

# Introduction to Mantle of the Expert

An online course

Lesson 1: Welcome

SLIDE 1: Hello, welcome to this introduction to Mantle of the Expert online course.

This course is designed to take approximately three hours, however, there are various tasks which you can do at your own pace and additional suggested reading which will make the course last longer.

At various points you will be asked to stop the video and work on a task. These tasks are designed to help your better understanding of the approach and to support your development.

My name is Tim Taylor...

SLIDE 2: ...here I am working with a group of children in a classroom in Norwich.

We're inside a fiction, working as a team of Animal Park Rangers. At this moment we're about to give an injured lion an injection so we give him first aid.

You'll notice we're all giving the lion the injection; Mantle of the Expert is a collaborative approach where the students and the teacher work together to develop the fiction. It is not about pretending or 'acting out a story' but a conscious and deliberate process of make-believe.

At this moment we are inside an imaginary world, but at any moment we can stop the fiction – just like when children stop their imaginary play – and come back out into the real world. TWO WORLDS – the process is very simple, something like, *"Let's just stop our story for a moment..."*

Back in the real world we can talk about what is happening in the story and decide what we want to do next, *"It looks like the lion is properly sedated, what should we do now?"*

SLIDE 3: You'll see now the children have relaxed and are looking at the lion from outside the fiction.

The student in the middle of the circle represents the sleeping lion (and is inside the imaginary world) while the rest of the class and the teacher are outside in the real world.

This duality of real and imaginary is at the heart of the Mantle of the Expert approach. It is, in effect, a process of collaborative story-making which the students and the teacher do together under the teacher's guidance and planning.

SLIDE 4: Here are some more images of children working inside the fiction as the Animal Park Rangers. You can see they are representing the work of the Rangers enactively, that is in the form of imaginary play or drama.

SLIDE 5: And here are some images of them working outside the fiction on curriculum activities that are developing the imaginary world, using other forms of representation – drawing and writing – to create the animals and the enclosures of the Animal Park.

In this way, the fiction creates interest and purpose which the teacher can then use to plan activities for curriculum learning and development in the real world of the classroom.

SLIDE 6: This short film will tell you more.

SLIDE 7: In the next session we will explore one way to start a Mantle of the Expert context and look at how the different elements of the approach fit together. In preparation for that please take a look at the resources for Session 2 – you might want to print them out for reference during the session.