Nations Divided
How to teach the history of partition
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Executive Summary

In October 2016, the Runnymede Trust was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of a pilot schools project introducing the history of partition to KS2 and KS3 students. The Partition History Project ran in four schools in Hitchin and Luton, and used lesson plans and a theatre performance to cover the history. We used quantitative and qualitative research methods to measure impact and capture experiences of students and teachers.

Although this project focussed on a discrete period of history it feeds into a wider body of work on the teaching of diverse history in British schools\(^1\). In the context of widespread national anxiety about British values, community cohesion and immigration, it is crucial that students are equipped with the skills and historical understanding necessary to navigate these multifaceted debates. They need to know where we have come from in order to understand where we are and where we might be able to go.

In our perspectives paper, History Lessons: Teaching Diversity In and Through the History National Curriculum, we argued that it is not only the content of what children are taught but also the support teachers receive to teach diverse curricula effectively and confidently. This evaluation examines one case study of how schools can introduce diverse history into the curriculum effectively, with lessons and recommendations for further work in this area.

Summary of Findings

Students and teachers in the participating schools had a very positive experience of the pilot Partition History Project. We found that drama was an effective way to embed learning and deepen understanding of the history being taught. Additionally, we found that staff and pupils were positive about the inclusion of this history in the curriculum and felt it was relevant for them to study.

- The pilot project was successful in increasing student understanding of the history of partition.
- To effectively teach the history of partition, schools should embed this topic within a wider scheme of work covering the British Empire and Britain's relationship with India. Without an understanding of the events leading up to partition, young people struggled to engage deeply with its political ramifications.
- The use of drama to cover the history of partition was very effective and it enabled students to understand the events in a way that individual lesson plan would not. The benefits of drama in education include: embedding learning, engaging hard to reach groups, and aiding students in connecting to historical events empathetically.
- The extent to which students can identify with the historical event being covered is determined by their personal context. As the participating schools did not have a high degree of ethnic diversity, young people struggled to relate to divisions arising from identity. The dominant themes that students connected to were: family, friendship, overcoming animosity and bullying.
- The history of partition is a high yield topic that creates an opportunity to discuss many issues such as refugees, community cohesion, overcoming difference etc. However, the discussion needs to be facilitated by teachers to ensure students to make these associations.

\(^1\) Most recently the Our Migration Story schools resource. http://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/
Most students, those with a personal connection and those without, enjoyed covering a topic that falls outside of the traditional school history curriculum.

Recommendations
In addition to the lessons drawn from the key findings summarised above, we make the following recommendations:

- In the absence of a theatre performance related to the history in questions, drama can still be incorporated into teaching. Teachers have the option of getting students to read and/or act out the play or alternatively to show films.
- Teachers should be given the necessary training and resources to teach diverse history. There are many opportunities within the curriculum to cover topics from a non-Eurocentric perspective, and students irrespective of their family backgrounds have a lot to gain from doing so.
- The history of partition is a high yield opportunity for schools to address numerous issues, including: Britain’s relationship with former colonies, community cohesion, religious pluralism and migration. It may be easier to approach these sometimes-contentious topics through the prism of the past, as it creates an element of distance from the immediate context.
- When schools do not have a diverse student population they should give their students the opportunity to mix with and learn, with, from and about those from different backgrounds. This can be achieved through links with other schools and community organisations.
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1. Introduction

2017 marks the 70th anniversary of the independence of British India, with territory ‘partitioned’ to create two separate states, India and Pakistan. In the UK and globally it coincides with extensive debates on immigration, community cohesion and national identity. With this context as a backdrop, the Runnymede Trust was commissioned to evaluate the Partition History Project’s (PHP) pilot school programme, in which drama was used to introduce the partition of India in four schools.

This report presents the findings of the quantitative and qualitative study that was designed to measure the impact of the project.

Partition History Project

The PHP’s aim is:

- to raise awareness and deepen public understanding, in Britain, of the historical circumstances surrounding the Partition of India in 1947, and the subsequent consequences of mass migration, displacement and terrible loss of life
- to pilot ways of addressing the hidden legacy of grief and distrust between people of different faith communities and backgrounds in Britain, dating back to this event, through the compassionate use of arts, history teaching and the national curriculum

In October 2016, the PHP team piloted a programme to introduce the partition of British India to school Children. The programme comprised of two lesson plans and the play ‘Child of the Divide’, by Sudha Bhuchar, which uses the story of one child to explore the experiences of those affected by partition. The lesson plans were developed by Historian Sarah Ansari and educationalist Elizabeth Jeanes.

Four schools took part in the pilot programme, with students across Key Stage 2 & 3. The schools based in Luton and Hitchin had significantly different student populations. The schools in Hitchin were 70-80% White British, whilst the school in Luton was over 70% Bangladeshi British and/or Pakistani British.

Aims

This evaluation aims to address the following:

- Whether the project enabled students to describe what happened at partition and the consequences of partition.
- Whether the lesson plans and materials were successful in enabling students to know and understand why British India was partitioned in 1947.
- Whether the performance of ‘Child of the Divide’ enabled students to respond empathetically to the migration of up to 16 million people via the microcosm of the family story.
- Whether students were positively responsive about bringing people of different backgrounds together, especially where there is tension or conflict between them.
Objectives
The following objectives were set to meet the above stated aims:

- Carry out a base line survey
- Administer a survey following the completion of the project
- Undertake focus groups with students
- Complete interviews with teachers

Methodology
The research had both quantitative and qualitative elements to measure understanding and capture experiences.

The survey, administered by teachers through Survey Methods, measured student understanding and experience of the project. The focus groups with students also explored understanding and experiences in addition to the themes students identified and potential connections between partition history and contemporary experiences. The teacher interviews allowed us to investigate the effectiveness of the project and lessons plans, impact on students and teacher perceptions of student engagement with the broad themes of the project.
2. Background

In recent years there has been considerable debate about the contents of the National Curriculum. Much of this debate was instigated by Michael Gove’s launch of the new National Curriculum in 2014. Within History, the commentators considered what the balance should be between ‘British’ and ‘world’ history. This background chapter covers the wider context within which the Partition History Project took place.

Curriculum

Within the current History curriculum, the British Empire is first covered in Key Stage 3; before this much of the history taught focuses on ancient history. At KS3 India appears three times as a non-statutory example within three key areas described by the National Curriculum:

- the development of Church, state and society in Britain 1509-1745
  - the first colony in America and first contact with India
- ideas, political power, industry and empire: Britain, 1745-1901
  - the development of the British Empire with a depth study (for example, of India)
- challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day
  - “Indian independence and end of Empire” (Department for Education, 2013)

It is difficult to determine to what extent the history of India and partition is covered by schools. Research carried out by the Runnymede Trust in 2015 found that “the pressures and constraints of a changed curricula and the new demands this makes on knowledge acquisition for all teachers, particularly those teaching the early key stages, raises significant issues for the teaching and learning of diverse histories” (Alexander et al, 2015:11).

Teaching ‘Diverse’ history

A significant amount of research has been done into the construction of the curriculum and what it includes or excludes. In increasingly diverse classrooms the consequence of excluding “ethnic groups from the curriculum leads to a sense of exclusion and marginalisation more generally from education ... In addition, it is highly likely that pupils from majority backgrounds will emerge with a limited perspective of the past” (Harris, 2010:2). The inclusion of diverse histories should not be seen as a way of engaging minority ethnic students, rather “as a way of creating a subject that engages all students in order to prepare children for life as adults in multicultural Britain” (Alexander et al, 2015:3).

Within this context the partition of India can be used as a “case study for analysing and understanding other migration events while providing students with insights into the specific difficult and complex of individuals, families and communities faced in 1947 in India” (Abbas et al, 2007:III).

Teaching through drama

Drama and creativity have been present in education for decades and a rich literature has emerged expounding on the benefits of its inclusion in schools. Research indicates that using drama in the classroom as a means of teaching helps students learn academically, socially, and developmentally. The use of drama as a tool for teaching in not new, “historically, both drama and theatre have long been recognized as potent means of education” (McCaslin, 1998:271).

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5 Each key area is followed by up to 10 example histories that can be used to cover it.
Within the context of History education, “drama enables children to journey inside an event, to engage vicariously in the lives of other” (Fennessey, 1995:16). However, in some ways those experiences are still removed in that ‘it’s not like that anymore’. So, classroom teaching is crucial for helping bridge the gap between what happened in the past and having sympathy for it and what’s happening now. This requires opportunities to engage cognitively and affectively.

Additionally, drama engages students who are otherwise hard to reach, and challenges students who have already grasped the concepts. Teaching history through drama is about “making history, historical evidence and interpretations more accessible to a wider audience than some more traditional teaching methods are able to reach” (Patterson, 2011:41).

Teaching Conflict
When it comes to teaching the history of conflict there are serious considerations about what students gain. Do educators want to educate students about the history or is there a wider agenda regarding the lessons that should be learnt? Should schools deliver a straightforward historical analysis of the past, examining what happened and how, or are they engaged in moral education? These two positions are often strongly contested, there is no consensus amongst teachers and the National Curriculum does not provide clarity on the topic6.

Another consideration when teaching the history of conflict is the reality that different groups within the classroom might have been exposed to contested versions of events. Teachers might face barriers from parents who disagree with the school’s chosen approach. Enquiry based, multi-perspective history teaching can be used to engage different communities who might have divergent views. The advantage of this approach is that it puts the “emphasis on students developing their own understandings from their examination of evidence and a range of perspectives” (McCully, 2012:156).

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6 The History KS3 national curriculum states that the purpose of study as: “Teaching should equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. History helps pupils to understand the complexity of people’s lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.”
3. Findings

In order to evaluate the impact of the PHP we utilised quantitative and qualitative research methods, which included a pre and post intervention survey, student focus groups and teacher interviews. This chapter takes each project aim in turn and evaluates the extent to which it has been met. Overall teachers and students valued the opportunity to take part in the project and felt it had given them a good insight into the partition of India.

3.1 Knowledge and understanding

The first aim of this evaluation was to measure the success of the Partition History Project in enabling students to describe what happened at partition and its consequences. Overall we found that the PHP was effective in improving student understanding of partition. This evaluation is in the context of two lessons and the play being used to cover a complex history.

Most students started from a position where they had no knowledge of India and Pakistan ever being one country and so there was significant gain to be made by exposure to this history.

Key findings

- The project was very successful at introducing the topic to students, with 70% of students agreeing that they had understood partition.
- When compared with a control group who did not take part in the project we found that there was a strong effect size of 0.91 (where 1 is the maximum) on student understanding.
- Although the project increased understanding, the teachers were limited in how much they could cover in two lessons and therefore students did not engage deeply with the causes and political ramifications of partition.

Survey

- When asked directly if they understood why British India was partitioned approximately 70% agreed they had (22% strongly agree and 47% agree), while 26% of students neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 80% of students were correctly able to identify what partition was, approximately 6% of students were not sure, and 14% thought it was the creation of two political parties representing Hindus and Muslims.
- Responding to the statement ‘I understand the relationship between Britain and India before partition’, the majority of students agreed (73% - strongly agree 22% and agree 49%). The remaining students answered neither agree nor disagree (23%), and a small number of students (4%) disagreed with the statement.
- Out of a potential 7 points students could score on understanding questions in the survey the mean score after going through the project was 4.23. The mean score for the control group who had not completed the project was 2.90. We found that there was a strong effect size of 0.91.

However, questions exploring the depth of understanding and the degree to which students retained the details about what happened at partition had less definitive results:

- Only 28% of students correctly estimated the number of people who had to move as around 16 million. The majority of students, 44%, approximated that 3 million people had to move from their homes. This might be expected as the project focussed on the individual human story.
Students were asked to identify which groups were affected by partition. They were given the option of selecting from Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or all of the above. 42% of students identified that Hindus and Muslims were affected, 36% selected all of the above, and the remaining few students selected either single faith groups or other combinations. It is positive that most students identified that both Hindus and Muslims were affected. This is potentially because the play ‘Child of the Divide’ focused on the stories of Hindu and Muslim children and families. Although some students showed understanding that Sikh groups were also affected, the majority did not. The lesson plans did cover the involvement and impact of Sikh communities. However, this was information that the students did not retain well.

In response to a question on the politicians involved, 54% of students were correctly able to identify Muhammed Ali Jinnah, Mahatma Gandhi and Louis Mountbatten as three key figures in partition. A further 25% were not sure, and 18% incorrectly identified Harold Macmillan, Anwar Sadat and Yasser Arafat.

In order to test students’ ability to evaluate and make judgements about partition they were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement ‘The British properly planned the process of partition’. There was a somewhat even spread of responses between agree (27.5%), neither agree nor disagree (36%) and disagree (37%).

Focus group
During the student focus groups it became clear that prior to the PHP very few students had knowledge of partition or British India.

“It was a part of history I’d never really heard of before” (Student)

Most focus group respondents felt they had a good understanding of partition following the PHP.

“I’ve improved the concept of it, I understand it more. Like before I knew some facts about it but now I understand emotions. Like how people felt about what happened then.” (Student)

They identified the play as pivotal in helping them understand the events that took place during partition.

“I feel I understand the entire thing with the ‘Child of the Divide’. Before the play and the survey, I never understood anything of it. But after that I understood the whole concept of it, like why they moved and stuff.” (Student)

Although students felt that they had understood partition, when asked about the politicians involved in partition most students could not name individuals. Out of all the political actors covered in the lesson plans they were most likely to recall Cyril Radcliffe and the act of drawing a line.

‘I found Cyril Radcliffe most interesting, because he didn’t even use the most up-to-date map. He just chose a random map and drew a line on it” (Student)

Some students could recall particular details but not with a great degree of accuracy.

“There was this guy who led marches for Muslims only to fight for their rights.” (Student)

Teachers’ perception
When teachers were asked whether they felt the project enabled students to describe what happened at partition and its consequences they responded positively.
“Without a shadow of a doubt. I teach this to four year 8 classes, high ability to low ability, and they can all tell me what partition is, which religions tended to go where and which leaders did what.” (Teacher)

“Yes, for their age I think they were able to describe it as they see it. I think they completely understand now what happened at partition and I think they understood some of the consequences in terms of migration and the violence” (Teacher)

However, for the students to develop a deeper understanding of the events that took place some teachers felt they would have liked to explore the history in further detail over more lessons.

“The students realistically needed a bit of background teaching first before we got on to partition ... I think the lessons could have been more of a series rather than just two.” (Teacher)

“It would be nice to supplement it and investigate and explore the period in that little bit of extra detail.” (Teacher)
3.2 Effectiveness of lesson plans and materials

This section evaluates the actual design of the project by focusing on the lesson plans and programme of study the schools were asked to deliver. Specifically, whether the lesson plans and materials were successful in enabling students to know and understand why India was partitioned in 1947.

Key Findings

- The use of drama to cover this history of partition was effective and enabled students to engage with the events in a way a straightforward lesson plan would not.
- Teachers found that the content of the lesson plans was of a high quality and provided a good overview of the historical events.
- The lesson plans would be more effective if they were embedded within the existing curriculum plan. Some teachers felt that a greater understanding of empire before studying this history would be beneficial.
- The wider objective of linking partition to contemporary contexts of difference and diversity could have been made more explicit for teachers.

Survey

- Almost 80% of students agreed that they learnt more about the partition of British India by watching ‘Child of the Divide’.
- Almost all students (78%) enjoyed watching the play ‘Child of the Divide’, with only 6.4% disagreeing.
- Students felt that the play had helped them better understand the experience of people who had to migrate during partition (84%).

Content of the lesson plans

Overall teachers were satisfied with the content of the lesson plans and felt they were suitable for providing an overview of the topic. Some of the teachers altered the lesson plans to make them suitable for their cohorts.

“The resources and everything were really good. I used a majority of them” (Teacher)

“The lesson itself as a stand-alone overview lesson was effective” (Teacher)

Effectiveness of play

Across all four schools students were very positive about the effectiveness of the play in helping them understand what actually happened during partition. They felt the play helped the history come alive and made them much more engaged.

“When you are at school they just give you a load of numbers, like this many people did this, this many people did this, but when you actually see it you can actually visualise what happened.” (Student)

“For example if a teacher was explaining it to you say like Hitchin was split in two but you were on the wrong side, that’s kind of hard for you to imagine because it’s never happened to you. But the play kind of showed it to you rather than just telling you.” (Student)

“I preferred the play because it was visual, you could see actually how people coped and what the consequences were” (Student)
“it definitely helped us understand the lesson a lot more, I had the lesson and as I was watching the play I was thinking back through the stuff we had learnt and it was making sense.” (Student)

All the teachers interviewed responded very positively to the use of drama in the PHP and felt it enhanced student understanding.

“When they came back from watching the play it had literally embedded what they had learn in the lessons.” (Teacher)

“This experience has made me more open to the use of drama to teach history, normally I would have said it won’t work. I think it is a good way of getting pupils, especially those who you think might not grasp it grasp it so much better.” (Teacher)

Curriculum Planning

Although the teachers found that students understood partition well and responded positively to the play, a few of them felt the students would have gained more if the topic was taught within a wider curriculum stream.

“I need more than two lessons ... over 6 weeks rather than trying to fit it into what we have to do anyway as part of our curriculum.” (Teacher)

“Difficulty we had with the lessons was it didn’t really fit in to what we were doing. We jumped from WW1 to India. Timing where it was in the year is very important.” (Teacher)

“I think going forward if it is to be introduced as a part of the curriculum going forward we would need to as a school look to factor in a few more lessons.” (Teacher)

This was particularly true for those teaching the Year 8 groups, where the students had not covered empire in sufficient detail to contextualise partition.

Clear lesson objectives

The teachers interviewed expressed that the wider objective, of using the story of partition as a prism through which students could better understand difference and conflict, had not been clear in the lesson plans. Thus, they had not been able to support the formation of links between the experiences of partition and contemporary challenges.

“I think the stuff we were given, the message got a bit disjointed going through so many people.” (Teacher)

“I think the weakest area in their understanding was the link between what happened then and what’s happening now. I don’t think the lesson plans properly addressed that.” (Teacher)

“I would have also made more emphasis in the second lesson about conflicts around the world.” (Teacher)

“I suppose if I was doing it again I might try and contrast it with something that they felt was more relevant for them to understand that whole issue around how people treat each other.” (Teacher)
3.3 Empathy

The aim explored in this subsection relates to empathy and the extent to which the play enabled students to understand the impact of partition. Specifically, we explore whether the performance of ‘Child of the Divide’ enabled students to respond empathetically to the migration of 16 million people via the microcosm of the family story.

Key findings

- Students expressed a high degree of empathy for the difficult experiences of those impacted by partition.
- Some students struggled to relate the family story to the wider experience of 16 million people.
- The relatively homogenous context of the schools involved limited their ability to relate to a very diverse context and the potential challenges it brings.
- The dominant themes that students could relate to were friendship, overcoming animosity and bullying.
- Participation in the project led to a significant increase in the proportion of students who agreed that partition led to tragedy on all sides.

Survey results

- 73% of students agreed with the statement ‘the partition of India led to tragedy on all sides’, while the remaining students (25%) neither agreed nor disagreed. In the baseline survey, only 37% of students agreed and 63% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.
- We tested the degree to which students agreed with the phrase ‘people should belong to each other and not to places’, a re-occurring theme in the play. 70% of students agreed or strongly agreed. A further 25% neither agreed not disagreed.
- The strongest result was in response to the statement ‘it is important for people from different backgrounds to live together peacefully’ where 90% of students agreed.

Understanding and empathising

During the focus groups, many students spoke of the way in which the PHP had afforded them an insight into the emotions and feelings of the individuals experiencing partition. They particularly commented on the fact that ordinarily just studying history in the classroom they would not have understood the gravitas of the situation.

‘It gave me a better feeling of the emotions of how they felt, because when someone is like explaining that it was really scary but with the play you feel more in it.’ (Student) “It was that personal side that social side that we don’t normally deal with in history that made them remember it more. They were very empathetic to what happened.” (Teacher)

“They seemed to really feel and understand the feelings of the people involved.” (Teacher)

“What works for students in putting that personal story ... but giving it a face and a name and a family, that’s the theme that runs through, loss and a sense of desperation and hopelessness of a situation.” (Teacher)

The family story

Some students (particularly older ones) could extrapolate from the story of the individual and connect it to the plight of the masses. However, one of the teachers interviewed felt that students struggled to extend their empathy to all those involved in the lessons. This is where structured lessons are crucial in supporting students to make connections.
“That makes you think how actually bad it is, one play has just shown you one family. Times that by 2 million.” (Student)

“I think they were really empathetic towards the plight of a child, I’m not sure I could honestly say that they extended that to 16 million.” (Teacher)

Context
On one level students connected with the play and could understand the experiences of those affected by partition. However, the extent to which they connect their own experiences to those of the children in the play was limited by their context. All the schools involved in the project had a single dominant ethnic group, either White British or South Asian. The degree to which they consciously thought about difference and diversity appeared to be limited. However, they could relate to themes of friendship, overcoming animosity and bullying.

“I could relate to the main character because he got bullied but he found friends in a difficult time” (Student)

“They could link it in terms of friendship but not in terms of difference. I don’t think they are that aware of difference.” (Teacher)
3.4 Difference and conflict

The final aim the project was to explore the concept of bringing people of different backgrounds together, especially where there is tension or conflict between them. This aim is harder to measure; it was explored in the focus groups and briefly in the survey.

Key findings

- Students connected positively with the idea of diverse communities living together peacefully.
- Overall students had a positive sense of their own experiences of diversity.
- Teachers and students felt that there were a lot of lessons that could be drawn from studying this history.
- Most students, those with a personal connection and those without, enjoyed covering a topic that falls outside of the traditional school history curriculum.

Survey Results

- 64% of students felt the play had made them reflect on what all humans have in common.
- 82% of students felt it is possible for Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims to live peacefully together.

Difference

Students responded very positively to diverse communities living together peacefully, with multiple students commenting on what people share rather than that which divides us.

“We can all live with each other, we are all people, and there is nothing wrong with each other. We are just who we are.” (Student)

“It showed that it shouldn’t matter, people shouldn’t have to fight or hate each other just because of their religion” (Student)

“Everybody’s the same, they come from different places or are in different cultures but everyone can get along.” (Student)

“I think everyone should live with everyone because everyone’s the same. Just because someone’s a different religion doesn’t mean they are different to you. It’s not fair that we are ignoring all these people because of their different religion.” (Student)

Our multicultural society

Overall students felt their own experience of diversity to be a positive one, and they valued the diversity in their own friendships.

“how grateful we should be, we should be grateful that we are in a mixed community and we weren’t separated because we have friends that are not Muslim and we don’t want to be separated from them” (Student)

“It also showed us a bit about the racism and stuff, and how even after the partition you thought maybe it would be clear and stuff but they started fighting just cause, even though they were all part of one country” (Student)

“It actually showed how far we’ve come today. Because we all get together in multicultural society and its fine”
Relevance
When students were asked if the history of partition retained relevance for us today many students felt that it did. The reasons given were multifaceted including: it being a significant historical event, personal connection to events, importance of learning lessons and the role of the British Empire.

“It is still relevant because India is still partitioned, we have affected India and we can’t really make it go back” (Student)

“It’s still very relevant in this day and age, and there are so many parallels that can be drawn between what’s going on with current affairs, that makes it quite an effective thing to do.” (Student)

“I think it still affects us because most of us here are Asian. We wouldn’t know what happened to our home country, we should know what happened to our own home country cause that’s where we’ve come from.” (Student)

“It’s important that we learn history so that we don’t repeat the mistakes of the past” (Student)

However, a minority of students felt disconnected from the history, either by distance or time.

“We are far from them, I don’t think it really matter what they are doing. It doesn’t affect us” (Student)

“It’s not really that important now because it happened ages and ages ago.” (Student)

Diverse History
In addition to responding positively to the idea of diverse communities living together, students and teachers were very positive about covering a topic that might be thought of as ‘diverse history’. Some students expressed the desire to have a fuller picture of the topics that had already covered and understand the impact of the British Empire from a non-Eurocentric perspective. Additionally, students who could trace their personal histories to South Asia seemed to value the opportunity to explore a part of history that their families experienced directly. They particularly seemed to value the linguistic, religious, clothing and musical references to South Asia.

“It was nice to learn about different cultures and what different people go through, because we don’t learn about that at all.” (Student)

“We’ve been learning about Great Britain, all the countries they had, we didn’t actually learn about everything they cause through that. So it was interesting to find out.” (Student)

“Yeah that really helped us, like people that are Asian’ ‘it made us feel a part of the play’ ‘he says funny things like tatti” (Student)

“If partition hadn’t happened then maybe some of the Pakistanis wouldn’t have come to England and we might not have been born in England.” (Student)

“The group I teach has a large proportion of Asian boys, I think they really enjoyed doing something that was about their history. It might not have been something they realised themselves.” (Teacher)

“Yeah I loved I, really enjoyed it. I would like to do it better next time, you know just more. I thought it was really valuable.” (Teacher)
4. Conclusion, lessons and recommendations

The PHP pilot project was delivered in winter of 2016. It took place in the year when the UK population voted for Brexit and Donald Trump was elected President of the United States of America. Both significant political events generated a lot of debate, not without controversy, about national identity, community cohesion, hate crime and immigration. Within this wider political context the PHP created an opportunity to explore many of these issues with some distance.

We found that the project was successful at introducing this completely new (to students) history and the use of drama was very effective at creating empathy and understanding amongst students. Both teachers and students were positive about its inclusion in the curriculum and felt it was relevant for them to study. This pilot project serves as a case study for schools and teachers, highlighting the opportunities and challenges present when teaching a diverse history.

Lessons

In addition to the successes of the project several key lessons came across.

1. To ensure that students understand the causes and consequences of partition the delivery should be embedded within the curriculum at the appropriate stage. It is especially important that student possess some prior knowledge of the British Empire.
2. Two lessons are not sufficient to cover the breadth of the history of Partition.
3. Drama is an effective and important tool for exploring conflict and developing empathy. However, students need to be supported in building links between individual stories and the historical period as well as contemporary issues.
4. The history of partition lends itself well to cross-curricular learning. There are strong links with Religious Education, PSHE, Politics and Geography. By involving different departments student learning will be more integrated and their critical thinking skills will be developed.
5. The ambitions and objectives of the project must be communicated clearly to all teachers, especially those that relate to values or wider connections. Teachers might not have taught this history previously and therefore might not be aware of the full potential of the topic.
6. Where schools do not serve a diverse population, students might not have encountered conflict or tension arising from difference, which might make it difficult for students to translate wider lessons to their personal context.

Recommendations

With the above lessons in mind, we make the following recommendations for any subsequent projects similar to the Partition History Project.

- In the absence of a theatre performance related to the history in questions, drama can still be incorporated in to teaching. Teachers have the option of getting students to read and/or act out the play or alternatively to show films.
- Teachers should be given the necessary training and resources to teach diverse history. There are many opportunities within the curriculum to cover topics from a non-Eurocentric perspective, and students irrespective of their family backgrounds have a lot to gain from doing so.
- The history of partition is a high yield opportunity for schools to address numerous issues, including: Britain’s relationship with former colonies, community cohesion, religious pluralism and migration. It may be easier to approach these sometimes-contentious topics through the prism of the past, as it creates an element of distance from the immediate context.
When schools do not have a diverse student population they should give their students the opportunity to mix with and learn, with, from and about those from different backgrounds. This can be achieved through links with other schools and community organisations.
Bibliography

- Patterson, B. (2010) “Drama in the Curriculum: Teaching History through Drama in Primary Schools” Scene April Issue 3&4.
Appendix 1: Methodology

Quantitative Analysis

We carried out surveys as part of the evaluation, one with a control group prior to participation in the project and one after. Questionnaires were administered for three reasons in this evaluation; measuring understanding of partition, evaluating the impact of drama as an educational tool and measuring empathy.

The control group survey was completed by 29 students from one school (two schools failed to complete the base line survey prior to the play). The final evaluation survey was completed by 247 students across the three secondary schools.

The survey was completed by students online on the website Survey Methods and was administered by teachers. In addition to univariate analysis (i.e. descriptive statistics), we used effect size to measure impact of participation in the project.

Table 1 Completed surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luton School</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitchin Schools</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characteristics of respondents

Schools were asked to ensure that at least 40% of participating students completed the survey. Two of the participating schools struggled to arrange suitable ICT facilities and so the completion of the survey was delayed by several weeks. The survey was not completed by the primary school involved because an online survey was not suitable for this age group.

Table 2 and 3 provide the ethnic and faith background of participating students.

Table 2 Ethnic breakdown of survey participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White British/Irish/White Other</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Faith breakdown of survey participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 The experiences of students in the participating primary school were captured through a focus group and teacher interview.
Qualitative Analysis

The analysis of the qualitative data was over 5 waves of focus group and 4 teacher interviews. It was iterative in nature, with a number of opportunities to scrutinise and explore data.

We used a thematic analysis approach when analysing the qualitative data (i.e. using categories that clearly emerged from the quantitative data prior to the interviews) as well as categories that emerged from the literature review (and ones we translated into the semi-structured questions).

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Religion</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Student Work

Equality is what matters!

Child of the Divide

I felt about the Play that it showed the truth of xenophobia, so it showed love and that it doesn’t matter on what religion you are everyone should be treated equally.

I understood it more because it showed what was going on not then and it showed the differences between the two countries and the love that was going on.
Child Of the Divide

What was the story?
The story was about a boy who was left behind in Pakistan whilst his family was in India. He was looked after by another family and raised as a Muslim. Back in India his little sister dies and the mother is devastated and wants her son back. After 7 years the boy's real father comes back to take him and he goes to India. He has promised to go back to Pakistan for Eid.

Who was in the play?
The Muslim couple, the Indian couple, the boy and his two friends, and two other boys.

What did you feel about the play?
The play was really interesting as it had a really good story line and I found it really cool how the character were swapping colours.

Why does it support your learning?
It supports my learning because now I have a better understanding of what happened. I also think it just portrayed one story and it could've been worse.

Why did the lesson before help you understand the play?
The lesson before helped me understand the play because I didn't really know much about when India was split.
Child of the divide

The play was truly touching and full of love and loss. It helped me get a better idea of what the Indian people had to go through to get to their side of the border and what the Muslim had to go through to be able to reach Pakistan.

As well as learning about culture it also helped me to learn many drama skills. It made me realise how troublesome the division was for many children.