

## Mantle of the Expert in New Zealand-Keynote: Luke Abbott

Content synopsis:

- Historical narrative for shared social and political perspectives.
- Play, 'the play', playing theatre as performance and theatre form.
- MoE in a nutshell-3 circles.
- APPROPRIATION and responsibility of users.
- Post modern knowledge bases and Futursight.
- Exemplar in year 4 classroom. UK.

Why has MoE suddenly taken off in the UK? Where did it all come from?

[ANSWER EACH QUESTION]

What have we been up to in the UK since 2006?

1. Let us first consider the notions of the word 'play' in the system. In 'play' in the play ground we notice children using themselves by adopting 'others' by which they see the world for a moment. They play at being Martians/aliens/robbers/explorers/animal savers and so on. In this way - using drama for learning approaches has the same feel to it-we play for a time 'as if' we are other people for the sake of the enjoyment fun and 'fix' it gives us. Emotional investment and involvement are used to shift the stakes higher in drama for learning. Our 'playing' as space explorers suddenly becomes more ominous and full of tension when we are confronted by a lone voice of a survivor in a ship from a planet we have just destroyed! In terms of 'audience' Bolton wrote in his collected writings that the class can function on many levels of 'play' from playing out events as 'actors' to playing out events and reflecting as 'play writes who take the

responsibility of inventing and trialling the next step in the narrative. However-the other form of 'playing' exemplified by Einstein's lifts to explain relativity to non mathematicians and physicists is the notion of **playing with ideas** and being taken to a place in the imaginative worlds under investigation where such 'playing with ideas' can work for the learning of children and young people. In my reflection of the class work undertaken on Wednesday with the students investigating 'humane pest control' Ltd/Inc-I believe there were several opportunities for the class to experience levels of play-playing -playfulness and 'the play'. I remember for example when we were filled playfulness with ideas around the name of the responsible team, and the play involved in packing the van, then there was the time when we appraised the first 'client' (as audience) and then met the 2<sup>nd</sup> client (as audience) and decided what sort of pest control people the 2<sup>nd</sup> client would visit and do business with. You may remember that the class always had you as a real audience and for some of you who want to tackle a huge ambiguity-you might want to identify what sort of playing was going on there? In a classroom the FUNCTION of AUDIENCE can as many of you know-be created by a point of view of the teacher. In is common practice in mantle of the expert to invite 'imagined' visitors into the fictional space, or create a context where the class are required to broadcast their findings in the company somehow. For example-a creative teacher could invent at some stage in the company's activity visitors who: need a training session on the best way to catch, store and dispose humanely of course of rodents. Or the teacher might pose

the question to the class such as.....well, I can imagine we are likely to find ourselves showing all sorts of visitors around and letting them know how we work. The question is-will we time in our pest control schedules to cope with them? Some of you will realise that such a question challenges students to take the plunge and either invent a visitor or ask others in the class who on earth would be interested in our work??? Anyway moving on.....

2. First of all those of us who have been advocating the use of the system have been networked as a learning community since its inception. I do not only mean recently. As a Masters graduate from Dr Heathcote's course in 1982-I have maintained consistent bonds not only with the inventor herself but with the growing community of teachers and school leaders who are looking for managed and disciplined 'change' to enable our children to learn how to be responsible global citizens who generally like to be alive-and HUMAN.
3. We have infected the system by gentle persuasion and with due regard to DH's stringent procedures. Teachers up and down the country are embarking on new drama adventures with their classes and of course this is good news. However we are beginning to realise that with the release of the system into the country and abroad we have to be vigilant as far as the seminal concepts of MoE is concerned so that those who have half knowledge are persuaded not to APPROPRIATE it as their own but to examine carefully HOW IT WORKS. At this amazing conference in NZ we hope we can support a platform for guidance for those who are new to the work as well as an

MOT for those who are well versed in the methods and conceptual frameworks-especially the 3 circles that help capture the knowledge bases we need to make it work. [IMPROMPTU CREATION OF INTERLOCKING CIRCLES.]

4. Mantle of the expert is having a 'hey day' in the UK it is true- BUT MoE is going being described under several guises! One hears: 'Oh they were mantling this morning' or 'The Greeks-oh yes we did a sort of mantle on it where the class had to make a Greek vase out of our clay we have near the school and pretend they were villagers in Greece when the parents day was organised.....' Whilst we can all be sure the people concerned were very well meaning declaring their allegiance to the system-unfortunately this does more harm than good.
5. Our discoveries so far are that the MoE system is an exacting one. It requires a very definite orientation by us as teachers to enquiry learning as a starter then to understand how the muses surrounding drama for learning can be summoned and then the challenges of tuning learning contexts within the landscape of MoE AS A SYSTEM! No wonder people want to 'short circuit' their dialogue. However we would want to urge all people to be vigilant and see their journeys ahead as a terrific opportunity to develop in themselves a way of LEARNING and teaching that that gives us an almost unlimited choice-and forever.
6. We have also discovered that those using the system or hearing about it are moved by the central premise that using MoE can shift the unearthly feeling in many of us that there is something deeply

wrong in our 'schooling' of children with the sure knowledge that doing the same better is not an option any longer. What of course excites people even more is that with the use of MoE procedures teachers HAVE TO do things differently. Professional imposition is replaced by skilled professional skills, structuring with students, instruction processes are replaced by induction sequences, teachers' objective lead curriculum learning transforms into student lead learning. This is not a harkening back to the 60's as many politicians would argue, it is though a radical process where in the post modern era (and some would argue the post-post modern era) students are given an opportunity to find their voice and uphold multi-opinions, the great emancipator spanning all time and nations based on the premise that young people are 'good' as opposed to being of the devil's seed that our media in the UK would have us believe. Children and young people we hear 'are not being taught the basics' and the Tory Party if and when elected have already staked their claim for Maths to carry more weight than Media Studies. For many of us-this is a harkening back to the times of the past where 'the basics' are seen as the ONLY domain of schooling. DISCIPLINE, DECODING, DRILLING the main artery of pedagogy. The only challenge to such an ideology is that in the UK it has lead to another 3 D's, the Disappointed, Disillusioned and Disappeared. When David Hopkins coined this concept in 2001-he was challenging the whole system in the UK curriculum of 11-14 year olds which has lead to a total rethink of the our KS3 sector. Secondary schools in the UK are now pondering on the challenge for incorporation

of subject domains (NOT INTEGRATION) and for some-using and learning how MoE works is their way to shifting the 3 D's to 3 R's of MoE-Responsibility, Recognition, Rethinking. But this ship is NOT FOR turning that easily!! Subject specialism is built into the system with HMI taking the stance that the quality of schooling will be diminished unless the 'subject disciplines' are upheld. This may be true for schooling wedded to ideology of the past millennia-but what our establishment hasn't yet grasped is that the era of modernist thinking is being overhauled by the world need for different subject knowledge. How to run a car on water, how to cope with the global challenges of food and water shortages, the ideological struggles between religious fractions, and the knowledge of how to work in 'port folio' ways and engaging in 'learning all the time'. All this in an era of severe graduate level unemployment and moving out of the effects of global recession in the next decade. These are the new knowledge bases and INCORPORATE knowledge from a range of disciplines. But what has any of these social and political contexts to do with MoE?

7. Perhaps it's to do with what we do everyday in our class rooms as teachers and educators using drama for learning.....
8. So for those of us who are still wondering what MoE is all about-all I can do is give a little insight into what I have discovered in my journeys with 'fellow travellers' based on the seeds I discovered in 1982 when I completed my Masters degree with Dr Heathcote-who luckily for me-had begun the deep reflective work on her wonderful

invention- of a genius that many brilliant minds throughout the globe have hailed time and time again.

9. Like surgeons learning from a brilliant research medic-we have the benefit of being able to support many more teachers to use the system we can now call Mantle of the Expert.
10. Students learn to harness their imaginative narratives in their heads to initiate with a teacher or skilled 'other' a fictional world that begins to entwine their faculties for learning.
11. As each responsible group invents their ways forwards- young people are confronted by dilemmas and challenges that take them into learning as much defined by the class as by the teacher.
12. The teacher skill is about their capacity to invent and harness their own creativity with young people. So for example-the class are to begin to investigate a science domain-that of habitats and classification of species. Geography is to be harnessed as well as the teacher wants the class to look at an unfamiliar region of the world-in Mary's case-South America. Also she is keen to ensure that there are opportunities for writing, imagining, planning, talking, working as a team, making decisions, solving dilemmas as they arise, sharing thinking with others and being challenged are all part of the mix. Mary is no different to most teachers I work with. What makes Mary unusual is that she is developing her skills in MoE. This she knows will make it possible for her vision of the curriculum to be a reality. It is another discovery we have made-even embarking a little into understanding that the system transports teachers.

13. Mary's inventions.....by the way I am NOT saying Mary's inventions are perfect-as she is attempting as a teacher/artist to move towards excellence and NOT perfection.
14. In her plan Mary was aware of her class in her head-and asked herself the question-what will interest them? Answer-travel, adventure, danger, imagining, drawing, making, looking up strange places and things in books especially in picture form, strange maps and mysteriousness.
15. So what does she invent? A team of people who have the responsibility of breeding endangered South American animals on an island that is currently uninhabited! Now I am not saying every one thinks this way-but it does say a lot about how this teacher tried her hardest to fit the curriculum to her children-a giant step in Personalised Learning!
16. Mary needed an island-the question was at the time-an island that exists already-or an island imagined in the minds of the class and their invention? She chose an existing island-Uttila Island off the coast of Honduras. In doing so many opportunities were closed to the class-creating their own island-creating the client with the teacher, linking their discoveries with other evidence and so on. BUT on the other hand many areas of learning were opened up-examining an island in detail that exists and raising questions about its ecology and human interventions, whether the island was suitable for the creatures that were to be bred, what sorts of shelter could we build that would be in keeping with the island? She needed a point of view as well-in other

words what possible view point could the class have that would spark them off? Well-people who breed animals to help them survive as a species seemed one worth working on. The class were to take the responsible position in their minds as animal scientists who breed creatures in need of human intervention to survive. However the question was now-what are the creatures that need such attention from humans? This lead into a fascinating process where the class began to investigate the inquiry questions emerging from the learning landscape planned.

17. Now as Mary was using MoE as a system she knew she needed a 'client'. The client offers in MoE a significant key learning ingredient-that of 'they who need to know how we are getting on'. This transforms experiences from events occurring to events needing to be recorded reported and assessed FOR THE NEEDS OF THE CLIENT. In this case Dr Abbott from the World Wildlife Fund. In the workshops today I hope you might ponder on the question that Mary asked-what is the difference between the teacher 'role playing' and the teacher 'in role'? It may sound like splitting hairs-but struggling with this concept is at the heart for the transformation of power to influence passed to classes.

18. But-where to start? In a way-starting is the wrong word-but like 'Dr Who'-we appear to be in the middle of things RIGHT AT THE START! So an entry that goes like-[DEMO ADMIN PERSON NEEDING THE LIST OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD THEIR INJECTIONS FOR TYPHOID]

19. One of the biggest lessons I learnt at Newcastle was the power and skill needed to select the RIGHT language-WORDS that carried the experience forwards into complexity. I learnt to listen VERY carefully at the beginnings of work with Dr Heathcote and learnt that CONTEXT was everything.
20. Such strategies take us to the heart of the landscape to come-because of course the teacher can switch between FICTIONAL POINT OF VIEW and OTHER POINTS OF VIEW to suit her purposes. For example-the class view their work as students in the class! (Just as I am doing now!!)
21. As we all make our attempts to experiment in classes with the system I urge us all to remain vigilant to the quality of our ongoing understanding and adopt the means to remain life long learners of MoE at the heart of what many of us believe is possible to heal a very sick education system.

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