



Cambridgeshire *Mantle of the Expert* Project Evaluation

Setting the context

The Cambridgeshire *Mantle of the Expert* (MoE) was a two term fully funded Local Authority curriculum development project that lasted from September 2008 – March 31st 2009. The project involved sixteen LA schools, thirteen primary and three secondary. The project was led and delivered by Luke Abbott (MoE National Leader) along with three other MoE trainers supported by two LA ASTs, one Primary Deputy Head and two CAS Advisers.

The Mantle of the Expert

The Mantle of the Expert is a pedagogy developed since the 1980s by drama educationalist Dorothy Heathcote. It is pupil led and is rooted in drama, enquiry and imagination in which children and teachers work together to create an imaginary community (e.g. a company or organisation such as the parish council) within which they function as if they were experts in a particular field working to fulfil the requirements of a specific commission (e.g. to make war preparations, create an elephant sanctuary, design a contemporary war memorial for a new town or create a museum from the disused buildings of a Victorian sewer).

Children's presumed expertise develops into a genuine expertise in certain areas of learning and their understanding of certain concepts is greatly enhanced. Through *The Mantle of the Expert*, children can encounter many aspects of the school curriculum enabling genuinely meaningful cross-curricular learning to take place.

Reasons for exploring and developing the pedagogy in Cambridgeshire Schools

The MoE pedagogy resonates with current educational thinking, offering meaningful ways forwards in relation to a number of challenges and issues which Cambridgeshire schools are currently addressing.

The strengths of the pedagogy are that:

- The "enterprise" upon which pupils participate and function as experts provides a context for learning.
- Teachers can bring together different areas of the curriculum, rather than trying to teach them separately.
- It is 'drama' based, so that classes develop ways to 'see through other eyes' helping young people develop ownership over their enterprise.
- Pupils are motivated by the challenge of making their enterprise work.

In short it was felt that the time was right to develop an in-depth understanding of an approach which a) provides a context for learning that is compelling and enjoyable for children, b) is in part pupil led, supporting the personalisation of the curriculum and c) is genuinely cross curricular, developing meaningful links between different subject areas.



Overview of the Cambridgeshire Mantle of the Expert Project

In April 2008 all Primary, Secondary and Special schools were invited to apply for one of sixteen places on the project. Schools were asked to apply either individually or as an cluster outlining how involvement in *The Mantle of the Expert* project would support curriculum and teaching and learning developments in their schools. The total cost of the project was £42,875.

What was offered to schools was a fully funded project that consisted of the following components:

- A half day briefing for Senior Managers;
- One training day for two lead teachers from each participating school, delivered by Luke Abbott and three other Mantle of the Expert trainers.
- Two training days for each teacher working as a pair with a teacher from one of the cluster schools, (and a Mantle of the Expert trainer), one day spent in their own school and one day spent in their partner's school (see clusters below);
- A half day Network Meeting for all teachers, at a mid point in the project;
- One additional half day support visit from a LA tutor for each school;
- An end of project showcase and dissemination conference.

The project was managed and delivered by:

Cambridgeshire LA Project Manager: Chris Hiscock (General Adviser – Music, Cambridgeshire Advisory Service)

Mantle of the Expert trainers: Luke Abbott (National Leader), Tim Taylor, Gemma Handley and Iona Towler-Evans. Each trainer was assigned to a one of the clusters (see table below).

Local Authority coach / Mentors: Caroline Stamp-Dod (Deputy Head – Monkfield Park Primary), Andy Gilmore (Primary AST – Queen Edith's Primary, Cambridge), Judith Pawson (Secondary AST – Swavesey Village College, Swavesey) and Andrew Wrenn (General Adviser – History, Cambridgeshire Advisory Service).

The process

In total, twenty six schools applied and from these, sixteen were selected for the project on the basis of a) the strength of a supporting letter of application outlining how the pedagogy would support the curriculum and teaching and learning priorities identified in the school development plan, b) geographical spread and c) variety of school types and contexts. It should be noted that without exception, applications were strong with all Headteachers outlining clearly and persuasively how the pedagogy would contribute to curriculum development within the school.

The project was launched to Senior Managers from each project school only. This was a deliberate strategy, the objective being to ensure 'buy in' from school leaders by clarifying a) the pedagogy, b) the potential impact of a new and developing pedagogy on teachers and pupils c) the organisational, administrative and financial details and d) our expectations of each project school for the duration of the project. In retrospect this proved to be time well spent as very few issues emerged during the project relating to whole school issues and support of senior managers.



For the training day and for the duration of the project, the sixteen schools worked in a smaller cluster each supported by a trained Mantle of the Expert trainer and a Local Authority Coach / Mentor. The clusters were:

<p>Cluster 1: Trainer: Iona Towler-Evans LA Coach / Mentor: Andrew Wrenn</p> <p>Schools: St Peter's Comberton VC Hinchingsbrooke</p>	<p>Cluster 2: Trainer: Gemma Handley LA Coach / Mentor: Caroline Stamp-Dod</p> <p>Schools: Monkfield Park Primary School Bar Hill CP School Meldreth Primary School Newnham Croft Primary School</p>
<p>Cluster 3: Trainer: Luke Abbott LA Coach / Mentor: Andy Gilmore</p> <p>Schools: Thongsley Fields Primary School Wheatfields Primary School Brampton Primary School Winhills Primary School St Mary's C of E School</p>	<p>Cluster 4: Trainer: Tim Taylor LA Coach / Mentor: Judith Pawson</p> <p>Schools: Ditton Lodge First School Burrowmoor Primary School Spring Meadow Holywell C of E School Wheatfields Primary School</p>

During the training day, two lead teachers were introduced to the underpinning principles of the MoE. They participated in activities that modelled the approach, worked in cluster groups to address planning issues and were introduced to the CPD model which underpinned the project.

The second phase of the project involved pairs of teachers visiting another cluster school. Typically these days involved observing and participating in classroom activities led by a MoE trainer in the morning and reflecting and planning future lessons in the afternoon.

Midway through the project a network meeting took place for all lead teachers at Cambridge Golf and Conference Centre led by Luke Abbott. During this afternoon session teachers had an opportunity to reflect on the successes, challenges and issues emerging from the project and plan ways forwards.

The project concluded with a whole day conference. Only teachers from project schools and senior managers from schools who had initially applied to take part were invited. During this day four schools presented case studies. These were: St Mary's Primary School, St Neots, Bar Hill Primary, Burrowmoor Primary, March and Hinchingsbrooke Secondary School, Huntingdon. The quality of presentation was outstanding in all cases. Secondly cluster groups discussed issues arising from the presentations and fed these back to the conference at the end of the morning. In the afternoon cluster groups met together once more to discuss ways of keeping the clusters together once the funding had ceased.



Project evaluation - Key findings

In addition to the following, Appendix 1 provides a compilation of teacher evaluations at the end of the project.

Impact of the Pedagogy:

Project teachers agreed that the pedagogy had:

- Provided a purposeful framework for teaching
- enthused and motivated themselves and their pupils
- inspired them and made them more creative teachers
- given them permission to take risks and experiment allowing themselves to be led more and more by the ideas and interests of the pupils (within the learning boundaries identified in their planning)
- challenged their assumptions and made them re-evaluated their role as teachers
- taken them out of their comfort zone and take many more risks
- freed up their planning, made them think more holistically about their pupils educational needs and be more creatively in identifying meaningful cross curricular links
- taken longer than expected to get to grips with
- sometimes appeared overwhelming as each progressive stage of development demanded an understanding of increasingly complex conventions and a challenging conceptual language

Developing practice:

All teachers without exception highlighted the following as the most helpful aspects of the project and the most powerful ways of moving their practice forward:

The trainers:

- high quality training provided by credible and skilled practitioners
- the chance to regularly observe MoE trainers working with their classes and with those of partner schools
- the chance to team teach their own and classes from other cluster schools alongside a MoE trainer
- collaborative planning and teaching
- regular contact with experts to discuss issues, clear up misconceptions and build confidence.

Collaboration with other project school teachers:

- Working as part of a curriculum development team
- delivering a mantle together
- observing each other and giving feedback
- The opportunity to collaborate with planning
- Networking and getting a constant flow of inspirational ideas and starting points for a range of different mantles from other teachers

Impact on learning:

Teachers perceived the following:

- Increased the engagement and enthusiasm of students
- Lower ability children are finding a voice



- The desire to please the client has led to the desire for self improvement
- It has improved speaking and listening
- Pupils are becoming more responsible for their learning
- Pupils are becoming more reflective

Impact on standards:

Many participants noticed the improved quality of speaking and listening, which accompanied pupil motivation and engagement. In many cases, this will probably have resulted in improved attainment. However, the project was not set up with the aim of collecting quantitative data, e.g. performance to particular levels in core subjects.

Key Challenges:

- The pedagogy challenged the position of teachers within learning
- Planning:
 - moving away from the security of QCA Strategy planning models
 - taking account of pupil input
 - sustaining cross curricular links over a longer period of time
 - ensuring that sufficient time is given to developing core aspects e.g. writing
- Understanding dramatic conventions and when to use them
- Linking curriculum, drama and Mantle principles and being able to move between them
- Behaviour management
 - establishing boundaries
 - dealing with 'wreckers'
- Weaving it around other school expectations; e.g. boosters, SATs, APP etc.
- Secondary specific:
 - rooming, time constraints and continuity have disrupted the momentum
 - Losing of continuity due to timetabling and clashes with other things going on.
 - Working within a 50 minute time slot once a week.

What the pupils have been saying

Here are some representative comments from pupils at St Peter's secondary school, Huntingdon following the completion of a Mantle of the Expert in which the class, working as a team of investigators, attempted to solve the murder of Macbeth.

- *The task that I enjoyed the most was when the King had been killed. I liked this task because our teacher made us feel like we were actually there. She made the room feel like a crime scene and she stayed in role really well. I liked writing up the report like we were crime scene investigators. It was really fun. Writing tasks can sometimes be a bit boring, but when they were included with the drama we were doing it made them more enjoyable.*
- *The task I enjoyed the most was acting the beggar woman in the hot seat because I got a different perspective of how nerve racking and pressured witnesses of crime scenes are.*
- *The best part of this project on Macbeth was that we could do a little bit of drama and there was a dramatic part where Miss Farrag sprinkled some flour on the floor into a human shame. It looked really realistic. I really want to do this project again another time.*
- *The task I probably thought was most fun was when we interviewed all the people because of the tension that was in the room when we were doing it. Lady Macbeth*



was a very 'all about me' person and ignored our recommendations though. Interviewing the witnesses was fun as well as they were very nervous and we had to break them up for answers. Overall I think that part of the play was fun and enjoyable.

Next Steps

Maintaining existing networks:

At the final conference it was agreed that within each cluster, one teacher would be identified as a point of contact between LA and National MoE leaders. These lead teachers would then:

- seek support of cluster headteachers in establishing a CPD budget with a contribution from each school
- disseminate information to other schools in the cluster
- attend further training and cascade to other schools
- coordinate network meetings between cluster schools
- coordinate further paired visits to develop classroom practice
- broker further support from ASTs, in discussion with the LA
- Inform LA of cluster activities

Training and network meetings

In response to requests from project schools CAS will provide further training in the following aspects:

- Understanding drama techniques and when to use them
- Planning further MoE schemes of work
- Two six monthly network meetings that are open to all LA schools using the pedagogy

Establishing new MoE training clusters

CAS has produced a MoE consultancy package that replicates the CPD model used successfully in the pilot project. The cost of the package to schools is £800. The package was sent to schools in April 2009. So far, four individual schools have requested the training and one established cluster of schools. These are Cromwell Park Primary, Spaldwick Primary, Burwell VC, Benwick Primary and the Over primary schools cluster. These will become the basis of a second phase of training in Cambridgeshire schools.



Appendix 1

Cambridgeshire *Mantle of the Expert* Project School Lead Teacher Evaluations

What did you find most helpful about being involved in the project?

The trainers:

Inspirational leadership from the trainers.
Working along side inspirational trainers.
Observing one of the trainers teach a MoE with my class and in other cluster schools, training along side and being supported by a MoE trainer in the classroom, particularly when discussing practice.
Developing a network of 'expert' contacts who are always willing to help and give of their time.
Seeing an expert start a mantle for me in my class.
The trainers have helped me be brave when taking practice out of my comfort zone.
Collaborative planning with a MoE trainer and LA AST.

Collaboration with other teachers:

It was very helpful to observe other teachers delivering a mantle.
Working with a team at school and delivering the same mantle together – observing each other and giving feedback – it really moved on our practice as a group.
Ongoing liaison and discussion with cluster group.
Getting ideas from other schools about MoE starting points
The networking has been really fantastic.
Working in small cluster groups.
Planning MoE with other colleagues.
A constant flow of inspirational ideas about how to teach a wide range of topics.
The power of peer support for teachers.

Impact on thinking and educational philosophy:

It has really challenged our thinking and assumptions about teaching
It has given me permission to be more creative and cross-curricular with my practice.
Provided me with a fresh way of looking at learning.
Recognising the importance of creativity and discovering a way of developing this meaningfully in the curriculum.
It offered a genuine creative initiative that we all found entirely motivating.
Revitalised my sense of what is important in teaching after a long spell in senior administration roles.

Whole school issues:

Having an enthusiastic and supportive Headteacher.
Being given professional freedom to develop the approach in my school.
The opportunity for two lead teachers to be expertly trained.
Being given permission by my school to 'have a go' and take risks.

Developing practice & impact on learning:

Having funding to make possible quality development time and time out of the classroom for reflection.
Experiencing example mantles right from the start in the initial training.
Having access to a really great national MoE website.
Learning some very useful drama techniques.
Making time for reflection in the classroom and listening to the children's reflections.
Devising and using tensions to lead the learning.
Access to opportunities to pursue additional training via Ringsfield Hall.
Observing children's responses.

How has the project changed your practice?

The pedagogy:

It has provided me with another powerful pedagogy to draw on in my teaching.
It has created a purposeful framework for learning (i.e. a mindset that permeates all teaching).

Teaching – broader impact:

Has made me more creative.
It has encouraged more imaginative teaching techniques
I now pay more attention to context and purpose.
I am more flexible in the way that I conduct the lesson – allowing children to lead their own learning.
I have become more reflective as a teacher.
Has made me re-evaluate how we should be delivering the curriculum in year 6 (e.g. including revision work as part of a mantle).
Started to impact on other lessons – thinking how to teach non-mantle lessons in a more engaging and interesting way.
It has made me much more confident to try things out and not feel there must be a certain way.
Enthusiasm for teaching – I am more excited about what I'm going to teach next.
It has changed my approach to planning the foundation subjects – have become more creative again!
There is a greater purpose to what we do.
It has brought out strengths and confidence within children.
I am becoming more comfortable in being a 'learning facilitator'.
It has made us review the position of pupils in negotiating learning.
I am becoming more confident about thinking on my feet.
It has encouraged us to incorporate more drama techniques into our teaching in general.
It has made us more open to children's ideas

Teaching - in the context of the MoE:

I am much more confident about starting and developing MoE projects with my class.
I am now always looking for opportunities to deliver the curriculum through MoE.
Having the tools to deliver a MoE with confidence.

Planning:

It has freed up my planning.
Have become more cross curricular in my approach.
Has put planning higher up the agenda!

Whole school curriculum development:

The project was well timed as we are currently looking at changing our curriculum.
Moving away from QCA and going back to skills.

Learning environment:

It has made me change my room around to make better use of the space.

What were the challenges?

Understanding the pedagogy:

Understanding the mantle approach takes much longer than I expected. It is a long term acquisition of knowledge and skills.
Initially getting my head around the key aspects of the mantle.
Never fully understanding the complexities of the pedagogy.
More difficult to consolidate in secondary school and I feel that I am disadvantaged because I have always taught from a 'drama for learning' perspective.

Planning:

Moving away from the security of QCA, Primary National Strategy etc. and looking at new ways of planning.
Planning that takes account of pupil input.
Planning and fitting in with the school planning processes and procedures & being less prescriptive.

Planning to include more cross curricular work over a longer period with MoE.
 Knowing exactly where to go next; coming up with enough ideas – being attuned to the children's ideas; preparing sufficient resources.
 Ensuring that the writing aspect is covering the curriculum.
 Experimenting with different types of planning.
 Coming up with suitable tensions for a MoE.
 Planning effective 'steps in'.
 Lack of secondary planning examples and resources.

Developing practice:

It has challenged the position of teachers within learning
 Understanding dramatic conventions and when to use them.
 Linking curriculum, drama and Mantle principles and being able to jump between them.
 Finding a way of making the practice work on my own.
 Varying the 'steps in' to a mantle.
 Needing more input on dramatic conventions.
 Breaking down the cynicism of year 9 pupils.
 Having to do a lot of 'self training' using the website resources.
 Adapting the MoE conventions to a core subject in a secondary context.
 Having the knowledge to know how to move forward when children take the MoE off track!
 Moving away from the conventional structure of lessons and seeing where the children take the learning.
 We have had to become more flexible about how we respond to outcomes

Behaviour management:

Behaviour management – tackling children who were trying to disrupt and establishing boundaries for children (became easier the more I did it). Also when children the children's over excitement got in the way of the dramatic conventions.
 Ensuring all children are gainfully employed all of the time.

Whole school issues:

Keeping up the momentum with support staff.
 Getting all staff in my school to observe it in practice.
 Introducing MoE to all staff and pupils.
 Maintaining momentum when I have to be out of the class for senior leadership duties.
 Weaving it around other school expectations; e.g. boosters, SATs, APP etc.
 Getting everyone on board within my school.
 Finding an extra adult for role-play.
 Trying to deliver a mantle in an open plan classroom.
 At secondary level: rooming, time constraints and continuity have disrupted the momentum.
 Losing of continuity due to timetabling and clashes with other things going on.
 Working within a 50 minute time slot once a week.
 Preparation for year 6 SATs year has created challenges.
 Keeping the standard of written outcomes high.

The future:

Continuing to develop practice in the future given how successful we all feel it has been so far.

What has been the impact on learning?

Impact on learning:

It has been great to see the children empowered and so enthused.
 It has increased the engagement and enthusiasm of students
 It as increased motivation for both children (and teachers)
 Lower ability children are finding a voice
 The desire to please the client has led to the desire for self improvement
 It has improved speaking and listening
 Pupils are becoming more responsible for their learning
 Pupils are becoming more reflective



Cambridgeshire
County Council

