes, it  
33 remains to be seen whether teachers will continue to forge links within and across their  
34 subject pedagogies. The obvious question for further research is whether the development of  
35 localised curricula frameworks will empower teachers to develop their pedagogy in new  
36 ways and whether or not a cross-curricular pedagogy will have any part to play in this at all.  
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## 42 **Tables**

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45 Table 1: Phase One Lesson Observations

46 Table 2: Observation Grid  
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**Table**[Click here to view linked References](#)*Table 1: Lesson Observation and Subject*

<b>Subject</b>	<b>School</b>		
	A	B	C
English	1*	1	1
Mathematics	1		
Science		1	1
History			1
Geography		1	
Music	1		1
Religious Education		1	
Art			1*
Drama			1*
ICT	1	1*	

*\* indicates that this teacher was interviewed as part of Phase Two of the case study research.*

## Table

[Click here to view linked References](#)

Table 2: Lesson Observation Grid

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>School:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Time:</b>
<b>Lesson Objectives</b>	<i>Add details here if known.</i>		Stated: YES/NO
			Displayed: YES/NO
<b>Scheme of Work</b>	<i>Add statement of broader context for individual lesson here.</i>		
<b>TIME-LINE</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Pupil</b>	<b>Notes</b>
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CLOSE			
<b>Potential Focus Points</b>	Central stimulus (question, resource, etc.)	Learning objectives	Teacher language

	Common resources including technologies	Explanations	Pupil language
	Subject content (and links to other subject content)	Modelling	Pedagogical devices
	Social interaction	Use of Metaphor	Assessment devices
	Widening discourse	Questioning/ Conversations	Pupil engagement and organisation