

Summary of evidence gathered for impact of AiL 2013-2016

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Section 1: KIT commissioned reports, evaluation outcomes and research into efficacy of Adventures in Learning (AiL)

i. Qualitative feedback from AiL projects prior to Wardrobes

Arabian Nights AiL:

“It’s like going on holiday for the first time, or reading a book for the first time... and now feel like I can do everything.” - Participating Year 3 pupil in Arabian Nights AiL

The Arabian Nights AiL took place in winter 2014 and 11 Key Stage 2 classes from Primary Schools across Birmingham Participated. The project was a collaboration between the Library of Birmingham, Birmingham REP and Tom Bowtell who wrote and directed the project in his former role of co-director of Coney. Like Wardrobes the project was designed to motivate writing and raise self-esteem in pupils and included a finale in a library.

90-second archive film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZM3qjwtru8>

Achievements across the project:

7 teachers responded to an in-depth questionnaire and 2 teachers were interviewed to camera. Below are the combined teachers percentages in response to how the project impacted on a range of skills in the classroom.

The project helped improve children's:

Passion for creative writing and reading	88.5%
Ability to solve problems	88.5%
Creative confidence	91.5%
Classrooms relationship to staff	80%
Knowledge of IT, digital and email	77%

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Selected feedback from participating teachers:

"The story writing was improved, as was language acquisition and improving self esteem - particularly amongst the SEN pupils". - Jackie Weatherill, teacher, Bordesley Green Primary School

"Children were eager to get involved especially when visiting the library. They generally find ideas for writing a challenge. This project enabled them to engage with writing through drama and provide the vocabulary they needed. This (project) supported the development of English speaking skills for EAL children." - Nahida Akhtar, teacher at Nansen

"This is it! This is the spark. I've already talked to the deputy and the head about the possibility of doing it in house kind of thing. And if there's any other experiences, you know, cause they love the idea of the email being sent. And the deputy head talked about the possibility of him becoming a character for some of the unit work. So, definitely. It really set the ball rolling I think. It's been fabulous." - Anthony McPhillips, teacher at Stanville Primary School

"Yes, the whole story and purpose to writing really helped the children to enjoy the tasks and put their efforts into it. I don't think I would have the time or resources to go the lengths that Arabian Nights did, but would certainly make up my own simplified versions, e.g. the lost file or video to start the topic". - Anna Malin, teacher at Westfield Primary School

Professor Memo's Time Machine AiL:

This school-wide AiL took over Lady Margaret's Primary School, Ealing, for 2 days in Autumn 2015.

"The event was extremely well organised and planned. children were engaged throughout the project. There was a strong link made to the school's own personal history, which was a fantastic touch."

Liane Simpson, Lead Practitioner

"Children thoroughly enjoyed the event and were eager in their quest to help Professor Memo get Mr Edwards back to correct period in time. The writing they produced was of a high quality."

Emma Kular, Year 6 teacher

"The children in Year 4 took great pleasure in being detectives and had to answer a series of clues in order to find out who Mr Edwards's granddaughter was! They thoroughly enjoyed this process and it helped to develop their questioning skills."

Ms Shaukat, Year 4 teacher

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Inspiration Days:

Inspiration Days (ID) are the shortest form of Adventure in Learning, built in response to requests from teachers for an adventure which fits neatly into a single day. The projects are each built around core National Curriculum project topics covering Reception to Year 5.

Individual Teacher Feedback to ID delivered to St Eugene's, St Mary's & Our Lady's Primary Schools in 2013-14:

"These inspiring days help to kick start learning in history and geography across the school age range from four to eleven years old. The children are highly motivated and very excited by this type of learning and in numerous cases, children who are usually quite hard to reach engaged fully in their learning for the first time." - Juliette Jackson, Executive Headteacher, St Eugene's, Our Lady's and St Mary's Primary Schools (2013-14 ID delivery)

"All children benefitted from the experience, you had their full attention for a long time. This is hard to achieve in Reception. All children responded well."
- Zoe Richardson, Reception Teacher at St Mary's Primary School (Writing about Egg ID)

"All children were involved and all were captured by the ideas and experiences. The topic was of interest to them and the structure was good with lots of movement and interaction. It was child centric - children got to use equipment to find fossils. Our SEN children reacted well and remained focussed. Visual prompts were really helpful as were song and actions. Both teachers were very impressed with the knowledge and enthusiasm that the team had."
- A Finan, Year 1 teacher, St Eugene's Primary School (Writing about Fossil Hunting ID)

"My objectives were all well met. It was interesting and gave pupils a purpose to study London's buildings. Thank you all for a great day - the children really enjoyed it!"
- Marina Hobden, Year 2 Teacher, St Mary's Primary School (writing about London' Superstructures ID)

"The class were completely motivated to work as a group for the whole day. Objectives were met very well and the team were extremely well prepared."
- Zoe Humphrey, Year 3 teacher, St Eugene's Primary School (Writing about Where in The World ID)

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Feedback from Samantha Danison, EYFS (Early Years) Phase Leader at Lady Margaret's Primary School following Fossil Hunters Inspiration Day delivered to 3 Reception Classes January 2016:

"We thought the whole team were dedicated and professional. The children enjoyed every minute of the 1.5 days. The whole idea launched them straight into the topic and they were enthused for learning. The pupils used vocabulary you taught them such as 'extinct'. The fossils they found are often referred to by the children..."

A fantastic start to a topic. - I've spoken to other year groups about our fantastic days and they cannot wait to have Kit theatre to launch their topics too. We had a wonderful day full of learning experiences."

CPD impacts for participating teachers:

"We will use the time machine more often to engage the children in learning. We will continue to launch a topic in an exciting way. I love drama and I try to use as much as possible in my teaching so it supported and gave me new ideas. We would love to have you back for another project."

"There were no behaviour issues simply because the children were so excited. The event allowed all to participate including SEN children in my class. I noticed that all the children wanted to produce something to ensure they felt part of it. It was really magical for them."

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ii. Social Impact Measurement

Educational researcher and PHD student Sam Holmes carried out a comparative study on 2 classes in the same year group at schools run by the same Executive Head (St Eugene's and St Mary's schools in Kilburn) and following the same teaching programme. He observed and assessed pupils before, during and after the Study group participated in the A Cat Escapes Adventure in Learning and the Comparison group did not. (A Cat Escapes is a six week adventure, with one 'episode' of the adventure taking place during one day each week.) Below are the results of an assessment Sam carried out to explore whether the study group's ability to link concepts and problem-solve creatively was improved by participation in the Adventure in Learning.

Headline statistics from final assessment:

Measure	Study group	Comparison group
Mean overall score (%)	56.4	33.6
Mean score for "fantastical problem-solving" (out of 4)	2.29	1
Mean score for "cross-curricular" problem solving (out of 5)	4.57	2.96

Structure of the assessment and marking criteria:

The assessment involved pupils writing an email giving instructions on how to cross the "Land of Many Tales". Pupils were given a map and a sheet of instructions with a table to help them plan their answer. Pupils' writing was marked according to the following equally weighted criteria:

Email format (4 marks)	Directions (4 marks)	Descriptive writing (4 marks)	Fantastical problem-solving (4 marks)	Technical problem-solving (4 marks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> greeting and sign-off introduction concluding sentence appropriate tone for classmate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sequencing terms compass directions or left/right detail to support directions extra tips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> range of adjectives simile/metaphor more than one sense interesting detail 	up to 2 ideas, 1 mark for each and a second mark for originality or technical detail	up to 2 ideas, 1 mark for each and a second mark for originality or technical detail

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Explanation of measures used by Sam Holmes:

Mean overall score

This is the mean average percentage score achieved by pupils across each of the groups.

Mean score for “fantastical problem-solving”

Pupils were awarded up to 4 marks for evidence of “fantastical problem-solving”. Examples included ideas such as using a magic carpet to fly past the dragon, or feeding it ginger bread from the ginger bread house.

Mean “cross-curricular” score

The “cross-curricular” score reflects the number of the different marking criteria categories in which a pupil registered marks. A high “cross-curricular” score suggests pupils can synthesise knowledge, skills and ideas from different areas and genres in their writing.

Analysis of findings:

The Study group outperformed the Comparison group in the assessment by a statistically significant score of 56.4% to 33.6%. The most significant difference came in “fantastical problem solving” (2.29 out of 4 compared to 1 out of 4) and “cross-curricular” (4.57 out of 5 compared to 2.96 out of 5). As A Cat Escapes is an Adventure in Learning which seeks to deliver cross-curricular learning through a single over-arching narrative, while encouraging creativity in pupils, these initial findings suggested the work is making its desired impact.

A copy of Sam’s full study can be found here (link may need to be pasted into a new browser tab on some systems):

http://media.wix.com/ugd/2b511f_b7f866786cd7455d8096bd00c011969d.pdf

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iii. KIT Theory of Change & AiL Methodology

Kit's Theory of Change, based on need, research and practice-led findings is as follows:

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
<i>An effective AiL model of delivery/ funding/ buy in from schools leadership/ time from schools/ and the passion, energy and creativity of young people and teachers</i>	<i>Wardrobe day - memorable experience delivered to key stage 1 children, with focus on those in disadvantaged areas.</i>	<i>Young people are more engaged through a creative context for applied learning.</i>	<i>Increased attainment in literacy with a focus on improvements in writing. Increased non-cognitive development particularly in creative confidence, problem solving and motivation</i>
<i>Contextual factors: YP from lower income backgrounds have fewer opportunities to engage creative activities.</i>		<i>Problem solving, motivation and creativity are key skills needed to thrive in the 21st century. The current national curriculum is not focused on developing these elements in pupils.</i>	

KIT's Adventures in Learning (AiL) methodology based on Mantle of Expert, immersive theatre, game mechanics, and digital tools:

AiL as Memorable Experience: AiLs always erupt unexpectedly, disrupting an ordinary school day and grabbing pupils' attention. We train teachers to be complicit in the event, enabling children to suspend disbelief. The apparent reality of the AiL creates a memorable, immersive, theatrical event and a heightened context for learning. The pupils are required to carry out curriculum-based tasks in order to help the characters. The 'reality' of AiLs also makes the experience feel transgressive - this isn't 'normal' work and this has allowed pupils actively disengaging with their learning to participate in AiL without losing face.

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Mantle of the Expert:

Plausible Ignorance: Presenting AiLs as real alters teachers' role in leading the class. This means that the usual dynamic of teachers passing knowledge down to pupils is removed: they're all in the same position of ignorance and all ideas and solutions are of equal value. This environment can empower less confident pupils to proffer ideas and answers without fear of failure. A 2014 study into AiL by Sam Holmes, PHD student at King's College, identified Plausible Ignorance as a unique mechanic in educational practice. (See above.)

Accessibility: AiL challenges are designed with teachers and require multiple tasks to be completed to finish the mission. This allows us to design tasks which are accessible to the range of abilities within the classroom, while maintaining a sense of the whole class completing the adventure together. Each pupil is able to showcase their own 'superpower' in completing tasks and thus feel a sense of achievement at having contributed to the mission's success.

Teacher development: Having showcased the impacts of AiL to teachers, we then work with them and their annual lesson plans as we seek to increase the legacy of the work by outlining ways in which they can embed our toolkit of adventure techniques into their ongoing practice.