‘Little Children, ‘Big’ Questions’

Does Mantle of the Expert create an environment conducive to philosophical thinking in the Early Years?

Julie Hymers
2009

BA(Hons) Early Childhood Studies

University of East Anglia
School of Health, Social Care and Early Education

City College Norwich
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who has supported me on this journey! I owe a huge debt of gratitude to all of the staff, children, and parents at the school in which this study took place. Thank you especially to Sally, who inspires me with her energy, enthusiasm and passion for MoE.

Thank you to my family for their support and forbearance during the hours, sometimes days, I spent pouring over the computer!

Thank you to my supervisor, Vivienne who always provided me with practical, positive and helpful feedback.
Abstract

An independent review of Primary Curriculum led by Sir Jim Rose and supported by the QCA, is currently examining the UK Primary Curriculum. There is a growing trend towards more creative teaching methods which offer children opportunities to develop a range of critical thinking skills within a relevant context in order to prepare learners for life in the 21st Century.

This study looks at the development of the P4C (Philosophy for Children) movement in the United Kingdom, it also examines the MoE (Mantle of the Expert) approach to education and seeks to discover whether the MoE approach creates and environment in which young children can engage with philosophical issues. The research strategy involves focusing on four core elements of the MoE approach, the aim being to discover if young children are able to engage with Philosophy. If so, to further discover what part the core elements examined play in facilitating this within the MoE approach to teaching and learning.

Using three data collection tools – questionnaires, focus groups and observations, primary qualitative data was gathered, and analysed thematically. Secondary research is discussed within the literature review and research strategy.

The research suggests that young children can and do engage with philosophical puzzlement, asking and beginning to explore issues often considered ‘too difficult’ for children.

The research finds that Teachers experienced in using the MoE approach to education discover that it does ‘throw up’ philosophical questions. It would appear that the four elements examined play an important part in this process but are not the only elements which combine to create a philosophically fertile environment.
## Contents

Title Page 1

Acknowledgements 2

Abstract 3

Contents 4

**Chapter One – Introduction** 7
- Context 7
- Mantle of the Expert 7
- About the Researcher 7
- Objectives 8
- Political and Educational Framework 8
- Research Questions 9

**Chapter Two – Literature Review** 10
- Philosophy and Young Children

**Chapter Three – Research Strategy** 17
- What is Mantle of the Expert? 17
- Children as active participants 18
- Children who are emotionally engaged 19
- Children in a community of enquiry 21
- Children who share power with the teacher 21

**Chapter Four – Research Methodology** 23
- Introduction 23
- **Data Collection Tools** 24
  - Questionnaires 24
  - Focus Groups 25
  - Observations 25
  - Validity and triangulation 26

**Chapter Five – Ethical Considerations** 27
- Informed Consent 27
- Anonymity and Confidentiality 28

**Chapter Six – Data Presentation and Analysis** 29
- Questionnaires 29
- Focus Groups 34
- Observations 37

**Chapter Seven – Conclusions and Recommendations** 39
- Conclusions 39
- Recommendations 41
References 43

Appendices 48

1.1 Core Elements of the Mantle of the Expert approach to Education 48
1.2 Letter requesting Parental Permission 49
1.3 Copy of covering letter sent with the questionnaire 50
1.4 Copy of the Children’s questions 51
1.5 Copy of the questionnaire sent to Early Years Teachers 52

2.1 Data – Focus group 1 53
2.2 Data – Focus group 2 54
2.3 Data – Focus group 3 55
2.4 Data – Focus group 4 56
2.5 Data – Focus group 5 57

3.1 Data – Questionnaire 1 58
3.2 Data – Questionnaire 2 59
3.3 Data – Questionnaire 3 60
3.4 Data – Questionnaire 4 61
3.5 Data – Questionnaire 5 62
3.6 Data – Questionnaire 6 63
3.7 Data – Questionnaire 7 64
3.8 Data – Questionnaire 8 65
3.9 Data – Questionnaire 9 66
3.10 Data – Questionnaire 10 67
3.11 Data – Questionnaire 11 68
3.12 Data – Questionnaire 12 69
3.13 Data – Questionnaire 13 70

9C4928214BD2 BA(Hons) ECS 2009 5
4.1 Data – Lesson Observation 1 71
4.2 Data – Lesson Observation 2 72
Chapter One

Introduction

Context
This study is based primarily but not exclusively, in a new primary school, which opened in September 2007, and is situated in a suburb east of the city of Norwich. It is the first new school to open in Norfolk for thirty years and currently has 45 pupils in the Foundation Stage, 45 in year one and 25 in a mixed year 2/3 class. The school is in a relatively affluent area, only 7.5% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

The school is in a unique position; with no ‘history’, the Head Teacher and her staff are at liberty to develop a curriculum based on communities of imaginative enquiry. The school is participating both in a Norfolk/QCA co-development research-based project with a focus on Personalised Learning and a Primary Learning Network with a research-based focus on Mantle of the Expert: assessment for learning through Mantle, and providing for gifted and talented children through Mantle.

Mantle of the Expert (MoE)
Mantle of the Expert (MoE) is a dramatic-inquiry based approach to teaching and learning invented and developed by Professor Dorothy Heathcote at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in the 1980’s. Through role-play, children and teachers work together, to solve real-life problems in an imaginary context.

About the researcher
I joined the staff of this primary school when it opened in September 2007 after working for almost 10 years at another local primary school. Previously I had experienced a subject based curriculum following the QCA Schemes of Work. Pedagogic style was largely didactic, teacher led and traditional in style. I had heard about Mantle of the Expert (MoE) and participated in one MoE lesson. This lesson sparked an excitement in me; for the first time the children, teacher and I were involved together in a ‘story’. Through drama, we became ‘caught up’ in the lesson which spilled out into the children’s play-time and which inspired the most interesting creative writing to date from the class of year 2 children. At this stage, in 2006, my understanding of MoE was that it was a way of making lessons more interesting using
drama, but that was about the extent of my knowledge. However, this positive experience stayed with me.

Objectives
During the first year in my new post, I became amazed and fascinated to witness young children in the Foundation Stage engaging with significant philosophical issues during Mantle sessions. They seemed to be navigating ‘big’ issues, in a deeper, spontaneous and more natural way than I had ever experienced before, through the Mantle work. I decided to look more closely at MoE, I want to find out how it is that MoE seems to facilitate this process of exploring ‘life’ issues. I want to ‘dig deeper’ and peel back the layers that make up MoE to discover if, in fact, it is an approach which supports the development of young children’s philosophical reasoning skills.

Political and Educational Framework
Over recent years the increased pressure on schools and teachers to deliver a performance based curriculum has resulted in a drastic dip in pupil attitude and teachers’ morale, an impoverished curriculum and a restricted pedagogy (Galton 2007). Concern was expressed by Bentley (1998), then a director of the Government think-tank Demos, who argued that the emphasis on qualifications should be reduced. Out of these concerns came the launch of, Excellence and Enjoyment: A Strategy for Primary Schools (DfES 2003). Then, following the publication of the Governments green paper Every Child Matters in 2003, Every Child Matters: Change for Children was published in 2004, with the Children Act 2004, providing the legislative spine for developing more effective and accessible services focused around the needs of children, young people and families. What is evolving is a more creative, integrated approach to teaching and learning. As Wenger (1989 p215) puts it;

‘learning transforms who we are and what we can do…it is not an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming a certain person’.

According to Haynes (2002), the idea of a collaborative community of imaginative enquiry originates in the work of Charles Peirce (1839-1914) who argued that we are participants not spectators in knowledge making. It is my opinion that children should be encouraged to participate in society from an early age, in contexts that are meaningful to them. From my observations it would appear that Mantle sessions
create meaningful contexts in which young children can engage in rational, logical, intuitive thoughts and action. Like Bruner, (1996) I would argue that schools should be places in which children have opportunities to ‘get a sense of how to use the mind, how to deal with authority and how to treat others’.

Guidance published by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE and QCA, 2000) identifies the Foundation Stage as from age three until the end of the Reception year. The Foundation Stage Curriculum comprises of six areas of learning, each of equal importance. Haynes (2002) suggests there is concern regarding the formalisation of teaching and learning in the early years. The need for learners to be flexible, adaptable, creative thinkers has been identified by employers and education policy makers. OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, 1995, p82) also requires schools to ‘teach the principles which distinguish right from wrong’. This research project endeavours to ascertain whether the MoE approach to teaching and learning in the Early Years (Foundation Stage until the end of Year 2) offers children opportunities to experience a learning experience which makes room for philosophical enquiry.

**Research questions**

- Can young children ask and begin to answer ‘big’ philosophical questions?
- How does MoE facilitate philosophical enquiry?
- To what extent do four core elements of MoE, combine to create an environment conducive to the development of philosophical reasoning?

1. children as active participants
2. children who are emotionally engaged
3. children as part of a community of enquiry
4. children who share power with the teacher
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Philosophy and Young Children

During the 1980s and 1990s, critical thinking skills became part of the formal school curriculum in the USA and elsewhere (Costello, 2000). In 1988, Mary Warnock argued against the inclusion of philosophy in the curricula of schools. Warnock suggested that philosophy was not an appropriate subject for pupils to study at school, rather that it should remain the preserve of the university undergraduate. However, towards the end of the 1980s, British research began to appear (Coles and Robinson 1989, Fisher 1990). The skills of enquiry, hypotheses and testing, planning and evaluating were referenced throughout the National Curriculum from its’ inception (Haynes, 2002). However, in 1999 thinking skills became a formal part of The National Curriculum.

In 1992, Dr Karin Muris developed a way of helping young children to think their way through philosophical issues using picture books. Muris believes that young children are able to engage and play around with ideas in a way that is more challenging for older children (Dowling, 2005). Throughout the 1990’s, the development of thinking skills teaching in schools became strongly influenced by the work of certain leading individuals (Fox 1996, Fisher, R. 1996, 1998; Quinn 1997).

So why in the 2002, revised edition of The National Curriculum were Thinking Skills emphasised further? Some argue that teaching thinking is a seductive, fashionable trend (Haynes, 2002). However, numerous different approaches to specific techniques and methods aimed at improving children’s thinking have mushroomed. Fisher (1990) provides a helpful summary.

Haynes (2002) suggests that the teaching of thinking is considered in three different ways. Thinking skills programmes, for example, The Somerset Thinking Skills Programme (Blagg et al., 1988) are based on taxonomies of transferable thinking skills. Such programmes aim to develop discrete skills which can then be applied in a range of contexts (Haynes, 2002: 44). Secondly, when problem solving, investigative and experiential approaches to teaching take place within the context of specific
subjects, it promotes critical and creative thinking. An example of such practice is Adey and Shayer’s (1994) Cognitive Acceleration Through Science and Maths Programme. Finally, it is argued (Haynes, 2002: 45) that in ‘meta-cognition’ an added layer of thinking can be developed through explicit and deliberate attention to the learning process. A ‘meta’ was a conical column used in Ancient Rome as a point around which to turn in a race. Similarly, meta-cognition is often seen as a turning point in our understanding of the mind. In its simplest form it involves ‘thinking about thinking’. Flavell introduced the term in 1976 to;

‘refer to the individual's own awareness and consideration of his or her cognitive processes and strategies’ (Flavell 1979).

Meta-cognition encourages pupils to engage with and reflect on their learning. Philosophy with children involves both thinking and enquiry based learning. According to Haynes (2002) bringing together the development of thinking and values is a defining feature of the philosophy with children movement.

An important pioneer in what in the United States is termed the Critical Thinking Movement, and which we talk about in the UK as thinking skills, is the American philosopher, Matthew Lipman. Originally a university philosophy professor, Lipman was unhappy at what he saw as poor thinking in his students. He became convinced that something was wrong with the way they had been taught in school when they were younger. They seemed to have been encouraged to learn facts and to accept authoritative opinions, but not to think for themselves. He therefore left his post and founded the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (I.A.P.C.) at Montclair State College, New Jersey. According to Lipman et al. (1980: 53), the central aim of Philosophy for Children ‘is to help children learn how to think for themselves’ Philosophy for Children (P4C) has also been developed extensively in the UK and uses a structured approach to classroom discussion as a key element in the approach. The influence of Robert Fisher in developing classroom resources to develop a 'community of enquiry' is particularly significant, as is the Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry in Education (SAPERE)

The roots of philosophical enquiry are strongly associated with Plato’s teacher, the Greek philosopher Socrates, born in 469BC. The concept of ‘communities of enquiry’
originates in the work of Charles Peirce (1839 – 1914). Peirce argued that we are not spectators in our learning but rather active participants. John Dewey (1859 – 1952) believed in co-operative intelligence, where schools should be communities in which children could develop as citizens.

John Locke (1632 - 1704), argued that children under the age of thirteen are developmentally unable to be reasoned with. Jean Piaget’s (1896 – 1980) theory of developmental stages suggests that children aged 2 – 7 years are in the Preoperational Stage. At this stage children begin to use symbols to represent objects. However, children in this stage still learn from concrete evidence and exhibit egocentric thought and behaviour. Piaget claimed that children at the Preoperational Stage are likely to focus on one dimension of an event and ignore other important factors. For Piaget the development of abstract thinking takes place as children enter the Concrete Operational Stage between 7 – 11 years. Margaret Donaldson’s (1978) critique and reinterpretation of Piagetian theory is an early example of much work which began to suggest that previous assumptions about children’s limited capacity for reasoning are inaccurate.

The Piagetian concept of children being essentially egocentric and Kohlberg’s theory that children pass through stages of moral development continue to influence the debate as to whether young children can engage with philosophical issues. Kohlberg’s (Colby et al 1987) model of moral development, consists of a six stage hierarchy. Kohlberg suggests that in order to move towards independent rational choice, people must move through each of the six stages, reflecting on the consequences of previous actions, gradually refining their choices (Eaude, 2008). Eaude suggests that this model is open to two criticisms; it is based on an assumption of morality having (broadly) the same point for everyone, in addition, it over emphasises the role of conscious choice.

However, the debate continues, more recently, Riggs and Peterson (2000), suggest that engaging young children in thinking about the meaning of and purpose in life is potentially problematic because they are often extremely engaged by what is most concrete and salient to them, rather than what is intangible. Riggs and Peterson (2000) claim that a powerful feature of human thinking is the ability to reflect on how the
world might have otherwise been, or, how under different circumstances it may be different than it first appeared. They go on to suggest that we often want to answer questions about things which are not immediately accessible: situations in the future, situations in the past, situations that do not exist, inaccessible places or even other people’s minds.

It is not necessarily the case that young children find thinking about intangible or abstract things impossible. A cursory examination of the literature (Costello, 2000) reveals descriptive accounts of thinking skills programmes which suggest that young children do benefit significantly from being involved in them and that they do have the ability to reason, enquire and evaluate. These programmes place emphasis upon the power of dialogue to allow children to construct meaning and articulate their thinking.

Matthews (1980) in his book, Philosophy and the Young Child, provides the reader with anecdotal evidence and claims that at least some young children engage their thinking quite naturally with philosophical issues. Matthews suggests that philosophical thinking in children can hardly be described as early stage thinking, that adults normally have naturally. Indeed, Matthews continues to suggest that child philosophy is like child art; children have a freshness, an openness and creativity in philosophical thinking as in painting and drawing, that many adults do not have (Matthews, 2005).

Philosophical enquiry is an area where the youngest children surprise adults with their ability to engage. Year two teacher Jenny Burrell gathered the following comments from a questionnaire to parents of children in her class at the end of a Mantle in which the children were a shipwreck salvage company;

‘He is coming to terms with life and death through this work together with the archaeological fascination of being involved with salvaging this historic monument.’

‘It’s very important for her, as an only child, to learn to work in a team situation. It has stimulated her to ask various questions she might not have asked about before.’

‘He’s completely motivated – I believe it’s because it’s so different – personal and intriguing – he takes it to heart.'
In 2005 The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER, 2005) conducted a review study of post 2000 literature relating to thinking skills in the early years. The second phase of the study asked; “What are the generic thinking skills that children in the early years are able to demonstrate?” Generic thinking skills relates to, as defined by Moseley et al., (2005);

‘Mental processes which require learners to plan, describe and evaluate their thinking and learning’

The literature from phase two of the study indicated that, by the age of seven (and given the right assistance), children are generally able to:

- use ‘thinking language’ involving words such as ‘think’, ‘know’, ‘guess’ and ‘remember’
- construct informal rules for the purpose of solving problems
- sort objects according to one or more criteria
- understand that the beliefs of others may be different from their own
- understand that because someone has partial knowledge of something they will not necessarily have all of it
- hypothesise about what might happen in relation to future events
- suggest alternative actions that could have been taken in the past (though this is more difficult than thinking about the future)
- reason logically from given precepts. (NFER, 2005)

Professor Keith Topping of the University of Dundee conducted a research project in conjunction with Clackmannashire Council Educational Psychologists, in which they reviewed the evidence for the effectiveness of P4C in Clackmannashire. The research discovered that this project can raise children’s IQ by 6.5 points. Dr Steve Trickey, a Senior Psychologist who worked with Prof. Keith Topping on the original research, said,

‘This type of follow-up study is rare but is important. It shows that the time children spend in exploring philosophical concepts through structured interactive classroom practices such as the ‘Thinking Through Philosophy' programme, is a good long term investment for their future’. Trickey (2007)
Cleghorn, (2007, online) states that some three and four year olds are learning the skills and dispositions, for good thinking. Cleghorn continues,

‘The difficulty with learning to be a better thinker, is that thinking is usually invisible. Through the development of appropriate language and a dialogical approach, we are helping make thinking ‘visible’, and so enabling youngsters to be more aware of the processes. The start of this is at the nursery stage, where the skills, language and dispositions of good thinking have their roots. We all use language to make sense of the world, to build concepts. If, beginning at nursery school, children are given the tools for better critical thinking, we are beginning to build for a more reasonable world’.

Much of the way in which children develop as thinkers and talkers depends on cultural norms and expectations as well as the social and economic position of the child in society. (Haynes, 2002) Over recent years, particularly with the statutory introduction of The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (QCA, 2008) in September 2008, many educators and early years practitioners, including Lillian Katz, Professor of Education at Illinois University have expressed concern regarding the formalisation of learning in the early years. In New Zealand the early years curriculum Te Whariki (www.minedu.govt.nz/curriculum) is very different. The curriculum recognises the wide variations in development in the early years and places emphasis on individual choice, responsibility and on promoting independence. The curriculum is divided into four areas: empowerment, holistic development, family and community, and relationships. Similarly, the curriculum found in the Reggio Emilia region of Italy has become renowned as a holistic approach which values the relationships between the individual child, the family, community and environment. (Edwards et al., 1998)

Haynes (2002) suggests that by offering children the scope and freedom to question, follow hunches and solve problems children in Reggio Emilia appear to demonstrate a greater capacity for astute observation and thinking than is generally recognised in the English school system. According to Filippini (1990) the role of the adult in Reggio Emilia has ‘listening’ at its’ heart.

‘The teacher must not merely think about children as strong and competent, but must act in such a way as to persuade children that they share this image.’ (Rabitti, 1995., cited in Edwards et al., 1998)

Employers and education policy makers emphasise the need for learners in the 21st century to be adaptable and flexible. Learners skilled in problem solving, decision
making and creative thinking. The principle of personalised learning was launched by Tony Blair, the then Prime Minister in his speech to the Labour Party Conference on 30 September 2003.

In January 2004, David Milliband the then Minister for School Standards delivered a refined definition in an important speech at the North of England Education Conference, outlining the Department's vision for personalised learning as the route to maximising opportunities for every learner. Miliband defined Personalised Learning as a system where every child matters, where careful attention is paid to their individual learning styles, motivations, and needs where there is rigorous use of pupil target setting linked to high quality assessment, lessons are well paced and enjoyable; and pupils are supported by partnership with others well beyond the classroom (DfES, 2004).

The strategy *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES 2003) set out the principles of creativity which inform personalised learning at primary school.

Under the governments *Every Child Matters – Change for Children* (DfES, 2004) agenda, now firmly at the heart of the curriculum, learners are to enjoy and achieve.

> ‘This demands a curriculum full of surprise and challenge. If children are to enjoy learning they need to investigate deeply and widely, build on their own interests and aptitudes, confront the big ideas that shape the world and have the chance to make a difference and take on responsibility.’ (QCA, 2007)

Schools however continue to be judged on their ability to respond to government priorities. Despite a ground swell of ‘talk’ about creative, modern professionalism, schools remain subject to scrutiny and monitoring by OfSTED. Powerful external requirements continue to dominate the educational agenda, generating a growing tension between school leaders’ personal values and educational priorities and government policy and practice.
Chapter Three

Research Strategy

What is Mantle of the Expert?

Dorothy Heathcote, now retired from her teaching position at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, developed this approach throughout her fifty year career as a teacher, lecturer and author. Bolton (Heathcote and Bolton, 1995) co-author with Heathcote of Drama for Learning describes his first attempt at Mantle of the Expert (MoE) Approach. He explains how he tried to tackle a bullying issue in his school by treating his pupils as ‘adult experts’ and seeking their advice. Heathcote explains how MoE is much more that just labelling pupils ‘experts’. Dr Brain Edminston (2005) states that the Mantle of the Expert approach is grounded in the principle that young people learn best when their relationship to learning and teaching is more like that of experts than of pupils in most schools. In life we all learn alongside one another, and become experts not only in our work place but also in our leisure and everyday pursuits. Edminston quotes Wenger who states, ‘learning transforms who we are and what we can do…..it is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming a certain person’.

Edminston (2005) explains that when teachers use the Mantle approach in their classrooms they are creating conditions for learning similar to those used by people in their everyday lives. According to Greenstreet (2003), modern living demands flexibility and adaptability in thinking and learning, due to the rapidity of change in so many walks of life. Greenstreet suggests that to cope with challenge of this kind, children need to develop creative ways of thinking, learning and acting to prepare them for their adult life. As children take on a Mantle of Expertise they ‘frame’ their relationships quite differently than when they see themselves as ‘pupils’.

Mantle breeds engagement and deep emotional involvement. Drama practitioners Morgan and Saxton (1987) developed a ‘categorization of identification’ as a taxonomy of personal engagement of young children in dramatic play. They recognised Mantle of the Expert as one of five classifications and suggest that by asking children to work ‘as if’ they are experts in, for example, flying, catching
giants, or solving problems their imaginative abilities are strengthened enabling them to build confidence in their own thoughts and ideas.

Currently, as part of its role to support Professor Rose’s Review of the Primary Curriculum, QCA are contacting schools, networks and authorities across the country in order to investigate new and innovative ways of exploring learning in primary schools. MoE is well known to the curriculum division of QCA as a well-researched and rigorous approach to cross-curricular, meaningful learning. As a consequence QCA have asked the MoE team to make contact with schools and teachers using MoE to gather as much evidence as possible to its effectiveness and impact in the classroom and to pass this information on to the data-collection team working for the Rose Review.

It would be impossible, in a study of this scale to evaluate fully the components which together make up the MoE approach to teaching and learning. However, there are six core elements of the MoE approach (Appendix 1.1). For the purpose of this study, four core elements which the researcher feels combine to create an environment in which young children’s philosophical thinking can be cultivated will be examined. They are; children as active participants, children who are emotionally engaged, children as part of a community and children who share power with the teacher.

**Children as active participants**

According to Heathcote and Bolton (1995),

> ‘The learners gradually take on **responsibility** for running an **enterprise** in a **fictional world**’.

Luke Abbot (2005), Lead Senior Adviser for Teaching Quality, Essex LEA describes the way in which teachers he has encountered over the years in which he has been involved with MoE, have referred to children ‘investing themselves’ during sessions of MoE. Abbot accredits this ‘investment’ to the fact that within Mantle, someone is at hand to hear and take account of what children feel, say and do. Edminston (2005) also describes the way in which children engage with both the actual world (of the classroom) and the fictional context of the Mantle. Hendy and Toon (2001) suggest that ‘pretend play’ is remarkable in that it is one of the first activities that can be observed in the behaviour of early childhood. Children have a natural willingness to,
as the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge called it ‘suspend our disbelief’. Young children glide effortlessly into a fictional world where they ‘become’; vets, chefs, Mummies and Daddies and so on. The fictional dramatic context of MoE enables children to be actively engaged in the experience but with the awareness that it is pretence. This enables them to explore situations in safety, even to make mistakes, knowing that it is ‘not for real’, even though their actual responses and feelings may be (Peter, 2001). O, Neil (Heathcote and Bolton, 1995), describes the way in which, through Mantle work, children are active in the learning process, not just cognitively but also socially, emotionally and kinaesthetically, through a network of tasks embedded in a flexible context.

**Children who are emotionally engaged**

According to Heathcote and Bolton (1995) the second core element of the MoE approach is that,

‘the learners **care** enough about the long-term goals of a fictional **client** that they engage in activities through which they begin to **imagine** the fictional world’.

Children need to be able to empathise. For Johnson et al., (1984), acquiring the skill of empathy, smoothes the paths of understanding, awareness and communication. The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA, 2000), states;

‘Successful personal, social and emotional development is critical for very young children in all aspects of their lives and gives them the best opportunity for success in all other areas of learning. This area of learning is about emotional well-being, knowing who you are and where you fit in and feeling good about yourself. It is also about developing respect for others, social competence and a positive disposition to learn’.

There is increasing recognition that emotional abilities have been under rated in the role they play in helping to ensure success and fulfilled living. Golemans’ (1996) work on Emotional Intelligence (EI) lists a number of studies which suggest that a person’s emotional state of mind is closely linked to the ability to think effectively (Goleman, 1998). However, this link between children’s emotions and other areas of learning is relatively recent. For Piaget emotional engagement merely energised intellectual activity (Piaget et al., 1968) and whilst Vygotsky emphasised the importance of social relationships, the role of the emotions within those relationships
was overlooked (Vygotsky, 1978). Following the work of Meadows (1994), Goleman (1996) and Laevers (1999) the emotional well-being of children and the role of the emotions in learning has become integral to the Early Years curriculum. Pascal and Bertram claim that emotional well-being is one of four factors identified in children with potential to become effective learners (Pascal et al 1998). According to Sousa (2001), in dramatic activity, specialised areas of the cerebrum focus on spoken language and call on the limbic system to provide the emotional component.

Eaude (2008) whilst acknowledging the link between emotional state and one’s ability to learn describes how, like others, especially men, he learned to distrust emotion. Eaude claims that the ideal thinker is supposed to be analytic, detached, dispassionate and unemotional. Eaude acknowledges the work of Gerhardt (2004) in his book ‘Why love matters: how affection shapes a baby’s brain’. Although Eaude feels this book over emphasises the brain’s physiology, he feels that the salient points are that; emotion is a more basic function than cognition, behaviour is influenced by how emotion is regulated, young children experience emotion with particular intensity and the regulation of emotion will depend on how well ‘significant others’ respond to our needs.

Bowlby (1965) described the way in which new-born babies bond with the primary carer, as attachment. Research indicates that where children start life with a strong bond or attachment to at least one person, they can develop a resistance to stress in their lives. (David, et al 2003)

All children come to school with strategies for responding to, and regulation of, emotions which have been etched into them since birth. The competence with which they manage these emotions will depend on the social context in which they have been living and the responses they have experienced prior to starting school. Vulnerable children may experience difficulty in managing powerful emotions, they continue to need relationships with trusted, consistent adults in a safe environment in order to develop emotional maturity.
Children as part of a Community of Enquiry

‘Learners and teacher together, interact predominantly as themselves. Imagine that they are interacting as experts who run the enterprise. Imagine that they are interacting as other people in the fictional world with whom the experts are concerned’. Heatcote and Bolton (1995)

According to Bredo (1997) all learning is situated within a specific context. Socio-cultural contexts are seen as a form of apprenticeship where learners engage in cognitive development within a community as a way of gradually gaining acceptance as a full member of that community. (Brown and Campione 1990; Lave and Wenger 1999). Watkins (2003:14) terms this form of learning as ‘building knowledge as part of doing things with others’. According to O’Neil, (Heathcote and Bolton, 1995) the social dimension of MoE should not be overlooked. Students work together in the kinds of teams and collaborative environments that anticipate life in the 21st century, establishing supportive, reflective communities. Bruner and Vygotsky were both concerned with the way in which learning is enhanced by social interaction. Vygotsky (1978) developed his ideas of the ‘zone of proximal development’ in which learners are supported by peers or teacher towards a higher level of performance. Similarly, Brunner’s idea of ‘scaffolding’ involves support without constriction.

Children who share power with the teacher

‘The teacher must share power to position the students (individually and collectively) as knowledgeable and competent colleagues and also ensure that children position one another similarly’. Heatcote and Bolton (1995)

Edminston (online, no date) proposes that ‘we need to make power relationships more visible as we build nurturing, collaborative and fair communities in our classrooms’. Haynes (2002) suggests that children are able to think more productively when unnecessary rules and rigid controls are removed. Unlike some traditional teaching methods where knowledge if transmitted from someone who knows more to groups who know less, MoE is a cultural mediation between people sharing a common experience.

The work of Paulo Friere (1921 – 1997), the Brazilian educationalist, continues to influence educational practice today. Friere placed emphasis on dialogue claiming that pedagogy involved not only reading the word but also the world. Friere insisted that dialogue involves respect and should involve people working with each other not ‘on’
each other (Smith, 1997, 2002). O’Neil (Heathcote and Bolton 1995) states that Friere showed that learners are motivated and empowered by the knowledge that they are learners.

For Edminston, working together is expressed within a caring, sharing community, in which all voices will have equal weight. Teacher and student share power by drawing on the authority of all people in the group rather than relying on predetermined texts or simply the authority of the teacher. Chris Baker (2008), Head teacher at Balsall Common Primary School, Solihull describes this process thus,

‘The teacher is part of the community, alongside the pupils, and responds with them to various problems. The problems are not presented by the teacher, but by the ‘client’, enabling the community to take responsibility for their responses without seeing the teacher in a didactic role. The teacher has to be prepared to allow changes in the balance of power, as the system opens up alternatives to the traditional classroom model whereby all control lies with the teacher. The system advocates a tone of co-operation, collaboration, attentive listening, sharing ideas, negotiation and sharing power with others as ‘colleagues’.”
Chapter Four

Research Methodology

Introduction

Hucker (2001) defines methodology as the study of research techniques that may be used. It is important that the method or methods of research are appropriate and will produce reliable and valid data. Methodology looks at the ‘how’ and on whom the research is based. It is the philosophy or general principle which guides the research (Dawson 2006: 14).

According to Hucker (2001) there are two main ways of gathering information. Primary research involves the collection of data using primary research techniques. Secondary data, research carried out by others which relates to the topic of study has been gathered and is discussed in Chapter two, Literature Review and Chapter three, the Research Strategy.

The focus of this project is investigative research. It is hoped that the results of the investigation will add to existing knowledge and understanding in the research area. The data produced will be qualitative as it seeks to gain insight into the views and experiences of practitioners and children.

‘Qualitative research obtains viewpoints and personal feelings from its participants. These are not easily measured’. (Green, 2000: 3)

The case study approach will allow the researcher to observe the characteristics of a ‘unit’ (practitioners using MoE approach). This research seeks to probe and to analyse the core elements of MoE, with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that group belongs (Cohen & Manion et al, 1994). The limitations of a small scale project do inhibit the potential for generalisability.
However, according to Bassey (1981: 85),

‘An important criterion for judging the merit of a case study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his decision making to that described in the case study. The relatability of a case study is more important than its generalisability’.

The researcher considers that the relatability of this study justifies any disparity in its generalisability. According to Bell (1987) case study has been described as ‘an umbrella term for a family of research methods having in common the decision to focus on inquiry around an instance’ (Adelman et al. 1977). Principally, case study is concerned with the interaction of factors. In this project, the interaction between core elements of MoE and philosophical thinking in the early years will be investigated.

Data Collection Tools

Questionnaires

Data collection methods have been considered, it was decided that using questionnaires would be the most effective way to gather information. Interviews were not considered feasible within the time constraints of the project and would be limited to practitioners working in the same setting as the researcher. The researcher wanted the opportunity to extend the focus into other settings in the county. Care was taken in selecting, designing, piloting and distributing the questionnaires.

Using Youngman’s (1986) question types, the researcher designed a questionnaire (see appendix 1.5) containing open questions. In addition to the initial response, respondents were invited to comment and expand upon their answers; to give their own views on the topic. Responses will be subject to thematic analysis.

Davidson, (cited in Cohen and Manion 1994: 93) suggests that a good questionnaire will be clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable. Davidson reminds the researcher of it’s reliance on the voluntary cooperation of the respondent and therefore suggests that the researcher be mindful of designing a questionnaire which engages interest, encourages co-operation and elicits answers as close to the truth as possible. With this in mind the researcher has designed a succinct questionnaire, distributed with a covering letter (see appendix 1.3) in which the researcher acknowledges the heavy
work load of respondents and expresses gratitude and appreciation for the time taken to complete and return the questionnaires.

Questionnaires will be distributed to staff in the researchers setting, in addition, postal questionnaires will be sent out to randomly selected primary schools within the locality. Piloting the questionnaire prior to distribution will help to identify any ambiguities (Green 2000). The piloting process will help to ensure reliability and validity of the data collected (Bell, 1987)

**Focus groups**

Sometimes referred to as discussion groups or group interviews, focus groups are led by a moderator or facilitator who introduces the topic, asks questions, controls digressions and stops break-away conversations. The researcher facilitated focus groups of children who had experienced MoE sessions within the setting. The advantages of this data collection tool were considered by the researcher to be that, a wide range of responses could be collected in a short time frame. For children, the group setting might help children remember teaching sessions which were less recent, the group setting may help children to be less inhibited. Disadvantages of using this method, such as not everyone contributing and contamination of individual’s views were considered to be out weighed by the advantages (Dawson, 2006). Questions were carefully prepared in ‘child friendly’ language which related specifically to the research questions (see appendix 1.4).

The sessions involved 30 children (5 groups of 6) selected at random from children from whom parental permission had been given to participate in the study. The group sessions were recorded for analysis.

**Observations**

Throughout the duration of this project the researcher will undertake non-participant observations of MoE sessions delivered to children in the setting. Prior to the project the researcher had observed ‘snap shots’ of sessions or had heard anecdotal evidence that were a catalyst to this project. Bell (2002) suggests that direct observation may be more reliable than what people say. Observations are not exempt from problems, researcher’s bias, interpretation and objectivity for example.
Validity and Triangulation

According to Rawlings (2008) the validity of practitioner research is questioned by many. However, the systematic collection of accumulated knowledge and facts over a period of time can move practice from the ordinary to the extraordinary. By combining secondary research, questionnaires, focus groups and session observations the researcher hopes to overcome the deficiencies that flow from one investigator or one method. Denzin (1989) defines triangulation, as the use of multiple methods of research, to prevent personal biases that stem from single methodologies.
Chapter Five

Ethical Considerations

No research can proceed without due consideration to ethical issues. Ethics apply to both the methodology and the manner in which information is gathered and used. From a research perspective, ethics means the moral philosophy or set of moral principles underpinning a project. All researchers have a responsibility to the participants of their study. The project should not do the subject any harm or be likely to do so.

‘Ethics has to do with the application of moral principles to prevent harming or wrongdoing others, to promote the good, to be respectful and to be fair’
(Sieber, 1993: 14)

At the outset of, and throughout this project, permission has been sought and granted from the Head Teacher who is deemed ‘gate keeper’ of the setting. Gate keepers are defined as persons who are, as Green (2000) puts it, ‘held in loco parentis (in the place of a parent) whilst children are in their care’.

Informed consent

Informed consent has been defined by Diener and Crandall (1978) as,

‘the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions’.

In seeking informed consent, the researcher is acknowledging the participant’s right to freedom, afforded by living within a democracy. Informed consent places a responsibility on the researcher to operate with competence, respectful of the participant’s right to refuse to take part or to withdraw at any stage (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1992).

Whilst ethical considerations have been a part of medical research for many years, ethical issues are increasingly a part of Early Years research. It is no longer considered sufficient to request the permission of parents when embarking on research involving children. Children’s wishes are now more likely to be regarded (David 1998). To this end, children selected at random to take part in the focus groups, were
offered the opportunity to refuse to take part or to withdraw at any time. This consent was sought in addition to the written consent of parents (see appendix 1.2). Written consent was refused by one family, this child was not involved in the study. The researcher explained to the children what was required and what would happen at the outset of each focus group session, one child said that she did not want to take part. She left the focus group and returned to the classroom. All other children participated happily. Consent for the researcher to participate in session observations was obtained from the Head teacher. Parental permission for this was not deemed necessary as the sessions formed part of the regular curriculum.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Information provided by the participants will remain anonymous, thus enabling respondents to freely express views. To this end questionnaires will bear no identifying marks. As Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias say,

> ‘The obligation to protect anonymity of participants …..is all inclusive. It should be fulfilled at all costs…’ (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992)

It is especially important when working with young children to maintain confidentiality. Therefore, names and any other identifying features will remain undisclosed.
Chapter Six

Data Presentation and Analysis

Questionnaires
Cohen et al (2007) suggest that researchers should be satisfied with a 50% response rate to questionnaires. Of the twenty questionnaires distributed in this study, thirteen were returned, a response rate of 65%. The researcher was conscious of the fact that questionnaires were distributed during the pre-Christmas half term which is notoriously busy in all early years settings. Cohen et al (2007) consider it important for the researcher to decide what to do with missing data and what the significance of it might be. It is possible that respondents amongst the sample who were familiar with the research topic were more likely to respond, similarly, despite efforts to design a questionnaire which would be accessible to all the potential respondents, respondents who did not feel young children should do philosophy in the early years or who had no or limited experience of MoE might have been less inclined to respond.

What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?
Twelve of the thirteen respondents were positive or very positive about children doing philosophy in the early years. One respondent said, “Most children are already philosophers when they come to school, but our current system crushes them and makes them conform to a cultural way of thinking”. Martens (1982) cited in Costello (2000, p47) expresses a similar sentiment asking, ‘why is it that children who enter school at four or five years of age questioning many things, often emerge from a period of compulsory schooling questioning very little?’ Another respondent said, “The sooner the better”.

Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? If yes, please explain how?
Ten of the thirteen respondents had taught philosophy using a range of methods as tabled below;
Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method used to teach philosophy</th>
<th>By number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhymes and Stories</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal progression of Philosophical Skills</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4C (Philosophy for Children)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘But Why’ using Philosophy Bear</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paintings, videos, signs, questions generated from MoE sessions</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One had not taught philosophy at all, two felt they had but not formally.

*Have you ever used the MoE approach to education in the Early Years?*
Eleven of the thirteen respondents had used MoE, two had not.

*Do you think MoE creates and environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues?*
Ten respondents felt sure that MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues. One respondent was unsure and two, who had never used MoE did not answer this question. One respondent was definite enough to say, “this is why I now do fewer ‘philosophy lessons’ as philosophical thinking and dialogue is so crucial to MoE”.

*What, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?*
In the opinion of the respondents there were many elements within Mantle which provoke philosophical thinking. The most common theme mentioned related to the relevance and purposeful nature of the drama based scenarios which form the context for fictional enterprise within Mantle frames. This is unsurprising as one of Heathcote’s central arguments is that when children don the mantle of expertise they enter imagined worlds framed as if they were experts rather than in their typical stance as pupils. As a result, the learning is more powerful. When children engage in activities in the ways animal rescuers, hotel owners or space explorers would, they
assume not merely a fictional role but real responsibility. Heathcote and Bolton (1995) explain:

‘Participants in mantle of the expert are framed as servicers committed to an enterprise. This frame fundamentally affects their relationship with knowledge. They can never be mere receivers “told” about knowledge. They can only engage with it as people with a responsibility. This responsibility is not to knowledge itself, although, paradoxically, that is what the students are indirectly acquiring, but to the enterprise they have undertaken. Knowledge becomes information, evidence, source material, specification, records, guidelines, regulations, theories, formulas, and artefacts, all of which are to be interrogated. This is an active, urgent, purposeful view of learning, in which knowledge is to be operated on, not merely taken in’. (p. 32)

Could it be that this relevant engagement, as one respondent suggested, forces children to remain open-minded, continually questioning assumptions? As Haynes (2002: 36) suggests, philosophical puzzlement is in itself an emotional condition involving doubt and uncertainty. Another respondent refers to the imaginary nature of scenarios within Mantle frames. Classroom drama, at its simplest, harnesses our human ability to play together for curriculum purposes (Edminston, online, no date). Policastro and Gardner (1999: 213) suggest that,

‘Imagination is a form of playful analogical thinking that draws on previous experiences, but combines them in unusual ways, generating new patterns of meaning’.

Frank Smith (1992: 45) suggests that ‘imagination is constantly underrated’. One respondent wrote, ‘young children have such super imaginations, MoE lets this shine through’. ‘Acting out’ expert roles within Mantle frames enables children to form new thoughts, make discoveries and construct new meaning. According to Haynes (2002), Western philosophy has established a reputation for developing powers of enquiry, critical thinking and reasoning. In philosophical enquiry, children gain experience in questioning concepts and values, they are able to ‘try out’ solutions within a safe, imaginary context.

Introducing a ‘pressure’ or ‘tension’ to the imaginative scenario was also considered an element which provokes philosophical thinking. One respondent wrote, ‘having a ‘pressure’... forces issues to the forefront as they need discussion/resolution’ Luke Abbott (2005) describes the way in which playwrights introduce tensions into the actions of their plays which build their characters into the events, forcing them
towards the outcomes. These outcomes occur because of individual motivations and the resulting actions. Thus the actions are ‘nursed’ by the resulting playwright’s inbuilt structure, to find the play’s resolution. Abbott claims that the teacher must have access to the skills and strategies for creating productive tensions which ‘nurse and challenge’ students at the point of interaction in the classroom. Tension is psychologically different to problem solving because the children are involved and emotionally engaged. Within MoE frames, it becomes ‘I’ and ‘we’ not ‘they’ and ‘them’.

This relevancy appears inexorably linked to engagement, the second most common theme referred to by respondents. Engagement in turn causes children to respond and reflect. Hendy and Toon (2001) cite Halliday’s (1975) ‘ideational potential’, the manner in which we can help children reflect on what they say and do. During Mantle frames children can reflect on and identify with universal predicaments common to all. For example, children observed during lesson 2 (see appendix 4.2) witnessed two staff members, in role, having an argument. The staff members were in role as a customer and waitress at the Fairy Tale Hotel in the children’s Mantle enterprise. The ‘story’ was then suspended while discussion took place. In this imaginative context, children begin, as Craft (2000) describes, ‘to form new thoughts and discover new truths which build up new worlds’. Haynes, (2002: 107) suggests that the teacher’s role involves recognising opportunities for philosophical thinking, making connections between ideas and enquiries, giving feedback to the children about recurrent themes and by demonstrating ways of mapping ideas.

The third most common theme mentioned by respondents as an element within Mantle which helps promote philosophical thinking was the concept of learning together in a community, specifically the safety and moral and value based foundations of the community. Communities of inquiry are based upon principles of class collaboration, of working together to develop a sense of security and belonging where risk taking is encouraged and celebrated. One respondent puts it thus, “Moe is collaborative – to do with listening intently, negotiated involving high level questioning, drawing out ideas thereby facilitating connections. It is an inductive process requiring shared responsibility. It has no ‘right or wrong’ remaining ‘open ended’.”
Knowledge is co-constructed with the teacher as facilitator who guides learners rather than instructs them. For teachers, this involves being prepared to treat pupils’ questions without prejudice, avoiding the temptation to apply the ‘teacher knows best’ rule. Bonnet (1995) describes this way of teaching as letting pupils think rather than instructing. This is not passive but rather a responsive approach which requires teachers to maintain an open disposition towards the thoughts of pupils, patience and the ability to hold back. The DfES document Excellence and Enjoyment states that,

‘pupils need to feel safe, settled, valued and have a sense of belonging for optimum learning to take place’ (DfES, 2003:49)

This ethos of a collaborative community is central to Mantle frames with each and every enterprise operating within a value and belief system.

The final common theme and thread of thinking relates to the opportunity within Mantle frames to develop speaking and listening skills, questioning, reasoning and meta thinking. According to one respondent, the benefits of young children engaging with philosophical issues means that they become, “better operators, listeners, communicators and active citizens”. Most respondents felt that opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking are essential. For example, one respondent wrote, ‘A society where no one questions the status quo would be very damaging...education is about preparing children for life’. Similarly, another respondent said, ‘young children start to learn reasoning, enquiry, speaking and listening, discussion, respect, just what society and future generations need!’ Two respondents felt that for children who ‘shine’ at ‘thinking outside the box’, philosophical enquiry can develop their own and others thought processes.

The Rose Review (2005) summary states;

‘The development of speaking and listening skills requires fuller and more intensive attention to make sure that children acquire a good stock of words, learn to listen attentively, and speak clearly and confidently….Moreover, they are prime communication skills, hugely important in their own right and central to children's intellectual, social and emotional development.

Hendy and Toon (2001: 37) state that, ‘discursive language is particularly important in the growth of children’s thought and understanding’. As human beings the ability
to think, speak and listen are fundamental to our survival. Talking through events or ideas can help develop perspective and understanding. Philosophical thinking and reasoning cannot occur unless we listen to one another. For children, learning the skills involved in effective communication unlocks their developmental potential.

**Focus groups**

All the children except one responded positively to the researchers’ invitation to talk about ‘stepping into stories’. MoE uses imaginative contexts and the children refer to these as ‘stories’. Using the term ‘stepping into stories’, enabled the children to contextualise my questioning.

**How do you feel about ‘stepping into’ stories?**

Of the thirty children questioned, the most common adjectives used in response to this question were ‘happy’ and ‘excited’. Nineteen of the thirty children used these words. Two children each used the following words; ‘really real’, ‘feels like we're there’, ‘relaxed’ and ‘quite fun’. The following feelings were expressed by one child each; ‘magical’, ‘surprising’ and ‘really good’. One child said, ‘not sure’ and one said they felt bored, although this child later said that he wished he could do Mantle at home!

There can be little doubt that the children enjoy the MoE approach to education. However, this does not prove that they enjoy it more that any other approach or aspect of school life. Within the constraints of this project it is not possible to examine other approaches or areas but few would dispute the notion that children who are happy and enjoying anything at school will, undoubtedly be in the best frame of mind for learning.

‘Enjoyment and achievement tend to go hand in hand. If children enjoy learning, enjoy good, supportive relationships with their teachers and peers, enjoy a rich variety of learning experiences and enjoy their leisure time, they are more likely to engage and achieve high standards’. (QCA, 2007)
What things have you been thinking about in our stories? Do you ever think about really puzzling stuff?

In response to these questions most children referred to the Mantles currently taking place within the setting – Fairy Tale Hotel Owners and Ancient Egyptian Archaeologists. They talked about various work they had been involved in and when asked if they had ever thought about puzzling stuff they relayed practical problems they had encountered in class. For example, how to make the hotel and what would happen if there was no electricity. Two teachers at the school use ‘Philosophy Bear’ to explore further philosophical questions. For these children, I substituted the words ‘really puzzling’ for Philosophy Bear. The children who are involved in an Ancient Egyptian Mantle, talked at length about the ‘after life’ and embalming process which they had been exploring. Children in another group said, ‘sometimes, like how the world was made’ and ‘I wonder what God is doing now’ to which another child replied, ‘you can’t see God, so we don’t know!’

What do you have to do? (Children as active participants)

This question provoked a range of responses, ‘you have to be kind, calm and sensitive’, ‘not be silly’, ‘think’, ‘think about what’s going to happen’ ‘explore things’, ‘organise yourself’, ‘make things’ and ‘listen’. Three of the six groups talked about the imaginative aspect of Mantles. ‘You have to pretend to be a different person’, ‘you take on a role and practice’, ‘we have to imagine stuff’, ‘we have to pretend’ and ‘role play’.

Is everyone involved? (Children as part of a community)

The children were unanimous in their response to this question. ‘Everyone is involved, no one is left out’, ‘they all do something’, ‘everyone, even visitors, all the staff’, ‘everybody does it’, ‘always everybody, but sometimes we take turns’, ‘lots of people’, ‘we all are’, ‘me, me’, ‘no one is left out, every one is in it’, and ‘sometimes Mr T’ (MoE Teacher, Primary Learning Network)

How do you feel when you are working together? (Children who are emotionally involved)

Many of the children talked about how it felt to work together in a group,
‘we feel like a real team, like brave soldiers’, ‘we feel like we’re collaborating’, ‘it’s like a whole class collaboration’, ‘we feel really grateful and happy and excited’, we’re grateful for what we’ve all done’, ‘collaborative – you’re not alone’, ‘really, really happy’, ‘we all work together, it makes stuff easier for us. If it’s hard stuff, instead of one, all of us can do it. The job is quicker’, ‘we feel we’re working together in a team’, ‘adventurous’, ‘nice and happy’, ‘happy’ and ‘collaborative’.

Who is in charge – you or the teacher? How does that work? (Power is shared between teacher and children)

Three groups said that the teacher was in charge. Other responses were, ‘sometimes the children – when we’re in groups’, ‘the teacher but we have to work together to do it’, it’s collaborating, it works if we all do it together, we don’t shout at people’, ‘we work together with the teacher – we get the ideas in our head’, ‘the teacher but sometimes you can be in charge too. It’s kind of half and half’ and ‘the person who comes to help us, everyone is important’.

Is there anything else you want to say about ‘stepping into stories’?

‘It’s exciting’, ‘we’d like to do it at home but Mum and Dads wouldn’t understand how to do it’, ‘we wouldn’t know how to explain it’, ‘it’s quite complicated to work as a team, but it’s very important’, ‘it’s fun and exciting’, ‘the teacher has to know if we need costumes’, ‘it helps if you’re independent, you think on your own’, ‘you get to learn more if you listen’, ‘you have to be kind, especially to teachers and if they tell you to do something you have to do it straight away!’, and ‘when we have a question we hold it in our heads, we don’t talk over people’.

Haynes (2002: 134) states that children are often very realistic about what is important, whilst also helping us to see things in a different light. Collaboration and working together was a significant element for all focus groups. It would appear that for these children, the opportunity to work together, makes them feel, ‘adventurous’, ‘nice and happy’, ‘happy’ and ‘collaborative’. Haynes states that children involved in philosophy emphasise the opportunity to speak, to have their point of view taken seriously and to have their experiences counted. Whilst the children in this study, aged 5, 6 and 7 years do not yet have the vocabulary to describe the intricacies of philosophical thinking and collaborative working within a community of enquiry, they are in no doubt that they enjoy it!
Observations

Two lessons were observed. It had originally been hoped that three lessons would be included in this study. However, due to staff sickness, one lesson did not take place at a time convenient for the researcher to observe. The first lesson observed (see appendix 4.1) was led by the Primary Network Support Teacher. During this session an interesting dialogue occurred when the children were discussing which guests they would allow to stay at their ‘Fairy Tale Hotel’. The children were in role ‘as if’ they were owners of a Fairy Tale Hotel. Staff members were in role as fairy tale characters, Thumbelina, Cinderella, The Witch (from Hansel and Gretel), and a dragon. The staff ‘in role’ had talked about the kind of things they would need if they were to stay at the hotel. For example, the dragon would need fire retardant curtains, Thumbelina would need flower petals for blankets, the Witch would need a cage. The children were faced with a dilemma, would they provide a cage for the witch, why did she need a cage? What kind of guests would they welcome? Later in the discussions a child wanted someone to stay in the hotel but it transpired that this person had no money. Again, this forced discussions about the value status of the company. What kind of hotel were they, would they turn someone away if they had no money? Why might someone find themselves without money? The PLN Teacher is experienced and skilled at steering children through the complexities of this kind of discussion. Each child’s comments were valued. The Teachers’ choice of language allowed the children to think together about the enterprise and its values. For example, ‘are we the kind of hotel that…..’

The second session observed (see appendix 4.2) was led by an experienced MoE teacher and was delivered to a parallel Year 1 class who are involved in a similar Mantle. In this session the children were preparing to take a ‘customer relations test’. The children were in role as staff in the hotel’s restaurant. The teacher modelled ‘good’ (resulting in an extremely satisfied, happy customer) and ‘poor’ (resulting in a very disgruntled, angry and dissatisfied customer) customer service and the children discussed what they had seen, interpreting body language, gesture and vocabulary used in order to compile a ‘crib sheet’ of pointers to guide their practice in role play. Later, after opportunities to practice and discuss progress another member of staff arrived, in role as the ‘customer relations assessor’ to assess the children.
Although no ‘big questions’ or philosophical conundrums arose from this session, children were challenged to reflect on and discuss issues around resolving conflict, reflect on the way in which or words and actions can affect others, and were able to speak and listen to others within a safe, imaginary context.
Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- Can young children ask and begin to answer ‘big’ philosophical questions?

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1995) says:

‘the child has a right to express a view and to have that view taken into account in any decision concerning them’.

So, does MoE, as an approach to teaching and learning offer children opportunities to discuss their own thoughts and ideas? What do children want to talk about and how are they equipped to take an active role in their communities and nations, both as children and increasingly as they grow into adulthood?

For me, this is the key to my project; from the evidence gathered first hand through observation of and from talking to the children, the evidence provided by other professionals, many of whom have a wealth of experience, to the secondary evidence gathered from published research, I am persuaded that young children can and do think philosophically. The view that philosophy with children is too difficult does remain for some, perhaps this is because we do not see children avidly reading Aristole or Kant. However, should this lead us to draw the conclusion that there is an unbridgeable chasm between the disciplined reflection of philosophy and the unbridled wondering of childhood? (Lipman, 1980) It would be possible to say therefore that because we do not see young children reading Shakespeare or playing Mozart that they cannot ‘do’ Literature or Music. It appears that the traditional reluctance to discuss philosophical matters with young children might be due to reliance on the view that the inherent complexity or forbidding abstractness of the subject makes it too difficult to present to young children. However, the fledgling work of Lipman and Matthews in the 1970’s and 1980’s does appear to have ‘grown up’ into contextualised philosophical thinking.
Does MoE facilitate philosophical enquiry, if so, how?

Within the constraints of a small scale study such as this, and with the limitations due to the possible bias of respondents to the questionnaire, it cannot be categorically stated that MoE does create an environment conducive to philosophical thinking. However, I suggest that to dispute the evidence that children can and do think critically and creatively, raising philosophical issues within MoE frames would be incorrect. MoE does make room for divergent thinking, alternative solutions or interpretations.

The four core elements do appear to be significant factors in the creation of an environment conducive to this kind of divergent thinking. From the data gathered, I would suggest that the four key elements within Mantle are that it is a purposeful, engaging, collaborative approach, rich in opportunities for two way dialogue. However, MoE is a multi-dimensional, layered approach to teaching and learning developed over many years. It would be fool hardy to suggest that this study could conclusively compartmentalise the many, diverse factors within the approach. In addition, each Educator, setting and child bring their own personal style in the delivery of teaching and learning activities.

Within MoE frames, children are exposed to scenarios which provoke issues which have to be dealt with. Children’s status is elevated to that of expert. Teacher and pupils share power in a model that is non-authoritarian and anti-doctrinal. MoE allows children to develop their own ideas and views within a safe, secure context of community. Children are encouraged to engage in discussions and conversations which challenge them to recognise the perspectives of themselves and others and to explore the possibilities of collaborative conversation. In addition and perhaps, most importantly, the children questioned love working in this way.

In my opinion, MoE is the big step from Philosophy for Children, in MoE you are there, in your imagination. The tensions created within frames result in ‘feeling problems’ rather than just solving them.
Recommendations

As previously stated MoE is not a ‘pick and mix’ approach to teaching and learning. It is a highly complex, multi dimensional system suitable, according to Heathcote (online, no date), ‘for the whole curriculum’ in the 21st Century. There is a danger that practitioners misunderstand the complex interactions of the elements which comprise the system, hence teachers who introduce an element of drama to a lesson have claimed to be ‘doing’ Mantle of the Expert. Although my research supports the hypothesis that four elements of Mantle combine to create an environment conducive to philosophical thinking, looking at Mantle through those four lenses could be likened to looking at the approach through binoculars set to maximum magnification. It is necessary to ‘pull back’, ‘zoom out’ to see the complexity of all the other elements which combine with the four mentioned in this study, these, as a whole, do seem to create a fertile space where philosophical thinking can begin to grow and develop.

It may be necessary for some issues which arise within MoE frames to be revisited within a more formal philosophy session (as suggested by one respondent to the questionnaires), in order to fully address issues raised.

Training for practitioners is then my first recommendation for any setting wishing to create an environment conducive to philosophical thinking via the MoE approach. An openness to new and innovative interactions within the classroom is also essential as both P4C and MoE challenge long held assumptions about the way in which young children think and learn and the way in which teachers teach and interact with pupils.

The continued interest of the Government and Westminster, with an independent review of primary curriculum led by Sir Jim Rose (DCSF, 2008) and supported by QCA, is significant for the future of philosophy for children and the MoE approach to teaching and learning. Rose’s interim report was submitted to the Secretary of State on 8th December 2008. On 31st March 2009, Rose’s final advice will be submitted to the Secretary of State. A two year consultation process will follow with the new primary curriculum due to be effective from September 2011. The involvement of the researchers setting in the Norfolk/QCA co-development research-based project with a
focus on Personalised Learning and a Primary Learning Network with a research-based focus on Mantle of the Expert: assessment for learning through Mantle, and providing for gifted and talented children through Mantle will continue to contribute to the development of the new primary curriculum.
References


Bell, J (1987) Doing your Research Project Buckingham: OUP

Bell, J and Opie, C (2002) Learning from Research: Getting more from your data Buckingham: OUP


Donaldson, M (1978) *Children’s Minds* Fontana


Edminston, B (2005) *Mantle of the Expert PSLN Tool Kit*


Filippini, T (1990, November) The Reggio Emilia approach paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association for the education of young children. Washington: DC

Fisher, R (1990) *Teaching Children to Think* Hemel Hempsted: Simon & Schuster


Hendy, L and Toon, L (2001) *Supporting Drama and Imaginative Play in the Early Years* Buckingham: OUP

Johnson, L. and O’Neill, C (1884) Collected Writings on Education and Drama Dorothy Heathcote Illinois: Northwestern University Press


Peter, M (2001) All about Drama Nursery world 6th December 2001


Youngman, M. B (1986) *Analysing Questionnaires*. University of Nottingham School of Education
Appendices

Appendix 1.1

Core elements of the ‘Mantle of the Expert’ approach to education.

1. The students / learners gradually take on responsibility for running an enterprise in a fictional world
2. The student / learners care enough about the long-term goals of a fictional client that they engage in activities through which they begin to imagine the fictional world
3. Learners and teacher together:
   a. interact predominantly as ‘themselves’
   b. imagine that they are interacting as experts who run the enterprise
   c. imagine that they are interacting as other people in the fictional world with whom the experts are concerned
4. Over time, the pupils engage in activities that at the same time are both curriculum tasks and that would be professional practices in the fictional enterprise
5. The teacher must share power to position the students (individually and collectively) as knowledgeable and competent colleagues and also ensure that children position one another similarly
6. The children must reflect to make meaning.

Adapted from:
© Dorothy Heathcote
Appendix 1.2

7th November 2008

Dear Parents and Carers,

As part of my degree course studies I am researching the way in which our curriculum encourages children to ask 'big' questions.

It is my intention to ask randomly selected children some 'child friendly' questions in small groups. Their responses will be recorded so that I can group together common themes in order to complete my project.

The school will not be named and the children will remain anonymous. The school fully supports my project.

I write to request permission for your child to take part, should they be randomly selected. If you wish to know more about my project, please feel free to come and have a chat to me.

I would be most grateful if slips could be returned by Friday 14th November, please return via your child's teacher.

Many thanks,

Mrs Julie Hymers (HLTA)

I do/do not give permission for my child to take part in the research project as described above.
Appendix 1.3

FAO Early Years Teachers

Julie Hymers  
Dussindale Primary School  
Vane Close  
Thorpe St Andrew  
Norwich  
NR7 OUS

office@dussindale.norfolk.sch.uk

7th November 2008

Dear

I am currently undertaking a research project to complete my BA(Hons) in Early Childhood Studies.

The project asks – Can young children do philosophy? Does Mantle of the Expert create an environment conducive to philosophical thinking? If so, what are the core elements within Mantle which facilitate this?

In order to complete this project I am looking for Early Years teachers who would be willing to spare a few moments to complete the attached questionnaire. If you felt able to help in this I would be very appreciative – I know how busy Early Years Teachers are and would value every response.

The questionnaire is anonymous and should you return the form by post or electronically you will not be identified in the study.

I am extremely grateful for the support of Jane Worsdale and Sally Coulter here at Dussindale, throughout this project and hope that the findings will add to current knowledge and understanding relating to young children, MoE and philosophy.

Once again, many thanks for your help.

With regards

Julie Hymers
Appendix 1.4

Childrens’ questions – Research into philosophy via MoE
In small groups of 5, I will ask the children the following questions. Responses will be recorded, collated and analysed.

- How do you feel about ‘stepping into’ stories?

- What things have you been thinking about in our stories? Do you ever think about really puzzling stuff?

- What do you have to do? (Children as active participants)

- Is everyone involved? (Children as part of a community)

- How do you feel when you are working together? (Children who are emotionally involved)

- Who is in charge – you or the teacher? How does that work? (Power is shared between teacher and children)

- Is there anything else you want to say about stepping into stories?
Appendix 1.5

As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. How do you feel about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No
   If yes, please explain how?

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?
Appendix 2.1

Children’s questions – Research into philosophy via MoE
In small groups of 5, I will ask the children the following questions. Responses will be recorded, collated and analysed.

- How do you feel about ‘stepping into’ stories? 
  - happy, happy, really happy, not sure, happy really excited.

- What things have you been thinking about in our stories? Do you ever think about really puzzling stuff?
  - Ancient Egyptians.
    - When the Egyptians died, I didn’t know when they died.

- What do you have to do? (Children as active participants)
  - We have to imagine stuff
  - We have to pretend

- Who takes part, who is involved? (Children as part of a community)
  - Everybody even visitors, all the staff. No one is left out

- How do you feel when you are working together? (Children who are emotionally involved)
  - adventurous, happy, nice and happy collaborative

- Who is in charge – you or the teacher? How does that work? (Power is shared between teacher and children)
  - The person who comes to help us.
  - Everyone is important

- Is there anything else you want to say about stepping into stories?
  - It’s exciting.
  - We’d like to do it at home.
  - But M&D wouldn’t understand.
  - How to do it.
  - We wouldn’t know how to explain it.
Appendix 2.2

Children's questions – Research into philosophy via MoE
In small groups of 5, I will ask the children the following questions. Responses
will be recorded, collated and analysed.

- How do you feel about ‘stepping into’ stories?
  
  happy, excited, happy excited.

- What things have you been thinking about in our stories? Do you ever think about
  really puzzling stuff?
  
  crocodiles, fairy tale characters,
  princesses, peter pan,
  people getting muddled up, when you will

- What do you have to do? (Children as active participants)
  
  you have to think
  you think about what's going to happen

- Who takes part, who is involved? (Children as part of a community)
  
  sometimes mr. taylor,
  lots of people, no one is left
  we all are, me, we, out, everyone is
  's it.

- How do you feel when you are working together? (Children who are emotionally
  involved)
  
  really makes really happy
  we all work together, it makes stuff
  easier for us. If it's hard stuff, instead

- Who is in charge – you or the teacher? How does that work? (Power is shared
  between teacher and children)
  
  the teacher
  sometimes the children, when we're
  in groups.

- Is there anything else you want to say about stepping into stories?
  
  it's quite complicated to work as
  a team, but it's very important

  what's the most important thing?
  j. learning new things
  i. of one, all of us can do it. The 250
  is quicker.
Appendix 2.3
Childrens’ questions – Research into philosophy via MoE
In small groups of 5, I will ask the children the following questions. Responses will be recorded, collated and analysed.

- How do you feel about ‘stepping into’ stories?
  happy, excited, very happy. It's feels like were really were very excited.

- What things have you been thinking about in our stories? Do you ever think about really puzzling stuff?
  where is Australia? Why did they take the train out? Why did they weight to heart, why was did they think there was an

- What do you have to do? (Children as active participants)
  you have to pretend to be a doll after life
  you have to listen person
  you take on a role
  practice there are

- Is everyone involved? (Children as part of a community)
  yes, some people feel nervous.

- How do you feel when you are working together? (Children who are emotionally involved)
  collaborative, you're not alone

- Who is in charge – you or the teacher? How does that work? (Power is shared between teacher and children)
  the teacher but sometimes you can be in charge too. It's kind of half/half.

- Is there anything else you want to say about stepping into stories?
  it's fun and exciting.
  the teachers have to know if we need costumes.

Appendix 2.4
Childrens’ questions – Research into philosophy via MoE
In small groups of 5, I will ask the children the following questions. Responses will be recorded, collated and analysed.

- How do you feel about ‘stepping into’ stories?
  - happy, bored, surprising, really good, fun, relaxed.
- What things have you been thinking about in our stories? Do you ever think about really puzzling stuff?
  - little pigs/ wolf/ island/ quick sand/ good magic/ bad magic
- Sometimes, how the world was made, I wonder that
- What do you have to do? (Children as active participants)
  - be kind, carry sensible
  - not be silly
  - everybody does it
- Who takes part, who is involved? (Children as part of a community)
  - everybody does it, always everybody

- How do you feel when you are working together? (Children who are emotionally involved)
  - we felt really grateful, happy and excited, were grateful for what we've done

- Who is in charge – you or the teacher? How does that work? (Power is shared between teacher and children)
  - The teacher, but we have to work together to do it.
  - It's collaborating it works, it can all do it.

- Is there anything else you want to say about stepping into stories?
  - It helps if you're independent, you think on your own
  - you get to learn more things if you listen.

Appendix 2.5
Childrens’ questions – Research into philosophy via MoE
In small groups of 5, I will ask the children the following questions. Responses will be recorded, collated and analysed.

- How do you feel about ‘stepping into’ stories? relaxed, quite excited, it’s magical. It’s quite fun.
The island was really real.
- What things have you been thinking about in our stories? Do you ever think about really puzzling stuff?
  I can’t remember. We had questions about living in Zimbabwe.
  How do you make the hotel, and what would happen there? Was there a war?
- What do you have to do? (Children as active participants)
  * we explore things
  * we make things
  * we have to listen
  * we play electricity
  * we think
  everyone is involved, they all do something. No one is left out.
- Is everyone involved? (Children as part of a community)

- How do you feel when you are working together? (Children who are emotionally involved)
  We feel like a real team, like brave soldiers. We feel like we’re collaborating. It’s like a whole class.
- Who is in charge – you or the teacher? How does that work? (Power is shared between teacher and children)
  We work together with the teacher. We get the ideas in our head.

- Is there anything else you want to say about stepping into stories?
  When we have a question we have to hold it in our heads. We don’t talk over people.

Appendix 3.1
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?

   I think it is a fantastic way of encouraging children to take risks with ideas and appreciate that learning is about ‘shades of grey’.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes No
   If yes, please explain how?
   Using stimuli, including picture books, paintings, video clips, signs, questions from MoE.

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes No
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes No

   MoE can bring forth philosophical issues which have to be tackled, forcing children to engage with big issues regarding life, death etc.

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?

   The expertise aspect encourages them to upgrade their thinking. The purposefulness aspect means there is no side stepping the big

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?

   - Flexibility of thought
   - Critical thinking
   - Tolerance
   - Speaking and listening
   - Ethical development questions
   - Graduation skills

Appendix 3.2
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you feel able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?
   
   I think it can be a valuable introduction to thinking skills and encouraging children to speculate beyond the everyday world.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No
   
   If yes, please explain how?
   
   usually through a book which raises interesting ethical questions.

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No
   
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?
   
   - the idea of approaching a subject from another angle, encouraging speculation and infinite possibilities.
   - the question of actions taken being right or wrong from a moral standpoint.

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?
   
   Yes. I think that young children can shine in this area. Their brains may just lead themselves to thinking ‘outside the box’ and this can enhance other thought processes. It encourages children to be less accepting of the norm and more opportunity

Appendix 3.3
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years? Very worthwhile children seem to thrive on being asked an important question and develop good thinking skills to get to children seem to bounce ideas off one another.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No If yes, please explain how:
Through "thruig time" - where we share a chosen story from school philosophy box and have time to discuss the issues in the story - cycling to a partner and sharing ideas back to the rest of the class.

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No Without a doubt, young children are more able than people think at having a go to solve a problem and think about problems and the effect it has on other people / creatures / environments.

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues? Children are allowed to be in control and taking their "thinking" in which ever direction they want to go. There is no right or wrong answer, the children always want to be the ones that help.

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be? Definitely yes! Some children are very good at thinking outside the box and this allows them to develop their thinking further. Other children ideas are enhanced by this. Encourages independence where children are given opportunities to have

Appendix 3.4
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?
   I think it is vitally important to their ability to reason, think logically and question the world around them. It helps them see connections in their own lives; it is crucial to their development of self—there ability to feel listened to as part of a community.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No
   If yes, please explain how?
   Yes— I have actually written a book about Philosophy in the Early Years. I use a programme I devised to develop skills in philosophical thinking from Nursery upwards—

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)
   In a less formal way—Using a story as a whole year focus, becoming part of the story—it is not as rigid as the Luke Hobrott Way

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No
   Yes, because it develops problem solving skills, negotiation of ideas and opinions, questioning and community skills. It is meaningful to the children’s lives and experiences.

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?
   See above. A engagement with relationship between the concrete and abstract.

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?
   See Section 1—MoE has proven to raise IQ, standards in Literacy, Science and Numeracy. It is not a subject but a way of thinking and meta-thinking. The skills

Appendix 3.5
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. How do you feel about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?
   
   *I think it’s brilliant! I love to see children thinking about big issues / questions that taxes all of us. Good for all sorts of areas of curriculum but valid in own right too.*

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No
   
   If yes, please explain how?
   
   *only on an ad hoc basis as ideas / themes have come up or as part of a topic*

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No
   
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?
   
   *The element of children acting in roles as adults in ‘real life’ situations encourages them to think about big questions with a purpose.*

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?
   
   *thinking skills, considering others’ points of view, developing / adapting an*
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. How do you feel about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?

   Very positive! The children really benefit from thinking philosophically in many ways. (a) No right or wrong answers encouraged participation. (b) Encourages children to frame and voice their own opinions. (c) Helps children to see that issues are complex. (d) Helps children see links between ideas.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No

   If yes, please explain how?

   (v) Encourages children to look beyond the surface and ask "deeper" questions.

   Y1 to Y2. Whole class discussion usually introduced by a story. Philosophy book. Recording thoughts and ideas in a 'philosophy book'.

   "What if?". Sharing ideas.

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No

   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6) Not sure what you're talking about.

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No

   Very much so.

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?

   Creating an imagined scenario, having a "pressure..." force issues to the forefront as they need discussion/ resolution.

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?

   I've already mentioned some benefits... here are some more:

   (a) Encourages critical thinking skills... children learn to question what they see and hear.

Appendix 3.7
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?

   I think some children are already philosophers before they come to school but our current system crushes them and makes them conform to a cultural way of thinking - I think philosophy is a strategy that could be used not an explicit lesson.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No

   If yes, please explain how?

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No

   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?

   Yes, broadening their thinking strategies, making encouraging a questioning and enquiring mind is essential for this.

Appendix 3.8
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. How do you feel about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?
   
   I think it's a great thing to do with all ages. Starting in the Early years is a good idea.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No
   If yes, please explain how?
   
   I used a scheme (can't remember which one), the children watched a film or heard a story then had to think of 'puzzling' or 'wonder' questions.

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?

   Captures their imagination so the children are interested and focussed. Promotes thinking skills in a context that is relevant to them. Gives them ownership. All opinions respected and considered.

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?

   Yes. Really helps with PSHE issues and empathy. Lots of discussions, helping children with their ability to put forward their views man considered way. Broadens children's understanding, beliefs.

Appendix 3.9
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?

   I would be willing to “have a go” and try it out.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No
   If yes, please explain how?

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No

   I believe it makes them think and extend their ideas.

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?

   To begin to think beyond their own personal feelings and experiences.

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?

   I believe young children benefit from many different opportunities and approaches. However if the person delivering the initial input is not skilled I believe the benefits may not be as great.

Appendix 3.10
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?

I think that philosophy is suitable for all children, as it builds on their natural curiosity. Children are always asking questions and we need to encourage them to ask ‘big’ questions based on a sense of awe and wonder of the world.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No
   If yes, please explain how?

I use Philosophy Bear and base the work on ‘But Why’ by Sarah Stanley (a local teacher) as she has a good bank of activities that develop early philosophical skills. The children love the idea of a small bear that asks big questions. It is very appealing.

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No

MoE frames are always based on a scenario that will challenge the children to debate philosophical issues and develop their own belief/value systems.

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?

- Safety to share ideas within a “community” and shared power with the teacher
- They have to debate and decide what sort of company they are and thus define their values systems through the imaginative enquiry

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?

We need children to keep asking big questions in order for them to grow up and benefit our society. A society where no one questions the status quo would be very damaging—we want them to be critical thinkers. I feel that all children need to be encouraged to think deeply.
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?
   
   I think all children should do Philosophy. It is really good for their ability to think, discuss, reason and respect.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No
   
   If yes, please explain how?
   
   We have started to teach a progression of philosophical skills.

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No
   
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No Not sure
   
   I think MoE needs to be very carefully planned. It can lead to a chaotic classroom with no direction in the children's learning.

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?
   
   Problem solving, enquiry, speaking and listening skills.

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?
   
   Yes definitely, young children start to learn reasoning, enquiry, speaking, listening, discussion, respect, just what

Appendix 3.12
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?

   I agree with it and think that it really increases their thinking skills.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes
   If yes, please explain how?
   Mostly through nursery rhymes and stories, eg. "Humpty Dumpy" + "Gorilla"

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?

   They really do benefit because they realise they can have really good & valuable ideas - there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer to these questions and therefore are more prepared

Appendix 3.13
As part of my research for my degree, I am looking for teachers in the Early Years who would be willing to complete this questionnaire. If you felt able, I would appreciate your comments very much.

1. What do you think about children doing Philosophy in the Early Years?
   The sooner the better - it can be done in a single format right from Foundation Stage and should include active participation and open discussion, rather than judgmental explication.

2. Do you, or have you ever, taught Philosophy in the Early Years? Yes/No
   If yes, please explain how?
   Initially, Philosophy for children was extended into philosophical type dialogue in other areas, especially as part of Mantle of the Expert.

3. Have you ever used the Mantle of the Expert (MoE) approach to education in the Early Years? Yes/No
   (If the answer is no, please proceed to question 6)

4. Do you think MoE creates an environment which encourages young children to engage with philosophical issues? Yes/No
   Definitely - which is why I now do 'Philosophy' lessons as part of the Mantle of the Expert.

5. If so, what, in your opinion are the elements within Mantle that provoke young children to engage with philosophical issues?

6. Do you think young children can benefit from opportunities to engage in philosophical thinking, if so what do you think the benefits might be?
   Yes. Better learning, better communication, active thinking, and understanding the benefits listed above.
Appendix 4.1

Lesson observation 1 Year 1 25.11.08

Adults present, CT (Class Teacher), PLNT (Primary Learning Network Teacher), TA (Teaching assistant) HT (Head Teacher), YR1 YR 1 Teacher) JH (Observer)

Children gathered on the carpet, PLNT kneeling at the front of the carpet.

PLNT: 'Have you ever been to a theme park'

The children begin to call out responses, PLNT encourages chn to indicate when they want to talk by touching their shoulder. Discussion about theme parks and rides.

PLNT: 'Would it be ok if we had a theme park, could we agree that we are the owners of this park'

Children agree

PLNT: 'What would you find in our park?'

Children are then asked to go and draw the things that you would see if you came to their park. They were invited to write a word or sound to describe their representation. Next, drawings (including a hotel) were collected, looked at and displayed on the classroom window.

Break

After br eak the staff, in role, imagined that they were characters from fairy tales who wanted to stay at the parks' hotel. The children listened to the staff in role and tried to decide who they were and why they would need the things they were asking for in the hotel.

Discussions around 'what kind of hotel are we', 'what kind of people will we let stay in our hotel?'

Points to note
- Power share: physical positioning of PLNTower than children
- Community: all comments valued and taken seriously, all children involved
Appendix 4.2

Lesson Observation. Year 1 27.11.08

Adults present CT (Class Teacher) , TA (Teaching Assistant) , SC (Teacher) , JH (Observer)

Mantle Frame - Fairy Tale Hotel Owners

Children to prepare for assessment in customer relations.

SC and CT role play 'good' and 'poor' customer service, as customer as staff member.

Children invited to observe, body language, vocabulary and gesture used.

Group compile a 'crib sheet' to help them prepare for their assessment.

Children role play in pairs to practice customer service skills.

Staff support (in role), pairs demo to rest of class.

CT arrives as 'Assessor' to assess children.

Points to note;

- Language used- 'we'
- Child 'on edge' left, later decided to join the group, conflict avoided everyone involved
- Children encouraged to read body language
- Discussion regarding conflict management how could things have been different? What could we try next time?
- Every contribution valued
- Comments fed back to the group for discussion. 'So you think...?' we feel about.....'
- Today’s tension is the inspection, this is set in the history of the do you remember when we were assessed on our customer service prevents fear of failure and allows every child to succeed.
‘Little Children, ‘Big’ Questions’

Does Mantle of the Expert create an environment conducive to philosophical thinking in the Early Years?

Barcode

“This work contains material that is the copyright property of others which cannot be reproduced without the permission of the original copyright owner. Such material is clearly identified within the text”.