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PGDIP through Dramatic Arts Inquiry

PPD 114 Negotiated Study

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## Attached

- Appendix A  MoE Planning Spring 2010
- Appendix B  Children's annotated drawings
- Appendix C  Impact Review
- Appendix D  Dorothy Heathcote's Conventions
Postgraduate Programme of Professional Studies in Education 2009 2010
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Abstract
This study has sought to explore a Mantle of the Expert project over a half term period in a Y1/2 class in a small rural primary school. It has noted and evaluated the most important critical incident within the drama project that had been identified by the children, and has found and reflected on what it was that attracted and drew in the children, step by step.

Personal Audit
What drives me?
Some of the most motivating and exciting training I have undertaken have been with Drama for Learning and Creativity (D4LC) and Mantle of the Expert (MoE). It has inspired a change in my way of teaching and responding to pupils in that I have found that Drama engaged participants and provided scenarios that directly employed empathy and creativity. This motivated me to focus my Advanced Skills Teacher work on Drama and led me to working with teachers to demonstrate Drama sessions, plan curriculum links and embed creativity into the curriculum.

Within my previous school (Sch.R) I was encouraged to develop a programme of Drama INSET in order to drive forward the teaching of drama. It did much to motivate and encourage us to use drama as a teaching and learning medium. This use of Drama was commented on by Sch. R’s latest outstanding Ofsted report (Ofsted 2009: 6) which stated that ‘Drama is central to much learning’.

I was aware that the level of engagement from the children whilst working in Drama was high. It seemed to me that there was more to this than simply enjoying the subject. In previous research (Zarins 2006) I had found that “Drama has a powerful impact in developing children's thinking, language and writing.” In reviewing this I
was intrigued by how the children's engagement appeared to be crucial to the process of driving thinking, language and writing. I was drawn to the idea that it was the link between creativity, empathy and engagement that drove the children's thinking forward. I resolved that my next research project (Zarins 2008) was to find out if Drama improved the levels of pupil engagement, empathy and creativity in learning.

I found that it did but the research also threw up more questions, such as: What is it exactly that draws the children in? Is it language, tension or ownership? The responses of the children have led to my greater understanding of what engages the learner, and how much children have to offer in terms of what they already know and what they can suggest as a way forward in their own learning. Sharing this with colleagues has maintained both the research and my engagement.

Significant strands in this research for me, have been the investigations as to what it is that engages the learner and what the link is that connects creativity and enjoyment with learning. To my mind enjoyment may be one of the elements that drives engagement. Although I have done some research (Zarins 2008) to find out how to measure this, using Leuven's Scale of Engagement, there is still some way to go as I have become more aware of how MoE in its use of big values and client/commission model provides a need to learn and how the frame within MoE often initiates and drives this need.

This year, my teaching circumstances have changed, involving me in working for two days a week in a rural primary school (Sch.S). With the backing of a supportive Head Teacher, it has given me the opportunity to work part time with a group of 19 Y1/2 children in developing a MoE project, which gives time to research and evaluate the impact of it.

In giving an account of the school, I referred to the depiction given in the School's website, describing it as a small and friendly primary school situated south of [N]. The school believes that every child should be an active and participating citizen of the school community. That all children have the right to be listened to and their views...
respected, and that they are entitled to an experience of education that is engaging, authentic and purposeful. The school is committed to giving children opportunities to develop their learning in ways that are meaningful and useful to them. It believes the most valuable resources we have in our school are the children's energy, commitment and imagination.

It said that [S] School strives to provide a curriculum that will allow the children to explore learning in many different forms and to develop knowledge, understanding and skills that will be useful to them now and for their futures.

In September 2009 the school was granted School of Creativity status by Creative Partnerships. This award gives the school a national profile to promote and develop the creative and engaging inquiry curriculum that has been developing at the school and which was recognised by Ofsted as outstanding (Ofsted 2009:9)

It is important to the school to create new and continuing creative learning opportunities for the school's pupils. By creating a Mantle of the Expert inquiry project with a class of Y1 and 2 pupils, I believed I was working in line with the ethos and with the support of the school.

In describing the characteristics of the class I would say that the children were a lively mix of Y1 and 2 with ten Y1s and nine Year 2s. There were ten boys and nine girls, showing a variety of abilities and interests, and a wide range in their emotional development.

In order to practice the ethical procedures stated by Bishop Grosseteste University College for the conduct of educational research, I will ask for informed consent from the school and parents. Confidentiality will be considered so that no names or personal details of the participants are disclosed at any time.

The Aim

In completing this module I hope to:

- extend my practice and understanding in working with MoE
• elicit and evaluate the perceptions of the children and TA as to what the 'critical incidents' are within the Mantle, that attract and engage the children
• extend methods of gaining rich data which would help me develop a greater understanding of what these critical incidents in the drama are and which factors make them significant

In the first instance I intend to plan and run a Mantle of the Expert project over a half term period, initially, then:
• note the most important critical incident within the Drama, identified by the children
• evaluate this moment with participants (children and TA) to find their views
• look at the factors that have made it significant
• Investigate what other researchers have to say and explore their reasoning in relation to my findings

In choosing how to research, I had assumed that I would be using Action Research Methods as I would be undertaking research as a form of self reflective enquiry so that I could improve my own understanding. In this, I would be in line with Carr and Kremmis' (1986:162) definition of action research but then I realised that as I was seeking to evaluate with the main focus on using drawings, photographs, children and adult voice, it would be more of an illuminative study.

At this stage I felt I needed to read about research methods that could be used with young children. Grieg, Taylor and MacKay (2007:90) warned that children's responses depend on their developmental capabilities, alongside their ability to manage the research tasks and whether they would be able to cope with one to one or group interviews.

I felt confident that I would be aware of my children's developmental capabilities and so be able to tailor questions and tasks that they would understand and respond to. I thought that solo interviews would be too formal and that I wanted the research evaluations to be a naturally reflective part of the Mantle work so I thought that group interviews would be better.

1 Also known as significant moments or important moments
I supposed that I could gain evidence from the children’s drawings. I needed to keep in mind my interpretation of them might not be ‘true’. Grieg, Taylor and MacKay (2007:95) warned that drawings need to be mediated by the children’s fine motor skills and their conceptual abilities. Perhaps if I correlated them with child talk I might get a clearer picture of what the children were thinking and the drawings would provide a stimulus for focused talk. Photos could also serve this purpose. So I drew up a plan of evidence collection and actions. (Fig. 1)

Fig. 1–Evidence Collection and Actions

| Time          | Data                        | Interpretation                                | Action                                      |
|---------------|                            |                                            |                                             |
| Jan to April 2010 | lesson plans annotated by CT | highlight which moments appear to be ‘significant’ to CT and TA | seek children’s opinions as to what significant moments within the drama are |
| April to May 2010 | children’s drawings, writing and recorded responses to the question ‘...and your most important moment was..?’ | identify ‘significant moments’ | seek children’s responses to photographs of these ‘important moments’ |
| May to June 2010 | photographs annotated with what the children said about the ‘significant moments’ in response to the question ‘... and you remembered this moment because...?’ | identify reasons as to why the children felt these moments were significant | analyse these ‘important moments’ and reasons in the light of own experience, children’s voice and reading-review findings with children and TA |
| May to June 2010 |                            | use to support or negate findings            | draw conclusions and consider implications |

THE BEGINNING
Knowing I was going to plan a series of Mantle episodes, I wanted to gather ideas for something that would engage the children from the start.

Initially I thought the idea of planning this Mantle tricky as I was going to be working with new children so for my security I would need to work with elements of planning.
already in place. In discussions with the children about what they knew and what they were interested in, I found they were attracted in their local area and things that they had collected which were items from nature and historical artefacts.

I had found some horse brasses and wondered if we could use them as a starting point. I researched the Victorian era when they were in use and found strands of information that interested me. As agricultural changes gathered pace there was a huge displacement of agricultural workers from the countryside. It was the fate of some of these people that I found intriguing and knowing that MoE worked when following lines of social inquiry I thought that we could follow the story of a family that had been displaced.

I was mindful of what I had picked up in MoE training sessions run by Luke Abbot and Tim Taylor. What really stood out for me in these sessions were their use of very careful, highly descriptive language and the slow drawing in of the children's engagement from the start of their sessions.

In order to help me structure the Mantle planning I used the Mantle of the Expert Website planning section (Mantle of the Expert.com) and found ways into planning the first steps. So, armed with these and historical information gleaned from the web and history books I started to plan. See (Appendix A).

**Collecting and Choosing Data**
As the weeks progressed I began collecting photos, notes and voice recording data of all twelve of the Mantle sessions. In sifting through this data I realized there were significant moments occurring in most of the sessions, and for different reasons. The difficulty became choosing which ones to evaluate further.

In choosing the sessions, I mulled over what the children considered was important. Although on one hand I felt it was important to interview children as soon as possible after the drama, on the other I felt there may be an element of them choosing the ‘significant moment’ that they had the most recent experience of. I became interested on what they would pinpoint as a significant moment looking back on the term’s MoE work. If, as Patrice Baldwin suggested that; ‘any learning acquired
through engagement with role is ... made memorable’ (Baldwin 2008) then the moments that the children remembered would therefore be important in their learning and could be described as critical incidents.

Fig. 2 – Showing the MoE episodes within the research period, Spring Term 2010 – from which the children chose their ‘most important’ moments.

After the Easter holidays when I thought that they had time away from the Drama and therefore be more able to reflect back over the whole Mantle, I asked them to cast their minds back to all the sessions that we had worked through and think about one thing that they had done in the drama that they felt was very important to them. I asked them to discuss this with the people nearest to them and them we shared our ideas.

At this point I was non-committal, affirming all contributions as I didn’t want to favour any idea above the rest. I rolled out a large roll of lining paper and asked them if they would just like to jot down, either in drawing or in words, the moments in the drama project that had been important to them. (Appendix B)
Initially I chatted to them while the work was in progress and noted that they talked to each other as they drew, explaining what they were drawing. I annotated the work as they drew. Later, we returned to the drawings and I recorded what they said in response to ‘Your most important moment was…?’

**What they said about the fire:**

Well, mmm... the house which Tom set fire to.
He wasn’t going to let anybody have it.
The... the mum and the boatman had an argument and Tom set fire to the house.
The fire. It was dangerous.
When Tom set fire to the house.
‘Cos it’s really interesting, the fire.
What the house looks like now. The house the Tom burnt down. I thought it was important that everybody knew what the house looked like now, when it was wrecked.

**What they said about the flood:**

Well, I drew the people on the roof and the boat is coming
I liked it when they were waiting on the floor of the boat
The house was floating on the water and on the way it got broken and it was a very old house. The people could save themselves. I know because I saw the boat
The flood because it was fun and interesting because I you get to do points of view and stuff.
He’s coming to save the people on the roof from the flood.
When they were stuck on the roof.
What they said about the argument:

This is the Mum’s son. He actually said no to his Mum and went and saved the people.
Well… when the Mum said it was too dangerous for the boy, going out by himself and the Mum said ‘No you can’t it’s too dangerous.’

I just like sitting there watching the drama story.

What K said about being in role
I liked being the teacher an teaching people and I liked telling people off because the children were being naughty and other children thought it was funny.

What H said about watching

As the children were working on the drawings together, there was the thought that some of them may choose to draw the same incident as their friends, but as I moved around, chatting with them, I noted that they were firm in their choices and felt quite strongly a sense of ownership of their option, one of them indicating the flood, that he should know because
‘I was there, wasn’t I, at the time it happened?’ I claim that it could be that a sense of ownership of the moment had developed because of him being in role, present at the moment of action.

Bowell (2001) declares that ownership, by pupils of their learning, is one of the cornerstones of process drama. What I had noticed as the children worked together through their MoE episodes, that like the child so sure of his choice of ‘important moment’, they had developed ownership through being there ‘in the moment’ and for me seeing it, it reinforced my belief that ownership is indeed, a ‘cornerstone’ of our MoE work.
What I found out from the Drawings, and children's voice about those moments in the MoE work that were important to the children (See Appendix B- Pictures of annotated drawings)

Fig. 3- Indicating the children's choices, shown in their annotated drawings

The numbers didn't quite add up here (Fig.3) as there are only 19 in the class (24 responses). I suspect some of them have come back for a second go but still felt this was valid if they felt it was important enough to include their second ideas.

There is always a danger in group responses that the children are swayed by their peer group but I am satisfied that the variety of responses plus the fact that we took time before returning to the work to discuss it and they explained what they had drawn, some
giving reasons for their choices (p9), triangulated the validity of their personal choices in a number of ways, indicating that it was their own preference.

I was a little surprised, though, at their choices. I thought that they would choose more recent episodes, ones that had tapped into their emotions as they were in role. I had recently witnessed extraordinarily tender moments when they were comforting their younger siblings, as they entered the workhouse, leaving their families. Instead they had chosen big issues, like the fire, flood and a family argument, involving danger and a sense of justice, as their most important episodes. Patrice Baldwin argued that it is the connections between emotions and drama that make it memorable (Baldwin 2008). Therefore if the children had remembered these episodes, it may indicate that their emotions were engaged. MoE usually works with big values and social frames so was it the big themes of the fire and flood, or the family/social tensions of losing their homes that captured them?

I decided to take the episode that the children chose as being the most important and investigate it further. I was interested in the way the children might be drawn into the episode and decided to use Dorothy Heathcote’s model of a continuum of engagement (Fig.4) to gauge the children’s engagement as the episode progressed.

![Fig. 4 Dorothy Heathcote’s continuum of engagement](image)

*Fig. 4 Dorothy Heathcote’s continuum of engagement* adapted from Mantle of the Expert PSLN Tool Kit (Essex County Council, 2005)
Episode 1 – Steps into the Mantle
A Description of the steps that led into the ‘significant moment’ when T set fire
to the house. With thanks to Tim Taylor, whose ‘Roman Box’ planning on (Mantle of the
Expert.com, accessed Dec. 09)) provided the structure for the script in Episode 1.

DESCRIPTION

PREVIOUSLY
Before the lesson the children had been asked to think about and bring in objects that showed what they thought the countryside meant to them. They brought in feathers, stones, leaves and pictures of animals and birds, which we looked at, handled and talked about.

EPISODE 1 - CONVERSATION
I gathered the class round a large sheet of paper. Before drawing, I started by wondering if they’ve heard anything about how people used to farm the land a long time ago in the past. The children began to offer comments;

Photo 1 – The children considering what they knew about how people used to farm in the past

REFLECTIONS
I did this to draw upon their interest and knowledge to begin with and also, by bringing and talking about their objects, I hoped that they would begin to be drawn in to an inquiry, through ownership of their objects/ comments and their interest

I had previously observed McE sessions, delivered by Tim Taylor and Luke Abbot, where the conversational introduction was so subtle, casual, that I almost missed it. I thought they were using Dorothy Heathcote’s Convention 16. (Appendix D: 7) so I decided to start our work in this convention to ‘attract’ the children’s interest in this natural way.

They had tractors
They were old ones
No they didn’t because they didn’t have engines then. They used horses. I know those big horses. They pulled ploughs. They still do that, I’ve seen them

As they offered comments, they started to build on each other’s ideas, continuing the conversation and showing what they already knew.
MAIN

I started by saying I'd like to tell you about something that was found in a field... At the same time I started drawing the outline of a box.(Photo 2). Convention 9, A drawing seen in the making (Appendix D:4)

This was inviting them into a story, the children were quiet at this point, and, I believed, intrigued at this combination of drawing and storytelling. I heard a loud whisper from one of the boys. What's she doing NOW?

Using Dorothy Heathcote's continuum of engagement (Fig. 4), I judged they were at the 'attention' stage.

The children were listening, and attentive to the language of this description, illustrated by T saying afterwards:

I could see it, you know, the hole, when you said about the sound of metal scraping against the stones

I was hesitant in using this as I had felt that the movement may be too small to be noticed, to be used as a dramatic tool. I may have been wrong, because as I did it I saw some of the children move their hands simultaneously as they listened; it appeared that enacting this drew them in further, though possibly still at the 'interest' stage.(Fig.4)

Photo 2- Drawing the box outline

I told the children the story of a box that was found by a farmer while out ploughing his field early in the morning. Verbally, I built up a picture of what happened and what it was like using the dramatic imagination to describe it, the sound/ silence, light/dark, movement and stillness. I told the children that the box had a curious handle and described it as I drew it.

DRAMATIC ACTION

I said that I'd show them how the opening mechanism worked. At this point I leant over and enacted the movement in opening the box.(Photo 3) It was a very small movement and I repeated it, saying,
'It opened something like this... I'm not quite sure if this will work'... (as if I was struggling) and waited for comments.

Photo 3 - Children offering advice on how to work the handle

I speculated about why people would want to bury it and asked the children if they would like to go back to the very moment after the box was buried. Perhaps we could find out more.

DRAMATIC ACTION

I said that what I hadn't told them was that where the farmer found the box there was the remains of an old house. That there was not that much there now, but what there was showed signs of fire damage.

I supposed we could 'look' at the moment when the box was buried.

The Role actually present Convention 1 (Appendix D:1)

I introduced our TA in role representing one of the people in the house at the moment just

W said, turning his hands in opposite directions. The children were being drawn in. I noticed that three of the boys, T, W and B, previously slow to engage, were upfront in offering ideas as I 'struggled' to open the mechanism of the box. I felt they were, in offering advice to one who 'struggled', developing investment and ownership of the idea. Lipman (2003) describes this... paradigm of teaching as one based within a community of inquiry, where children are stirred to think ...by a teacher who as seen as 'fallible'. By being 'fallible' I was moving from a role of teacher to co-learner, therefore allowing the children to step up with their expertise. In doing this, I judged them to be at the 'engagement' stage. (Fig.4)

I used language here like, 'supposed' – not as a direction, but as a suggestion. I needed their agreement in this. Also I used 'we' – at this point of invitation again, I was moving from a leading role to a co-role, and hinting at things to come (an implication that we could go back in time).
after the box was buried but before the farmhouse was burnt down (Photo 4) I invited
the children to look and make observations.

The children started to comment:

She looks sad. Her head’s down.
She’s looking down at something
It’s the box.
There’s something in it.

The way in which they talked to her was gentle. They appeared to be concerned as they said:

Are you all right?
You look very sad.
Is there something wrong?
We could always help you, you know.

I was interested by the children’s attitude, here. They appeared to be concerned
about the role, in a way that I had not noted, previously. In talking with our TA
afterwards, when she said they ‘just
wanted to know what was wrong, so they
could help.’ I thought that it may be (she
had been their YR TA, and was with us
for this afternoon session) that the
children had a strong emotional
attachment to her, which fed through to
the drama. They didn’t only want to help
the lady with the box. They wanted to help her. It could be, because of this
emotional engagement they had moved
on to the ‘investment’ stage. (Fig.4)

Photo 4 - TA in role at the moment after the
box was buried but before the farmhouse
was burnt down

I said they could talk to her. She gave the
information that they have been forced out by
the big farmers who have taken their land.
That they have no food now and without the
land cannot grow more. They are going to
burn the house as they leave. They are not
going to leave it for those who have taken
their land.

The Role as an Effigy - Convention 4
(Appendix D:2)

I invited five children into the picture (Photo 5)
as the others in the family, with their
possessions as if for a journey, asking – ‘I
wonder what they said as they left? They don’t
look too happy’. I waited for and affirmed their
comments.
I was intrigued by the children’s use of language here. The children knew the group representing the family really well – yet in their language ‘the Mum’ and ‘the middle one’ they maintained a distance – it could be that they perceived themselves as observers in the drama at this stage, but observers who were making sense of what they saw.

I don’t think they were too happy.
It looks as if the Mum is looking back to make sure they are coming.
I think they need to look after the middle one.
They don’t want to go, do they?
The little one looks really sad

I used formal language at this point, both to underline the gravity of the situation and to distance ourselves from something happening that could be challenging to contend with (Setting fire to the house). The gravity was also underlined by implying that the consequences could reach into the future. I did not indicate which child should set fire to the house. We waited. When T took the decision to do it, the enormity of his decision seemed to be written on his face. In asking him about this afterwards he said, ‘I really wanted to do it. Set fire to the house.’ I felt that he was ‘owning’ the moment and taking responsibility for it. I judged him to be at the ‘obsession’ stage (Fig 4).
Nine children chose this as their ‘most important moment’ in the drama.

Within this reflection, I had used Dorothy Heathcote’s continuum of engagement (Fig. 4) to measure the children’s engagement up to the critical incident. I had gauged T’s involvement as ‘obsession’. After a period of twelve episodes, the fact that, nine children had cited it as their ‘most important’ moment, pointed to their depth of engagement as well. Now I returned to the children and TA to find out what they had to say about what was important to them - twelve episodes on. As the children were working, I showed the photograph to small groups of participants and asked if they remembered what they may have been thinking at the time.

J’s comment: Why would anybody want to watch him putting our house on fire?

TA’s comment: I thought they were really involved in this, because all the children’s eyes were on T. I think they couldn’t believe that he was going to do it. Setting fire to his own house is a really big thing.

CT’s comment: When I waited, I felt uncomfortable as I had left it open as to who would choose to take this action, not knowing if anyone would. The intensity of T’s movement was really powerful.

AM’s comment: I just didn’t want to see him doing it (setting fire to the house) because I was scared of the fire.

T’s comment: What am I doing? This is MY house I’m setting fire to. I’m smashing through the window to put it in.

What the other children said:
*What he did was really important, I mean no— one told him to do it.
*I thought it was exciting, when T set fire to the house.
*I didn’t expect him to do that, it surprised me.
*I mean, it’s not the sort of thing we do, is it?
*I didn’t know he would do it. Set fire to the house.
SUMMARY

My first reaction to these comments was surprise at the strength of opinion that the participants had, responding so long after the critical incident. It may be that the method of showing the photograph stimulated their thinking really well (no prompting was required at this point). It could be that using the photograph worked to provoke their thoughts to return to that moment and rekindled the strength of that incident.

AM’s comment showed that the moment had stayed with her because it tapped into her life experiences. She is afraid of fire. J, in his comment about why anybody would do that, appears to be distancing himself from the difficult scene he was witnessing. Our TA’s comment highlights the engagement and tension within the group as T acted and T’s comment shows complete ownership and belief in his action.

The other children’s responses, in which they thought it was surprising, exciting and important corresponds with my view, that when he took ownership of this moment it was powerful because of these reasons and therefore, a memorable critical incident within the drama.

We must however, consider the factors that led up to this point. At the beginning the question about how they thought people may have farmed in the past was open and conversational, also setting the scene and time. The story, matched with the picture drawing attracted them, giving them more information to speculate on. The use of the dramatic imagination, in using their senses to ‘imagine’ the moment the farmer found the box placed the children there, in that moment. The ‘fallible’ teacher, who couldn’t work out how to open the box, inspired them to help and become a co-role. The effigy representing the lady with the box pulled on their emotions and willingness to help (they’d already helped with the box – so they had a ‘history’ of it). The roles, representing the family about to leave their house inspired comments about their situation and feelings. All of these factors prompted ownership and it was ownership, I believe, that inspired T to make his choice to set fire to the house.
On looking back through this episode, leading up to the critical incident, I am aware content, convention, language, and participants views have been reflected on, but not tone of voice, gesture and atmosphere. There is a lot of power in a glance, a raised eyebrow, a gesture, a stillness, which may not be planned beforehand but which happens as a drama is co-constructed.

Dorothy Heathcote (Heathcote and Bolton1995) claims that when a teacher is showing children something and talking in a different style (being aware of body image and position in relation to the object) they are signing to children, who because of their life experiences, are expert sign readers. I agree with her view and claim that all this adds to the drawing in to the drama through attention, interest, engagement, investment through to obsession (Fig. 4).

The inference I would draw from this is that all of the MoE conventions and steps used in Episode 1 operated to engage the children's attention, thinking and imagination. Plus it was the 'atmosphere' of learners together, in a co-constructed scenario that became a relevant and motivating challenge, that worked for us.

It was one of our parents, in commenting about the effect this drama project had on her child, that highlighted one of the reasons for my engagement and interest in learning and practising Mantle of the Expert, when she said 'It has made him feel so much more positive about coming to school because his imagination and ideas have been really valued.' Isn't that what we would all want for ourselves?
References/Reading


Malcom, P., French, J. and Eagle. (2005) Thinking Headteachers, Thinking Schools (National College for School Leadership) How three headteachers are leading their schools towards becoming communities of enquiry