



HALL SCHOOL

A Specialist College for
Communication and Interaction



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Reflection on the Sleeping Beauty workshops and performance which took place on 7th December 2011

At the Hall School in September a group of students from 2 secondary classes, who have a range of complex needs, took part in a project called Sleeping Beauty. This project was the music option for the first term. It was designed to be a continuation of the Norwich Theatre Royal Opera project where Hall School students, with the help of outside musical professionals, created their own version of an opera.

The Sleeping Beauty workshops run by Mark and Bryony from Slanted Dance, included students and staff who had been in the opera and also introduced new students and staff to this type of dramatic project. These outside professionals had previously worked with Hall School on the Opera. Mark played the piano and trumpet while Bryony concentrated on the dance and drama. During the workshops Mark and Bryony helped students and staff create a musical production which was their own original work.

All the adults working with the students encouraged them to take an active part. They did this by having talking partners which are small discussion groups offering even the most withdrawn or challenging students an opportunity to express their ideas. Bryony and Mark listened and observed and used their musical and dramatic expertise to quickly capture in music and words the emerging ideas from the group.

The group of students and staff evolved a learning environment where everyone involved was respected and listened to. As ideas and challenges emerged they were discussed honestly and solutions were found. This strengthened positive working relationships between adults and students and engendered a confidence and eagerness to contribute to the success of the final production. For example when Mark, Bryony and the teacher were unable to come to the workshops the staff at Hall School took the initiative and made scenery, props and a backdrop for the production. Alongside this they used their own time to make costumes and props.

It was a pleasure to see staff contribute their artistic and creative talents which perhaps had not been fully recognised or used before. Also, when the group wanted to rehearse without Mark and Bryony, one member of staff clearly demonstrated an ability to remember the songs and stage manage the cast sympathetically. This allowed adults working with challenging students to concentrate on keeping them focused.

This positive working atmosphere enabled all students to enjoy and make progress in taking part in rehearsals, costume fittings, make up and 2 consecutive performances in front of an audience of students and adults. It was noted that a particularly sensitive and potentially volatile student, ably supported by a member of staff, successfully participated and enjoyed in Sleeping Beauty.

The outcome of this project has been the further development of confidence and abilities of students and staff who were in the Opera project. Alongside this they have been joined by other students and staff whose confidence and abilities are now recognised and appreciated. There is now an enthusiasm to further explore and develop these skills so that this type of working and learning can be used within all areas of the secondary curriculum in Hall School.

We would like to thank the Chiver's Trust for their financial support which made the Sleeping Beauty Project possible at Hall School.

Written by Cecilia, S3 teacher Hall School – 11.12.11

