

Evidence and Research for Inquiry-based Learning

ERIL

Paul Hamlyn Foundation Teacher Development Fund

Independent Evaluation

Teacher Development Plan:

Mantle of the Expert Training Programme 2019 – 2022

[EH1]

EVALUATION INTERIM REPORT

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Introduction

This Evaluation is of a Training Programme run as part of Hamlyn Foundation's Teacher Participation Programme, designed to assist teachers to access new pedagogies, and to embed effective new teaching methodologies in general educational practice.

This Training Programme is in Mantle of the Expert, sometimes called 'MoE', referred to as 'Mantle' within this report. Mantle of the Expert is a classroom pedagogy devised by the pioneering educator, Dr Dorothy Heathcote (1926-2011). Mantle uses drama and the imagination and assumes that all learning and teaching should be as holistic, collaborative, and as inclusive as possible.

Heathcote's innovative practice remains in use in the UK and elsewhere worldwide, including in the US, New Zealand, Australia, Jordan, Wales, Ireland, Portugal, Turkey, Germany, India, and Greece.

"If you want to really learn something you teach it to somebody else."

Dorothy Heathcote

What is Mantle of the Expert?

The Mantle of the Expert is an approach to teaching and learning in which the class do all their curriculum work as if they are a team of people with expertise as professionals or other grown-ups. For example, they may be running a library. They might be engaged in scientific experiments in a laboratory or people running a store. Because they behave as if they are a team of experts, the children adopt and develop a position of shared responsibility. Their expert viewpoint brings with it specific responsibilities for collaborating to create particular outcomes inherent in the work of the team grappling with challenging problems. For example, making their library accessible to the visually impaired, addressing ways in which their 'store' can help and support refugees or creating a virtual reality simulation for the curator of a science museum.

Heathcote describes Mantle as follows:

'The Mantle of the Expert carries two very important features, which are related to the way learning takes place. 'Mantle' represents the preparedness of participating individuals to carry the responsibilities of the work they are engaged in doing. The second word 'expert' actually turns upside down our notions of how to teach children. It is an assumption, long established, that if you want people to learn, you teach them. But your own experience will tell you that if you want to really learn something you teach it to somebody else."¹

With a Mantle approach, students are not putting on a play. They are asked to agree that they will interact as if they are a group of librarians, scientists, etc. This is an approach to the

¹ Heathcote, D. (1994)

whole curriculum which creates imagined yet authentic contexts for the development of skills, knowledge, and understanding. Through Mantle, children can encounter any aspects of the school curriculum, including science, mathematics, geography, or any other subject area teachers intend to teach. A Mantle consists of a fictional enterprise, a client, and responsibilities that the children accept as they work to resolve particular challenging problems. The children, alongside their teacher, collectively imagine that they are working as a responsible team as part of a realistic, already existing, enterprise. The client/s (person/people who need our help) approach us to work for them. The team's expertise is in dealing with complex tasks. In this way, Mantle provides authentic purposes for children in their learning, for example, applying the skills of measuring as a team of designers.

Our approach to the Evaluation

Our approach to evaluating this training is to document and analyse the consequences of the professional development on the participating teachers' practice.

As it is the teachers who implement any programme, we have chosen to foreground teachers' voices, experiences, evaluations, and their personal journeys learning to use this approach. We will not evaluate the professional development programme directly but rather the consequences of the professional development on the teachers' practice, their reflections on their experiences of the programme, and their evaluation of its effect on children's learning, especially those coming from disadvantaged situations.

As a pedagogy, MoE is a deep and holistic approach to learning. It is not simply a case of adding new techniques or 'tools' to their existing skillset; rather it requires a reflective re-assessment of the roles of teachers and pupils at a quite fundamental level.

The training will therefore be assessed on the change and shift in participating teachers' perceptions of the learning process and the way they re-position themselves and the children they teach.

A working definition of disadvantaged children

Hamlyn is interested in the effect of the training on children experiencing disadvantage. Defining 'disadvantage' in educational terms is complex² and beyond the remit of this study. For the purposes of evaluating the Training Programme, we have accepted the views of the PTs of children experiencing disadvantage in their teaching cohorts; this may include disabilities, difficulties and differences, health, geographical, family or financial circumstances, or other factors. Our own definition of 'disadvantaged learners' for the purpose of this study would include anyone who experiences a barrier to learning for any reason, or is seen by the teacher as doing so.

² Kellaghan (2001)

Context and geographical location of participating schools and teachers.

This Training Programme was led by two highly experienced Heathcote practitioners, Luke Abbott and Tim Taylor, who have done much to promulgate her pedagogy in schools and universities, nationally and internationally. The programme was co-ordinated by a teacher and deputy head teacher, Helen Chapman, who had previously undergone training with the trainers, and who was practising it in her teaching context. Her work with children, and other schools' Heathcote practice, had been witnessed by some teachers in neighbouring schools, and teachers had been persuaded of the benefits of learning more of the pedagogy.

Helen Chapman selected nine schools to participate in the programme; all church schools: Carreghofa, Welshampton, Oakmeadow, Newtown, Trefonen, Llansantffraid, Whittington, Morda, and Llandysilio.

The Head of each school elected two teachers to take part in the training. All taught different age ranges, including Foundation, KS 1 and KS2; four of the participating teachers (PTs) were head teachers, one of whom is a teaching Head, and two were Deputy Head Teachers.

All the schools are situated on the Wales/England border, with two of them, Carreghofa (Welsh Carreghwfa) and Llandysilio, in the village of Llanymynech, which literally straddles the border. Three are Welsh and six, English. Newtown School is located in a town of about 11,500, and Wem, 8,000, but the others can be classified as rural schools in villages with populations of between 4,000 and less than 1,000.

The size of the schools varies from Oakmeadow (372 pupils) to small schools such as Welshampton and Ysgol Llandysilio (75 and 83 pupils) with the majority being between 100 and 160 pupils. The teaching language of all the schools is English, although Welsh is taught as a second language in the three Welsh schools.

In their last inspections, five of the schools received a 'Good' classification, two, Outstanding' and one 'Adequate' and one 'Needs Improvement. One of these, undergoing senior staff changes, were removed from monitoring the following year. The other school, inspected in 2019, took on a new management plan to improve.

It should be noted that the only school with higher numbers than average for SEND and disadvantaged children is Morda School, in which Helen Chapman, the co-ordinator is based.

Contribution to Paul Hamlyn's wider research on Teacher Development

We are fully aware that the final evaluation of this programme, while referring specifically to the strengths and challenges of this programme for teacher development, may also have implications for the wider view of education in the UK, for example, its use in rural schools, The scope to compare rural schools with others is beyond our remit for this evaluation. However, we hope that our final report will provide material to inform Hamlyn Foundation's wider agenda in their Teacher Development Programmes.

2. The Training Programme

Overview of Programme Events Sept 2019 – November 2021

2019

- April Preplanning starts: Initial Heads' meeting
- September Hamlyn Foundation's Staff Agreement & Questionnaire issued
- October ERIL appointed as Evaluators

The Project Launch: 2 INSET days for all teachers and TAs on Fri 25th October and Monday 4th November in Morda School for the English schools and in Carreghofa School for the Welsh, in which staff trialled Mantle of the Expert methods (Mantle) with the Trainers.

Iona Towler-Evans from the ERIL Evaluation Team attended the Welsh launch event in order to introduced herself to the cohort and explain the methodology of the Evaluation.

Relevant books allocated to all project teachers (PTs)

- November Meeting of Steering Committee: evaluated the work so far and planned ahead, including the next two-day training workshop in January 2020.

They noted the introduction of the Buddy scheme that the Trainers felt would be beneficial. On this basis an additional grant of £30K was agreed: £10K for setting up and administration of Buddy support partners and £20K for additional administration costs. In October

During the term Helen Chapman noted that Participating Teachers (PTs) in Morda, Trefonen and Whittington Schools were already trialling some Mantle techniques with their classes.

2020

- January The first Introductory Mantle Training Weekend: PTs introduced to the Mantle/ drama for inquiry practices in two full days of initial training and evaluation. This training included class experimentation tasks, and reflective evaluation.

Reading tasks and an end of term assignment were agreed. A Microsoft Teams on-line support system was established with staff to create a collaborative learning system.

Dates for the next phase of the training, a development day for the Triad groups were agreed.

Co-ordination 'behind the scenes' also ensured that Senior Management of all the participating schools would ensure release for training time for PTs, including time in lieu for weekend training courses.

Books, in particular 'Mantle of the Expert: A Beginner's Guide' by Tim Taylor, and other resources, were made available in printed form for all PTs.

Helen Chapman visited Whittington school to inquire regarding the use of Mantle in the school, and also received feedback from some Head teachers.

Iona Towler-Evans from ERIL Evaluators interviewed the PTs from the selected Triad.

During this term PTs begin to trial Drama Inquiry and Mantle in their classrooms and plan for Development Days. The course required them to evaluate this work using their on-line platform for at least 30 minutes weekly.

PTs were asked to liaise with Trainers over year groups, subject content and lesson aims of their Development Day Mantle sessions.

February School Development Days took place in three of the project schools, with the rest of the schools in the Triad attending each day, in order to witness Mantle working in practice in a school setting. The Trainers led the Development Day, modelling use of Mantle in classes, with PTs supporting their delivery.

March More forward planning took place, with targets for the following term set. All the Head Teachers were involved, with six attending the meeting in person and three responded through email.

April PTs continued to practice Mantle techniques in the classrooms, until schools were required to close due to Covid-19.

The response of the Trainers to the situation, in an attempt to continue support and stimulation to the PTs during their work online with pupils, was to produce some online materials; these were trialled by Newtown and Morda Schools.

April – July Thanks to the extra Hamlyn Foundation funding, the 'Buddies' scheme continued through lockdown, with qualified Mantle teachers mentoring PTs online.

'Mantle of the Expert: A Guide to Planning', a core resource book by Tim Taylor, was published on the Mantle website, to assist teachers working in lockdown.

July

Various virtual training materials were created by the Trainers, with the aim of supporting teachers in the coming Autumn Term.

A re-launch of the programme was planned for early September.

Later in July it was decided to postpone this re-launch, with its planned training and development days, for initially the first half term of the Autumn Term, as it was recognised that teachers faced challenges re-establishing routines in school, and adding to this stress would be counter-productive.

The decision was then made to postpone training and development days for initially the first half term of the Autumn Term to allow for schools to get into routines for returning to school, ensure participant safety and reduce teacher stress.

Helen Chapman consulted with staff and other stakeholder through a written survey: on this basis the course was re-scheduled, extending the time-frame: 6th November 2020 - December 2021, with two additional days of training.

Development Days were to take place in November 2020 and Staging Post Reflection Activity in December. Further training was planned for the Spring Term 2021, with another 2-day training course in February, followed by Development Days in schools in March. More reflection activity was scheduled for April, with a further two-day course in June and more Development Days in July 2021.

The final Staging Post Assessment was timetabled for the Autumn Term, along with the awarding of Quality Marks and the final conference in December 2021, with the Evaluation to be completed by April 2022.

The Trainers in the meantime had produced a considerable range of materials for teachers generally to use including:

- an introductory film to Mantle, available on the Mantle website,
- two podcasts, one on the Mantle conventions, the other on 'the two circles' of the real and imaged worlds.
- a film introducing the conventions and a planning guide,
- online programmes for process drama which could be purchased.

An additional Paul Hamlyn Foundation Covid Grant was awarded to cover the production of the course materials and half-day supply cover for teachers to allow release time for all PTs to watch and use the programme materials, to refresh and develop their practice during what at this stage was hoped to be simply a pause in the Mantle training, ideally with their Programme Partner Teacher (Buddy), during school time.

- September At this point the Planning Group became aware that the course may need to be further extended to Summer 2022 if Covid restrictions were not lifted to allow face to face interaction in schools.
- October In the light of responses to questionnaires sent by the Co-ordinating Teacher to participating schools, and the imminent lockdown in Wales, a Recovery Plan was agreed: the previously proposed live re-launch was postponed, and PTs were asked to engage with the new online resources the Trainers provided between October 2020, and the re-scheduled programme re-launch. This was now planned for Spring 2021 (with the 2-day training being earmarked for February 2021).

2021

January - April

Tim (Taylor) produced the 'Guide to Mantle Conventions' and 'Mantle Training Films' - online course.

Tim and Luke also provided a 1-1 session with Buddies

- May From 4th - 26th May Zoom meetings were held in groups of three for teachers to discuss their progress over the year, and to express their development needs with their Mantle Key Trainer. Iona Towler-Evans attended one of these meetings to collect information for the Evaluation.

Discussion points identified by the Trainers included asking the PTs to mention any trials they had faces, any points on which they felt they needed clarification, how they envisioned their next steps, and what online activities they had taken up.

Discussion points were also identified for the teachers acting as Buddies: to encourage the PTs to use experimental content to include Mantle, helping them to identify first steps, and asking the, to check in with their Buddy at the start, halfway, and endpoints of their projects.

The Trainers were hopeful of starting a period of the PTs experimenting during the Summer Term, with the key elements of practice being to focus on what they had gained from the training so far.

- July A Headteachers' / Programme Leaders' catch up Teams meeting took place at the beginning of July 2021, attended by Headteachers, with conveying their thoughts through Helen Chapman. The Trainers and one of the ERIL Evaluators, Eirwen Hopkins, were also present.

The second 'live' 2-day Training Session and Development Days were re-scheduled for September 2021, with high hopes by now for the continuation of the project on a more normal basis. However, the lurking threats of Covid-19 and variant infections caused many counties throughout the UK, including Shropshire to operate on a no-visitors schools basis, which precluded the Trainers from engaging with the teachers in the classroom.

Helen Chapman reported that, after consultation and further lockdowns, it had been decided that, under the circumstances, momentum could best be sustained through more online materials that the teachers could access remotely to support their classroom work on Mantle

- September Two Training Days were completed. Welshampton Primary School and Newtown Primary School share a Headteacher. This post changed hands in July 2021, and the new Head had concerns about the school which decided him to abandon the school's participation in the programme. One of the teachers, highly invested in the course, has remained as a PT, although it is not yet known how this will be supported by Senior Staff of the school.
- October Shropshire County Council closed the schools to visitors due to Covid restrictions, so further work was again curtailed.

Conclusion

It is fair to say that the Covid School Closures put pressure on all education staff, including those involved with this training programme. Mantle of the Expert is heavily reliant as a pedagogy on interactive activity between children and their peers and teachers, and the inability to work face-to-face with classes significantly altered the nature of the training programme. The inability of anyone to predict for how long the lockdown situation would obtain was another challenge to planning.

The response of and communication between the Trainers and Course Leaders, to make as much material available on-line for PTs, and to continue to support them while they trialled the elements of Mantle that they could, kept the momentum during a very difficult period for all concerned.

3. Evaluation: Methodology and Process

Research Questions

Our key Research Questions for this Evaluation are as follows:

- **Why do teachers believe that it is worth learning to use the Mantle approach?**
- **What changes do the teachers assess have occurred in what and how the children are learning, especially those coming from disadvantaged circumstances?**
- **As they use the Mantle approach what significant shifts in their practice have teachers reported?**
- **As they learn to use Mantle successfully, what challenges do teacher participants encounter and how do they navigate those challenges?**
- **How have teachers learned to use Mantle successfully and, in particular, how has the Morda Teacher Development Programme helped them?**
- **How do stakeholders believe engagement with Mantle has affected whole school culture and parental responses?**

In order to reach the answers to these questions, we planned to approach the Evaluation by using two research approaches³: a more direct approach through questionnaires and an in-depth narrative approach using interviews, which we felt would elicit deep nuanced information on Participating Teachers (PTs) change of thinking and feeling. The questionnaires are intended to establish broader attitudes and trends generally, and more in-depth analyses will be sought through a Case Study approach⁴ (obtaining and analysing focussed and regular interviews with a selection of PTs).

The two researchers can to some extent triangulate the analyses of questionnaires, with the aim of making finding and outcomes more trustworthy, and both questionnaires and the first set of interviews were analysed by both researchers, and the conclusions compared.

From this research we expect two outcomes: more general points emerging from questionnaires, and more subtle and nuanced changes and shifts from the Narrative Case Studies.

For the Case Studies the main methodology being used is narrative inquiry⁵ as we focus on participants' development as teachers through the programme. Narrative inquiry has been

³ Denzin & Lincoln, 2012

⁴ Stake, 1995; Tight, 2010

⁵ Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Schaefer & Clandinin, 2011; Schaafsma & Vinz, 2011

used by one of the Evaluators previously in evaluation of programmes, in which both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed.⁶

The focus of this qualitative aspect of the evaluation is to capture the multiple stories of how teachers evaluate the training and how they perceive it has made a difference to their teaching as a result of the Mantle training programme. Working to principles of Heathcote, the plan has been to enlist the whole cohort of participating teachers to become co-researchers with us⁷.

The intention over the originally planned two years of the programme was to interview two teachers from each of the three schools in the Triad with each interview being recorded and transcribed. The teachers would be interviewed additionally once during each of the two school years.

The teachers' stories of their teaching and developing practice would thus be documented, focusing in particular on classroom events that illustrate their sense of success and struggle. Teachers would be asked to recall specific events when they believed teaching using the Mantle approach was significant for pupil learning, focussing particularly on children in their classes from disadvantaged situations, referring to any outcomes created by the children.

At the end of the first year of the programme an analysis of this data collected from the six teachers was intended to inform the design of a questionnaire,⁸ to be sent to all teachers in the programme.

A second questionnaire, originally planned for the end of the academic year, was to be delivered to the PTs but also other stakeholders, including Head Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Governors and parents. In the light of the restrictions put on all activities due to Covid-19, this proved impossible; interviews were therefore held with four SS's, (senior teachers) and use was made of the interviews carried out by the Co-ordinating Teacher (CT) with Teaching Assistants. It was not possible to reach Governors and parents, and as the training programme had been curtailed, it was decided that this would have limited relevance at this stage of the programme.

As seen by this, since Summer Term 2020 the original plan, with its timetable, and hence the methodology, has undergone some revision due to Covid-19. This Report will take us up to December 2021; however, the final Report will re-address the period during Covid-19 lockdown and the subsequent development of the Programme.

Evaluation Method: Participants

As said previously, it is the teachers' voices, experiences, assessments, and their personal journeys we have used in assessing the effectiveness of this programme.

To ensure that any improvements in practice are fully embedded in the school, we include the perspectives and input of Senior School Leaders (SSL's), including governors where possible; we also feel that Teaching Assistants (TA's) have an important role in school practice. The

⁶ Edmiston & Towler-Evans, 2017; Edmiston & Towler-Evans, 2018

⁷ Bergold and Thomas, 2012

⁸ Denscombe, 2014

perspectives of the two Trainers themselves will also be gathered, along with the perspective of the Co-ordinating Teacher.

The Case Study is constructed by interviewing representative Participating Teachers (PTs), in order to document and analyse how their teaching changes over the programme's length (February 2020). The Case Studies focus in depth on teacher development within one of the three triads; chosen to be as representative as possible of the range of teachers in the programme and in particular, attending to teachers' work with disadvantaged children. Names used to refer to individual teachers are pseudonyms.

This part of the evaluation documents change across all five teachers. We will address their response against each key question, which are outlined in the original proposal to reflect teachers' voices. We will therefore use these questions to present the preliminary results.

Six teachers were originally selected from one triad which provided the qualitative aspect of the evaluation. This included one teaching Head Teacher and a teacher from the Welsh school within this triad. The other four teachers came from the English schools.

All teachers continued their participation in the training programme through the academic year, apart from one teacher who withdrew during the Spring Term 2020. As the evaluation tracks changes in teachers' practice, over time, we decided to focus on the data of the five remaining teachers who continued to participate in the programme. Our qualitative analysis therefore focuses on the experience of five PTs, including the Teaching Head. Information will be sought from the teacher who withdrew on their reasons for withdrawing for the Final Report.

Teachers were asked to reflect on how they learned to use the Mantle approach with particular consideration of their understanding of how the Morda Programme made a difference to their own learning, and an invitation to reflect on any materials that they generated during the training sessions.

Evaluation: Process

Autumn 2019

Autumn Term 2019: Events

- Evaluators appointed
- Baseline: Questionnaire (Q-1)
- Hamlyn Contract Questionnaire.
- 4 November Iona attended launch event
- Selection of 6 PTs from Triad for in-depth evaluation work: case studies
- 13th December Evaluators met with Pat Cochrane
- Questionnaire (Q-1) analysis to decide interview questions by 9th December

Having been appointed in October 2019 our first priority was to collect some baseline data. This we did in October/November, by referring to the sign-up questionnaires issued by Hamlyn Foundation (Hamlyn Q-1), and completed by all the schools. We also sent out a short initial questionnaire (ERIL Q-1), with nine questions, in October to all PTs.⁹

This first questionnaire was issued to all PTs, before any Mantle training had taken place, to attempt to gain some baselines information on PTs attitudes to their work before starting the course, received 27 responses.

The purpose of the first questionnaire was to investigate why teachers had agreed to attend the programme and to address our first key research question, 'Why do teachers believe that it is worth learning to use the Mantle approach?' The questions were designed to explore the rationale and motivation for joining the programme and the level of commitment to learning how to use M of E, PTs prior exposure to M of E (if any), their readiness and anticipation of change in their own practice and in the children's engagement with the curriculum. As Mantle is a holist and collaborative approach, the Questionnaire ERIL Q-1 also aimed to elicit their view of what they saw as significant in how and what children learn, as well as their motivation to learn in a new way.

Those returned were analysed by December, to inform questions for the in-depth interviews in the New Year.

In order to introduce the Evaluating Team and the notion of evaluation to the stakeholders, Iona Towler-Evans attended one of the Launch Events on 4th November 2019, which all the PTs attended, along with some TA's and all but 1 of the Head Teachers. She introduced herself to the cohort and, according to the principles of the research, during this meeting she invited all the participating teachers to become co-researchers¹⁰.

⁹ Questionnaire 1 (Q-1): November 2019 See Appendix 1

¹⁰Bergold and Thomas (2012)

After this meeting Helen Chapman reported teachers being more aware of the evaluation process and less anxious; more willing to engage with evaluation activities as they felt more comfortable with the evaluation process after this meeting than they had done previously, understanding that they were to be partners in the process, not judged by anyone.

From her meeting on 4th November, Iona advised on selection of PTs for the in-depth case studies. 6 participating teachers (PTs) from 3 schools were selected for the Triad Interviews, on the basis of seeking a representative balance of the Welsh and English schools (1:3): 2 from Carreghofa (Wales), 2 from Newtown, and 2 from Morda Schools (both English), were invited to participate in regular interviews and to share the work of the children: Interviewed Participating Teachers (IPTs).

The six IPTs also represented the different age groups being taught: 2 taught Yrs 5/6, 3 taught Yr 1 or Yrs 1/2 and 1 taught Yrs 3/4. Of the six, one was a Teaching Head.

The teachers were contacted by ITE, and agreed to take part in the in-depth survey, to contribute their views and share the work of their pupils.

The Evaluating Team met with Pat Cochrane on 13 December 2019, to consider how well the programme might address some key areas for Hamlyn: how this pedagogy could assist the performance of rural schools and particularly, how disadvantaged pupils could be better supported through its use.

Spring 2020

Spring Term 2020

- 16 Jan 2020: Interviews of 6 Triad IPTs & in-depth PTs & analysis of recorded interviews ERIL I-1)
- February 2020: Questionnaire (ERIL Q-2) issued to all PTs following School Development Days
- 27th February 2020: Interviews of Senior Staff (ERIL SS-1)

In January 2020 the first introductory Mantle Training Weekend introduced PTs to the Mantle/ drama for inquiry practices in two full days of initial training and evaluation. From the analysis of questionnaires (Hamlyn Q-1 and ERIL Q-1) in December 2019 the Evaluation Team identified potential questions. Following the initial training on 16th January 2020, Iona Towler-Evans conducted open-ended informal interviews of approximately 45 minutes each separately with two Participating Teachers from each of three schools in one of the triads. These interviews were aurally recorded. While the evaluation questions from the ERIL Q-1 guided the questions asked in the interviews, particular questions emerged as the conversations progressed.

The interviews (coded for this report as ERIL I-1) were then transcribed by Iona, the interview data was analysed by her and by Eirwen separately, then discussed by the two Evaluators in order to identify key emerging common themes.

The Development Days training then followed; these and the previous staff interviews were followed up in February 2020 with another questionnaire: coded for this Report as ERIL Q-2¹¹. The aim here was for this questionnaire, conducted after all the teachers had experienced further training opportunities and a chance to practice the approach in their own classrooms, to gain information on how confident and interested the PTs were at this stage.

This information would inform the interview questions for the next round of the in-depth case study with the selected six participants.

However, before all the ERIL Q-2 questionnaires were returned, the Covid-19 situation required the PTs attention to be diverted to maintaining education for their pupils during lockdown. By June 2020 eleven questionnaires were returned and these were duly analysed.

- Observation of Training Days by Iona Towler-Evans
- Participation day by Iona Towler-Evans in reflective discussion with Luke Abbott and teachers from one triad (including one of the case studies), following a development
- Participation on Zoom discussions with Buddies and the trainers, Luke Abbott and Tim Taylor: feedback from 3 experienced Buddies, and their perspectives on the Buddy Programme

In March 2020 the forward planning meeting was well supported by Head Teachers, with six attending the meeting in person and three responding through email.

During this meeting Helen Chapman reported that feedback from all the school heads showed that Mantle teaching was having a positive impact on learning. There was some concern about teacher workload, for instance the amount of time required to write reflections, which was a task not originally budgeted for in the time allowed for release. The trainers released teachers from the burden of writing reflective assignments, due to their concern regarding work load, particularly during the pandemic.

Summer 2020

During April-May 2020 PTs continued to practice Mantle pedagogy in the classrooms, for an increasing number of lessons, and Helen Chapman reported that they were gaining in confidence to use Mantle to address different areas of the curriculum, and extending the range of techniques they were using. She also remarked that teachers were planning the sequence of learning using Mantle

Unfortunately, during this term all classroom activities were put on hold due to Covid-19

Autumn Term 2020

Helen Chapman reported in June 2021 that some teachers had used Mantle approaches during this term: these included Tom Roberts, in Carreghofa School, and Jo Cross in

¹¹ ERIL Q-2 See Appendix 2

Llansantffraid, assisted by a colleague, and all participating staff at Morda School. The Head Teacher of Whittington School (Carl Rogers) reported that the two PTs there were working with the approach, and that he expected it to be embedded in the school in the future. The Senior Staff member from Newtown School gave an outline to Helen, and felt happy with the progress made.

2021

Due to Covid-19 lockdown, further Evaluation events in the classroom were curtailed. However, further detailed feedback via e-mail was sought in January 2021 from three PTs who were able to engage under the circumstances (coded for this Report as ERIL I-2), and interviews were also held in February and April 2020 with some Headteachers and other Senior Staff (ERIL ISS-1), to attempt to gain a view of any changes that might be perceived in the whole school culture.

ERIL I-2 followed two Training Days and two Development Days in their classrooms by the TT's and a period of trialling the Mantle approach by the PTs in the classroom. Unlike the first interviews, these were conducted over an extended period: 'Catherine' in February 2020, 'Bob' and his Year 6 children in May 2021 and 'Emma' in November 2021.

This Interim Report details the results of all these inquiries, and in the Preliminary Analysis which follows, the abbreviations will be used to refer the reader to the appropriate research activity.

4 Evaluation: Preliminary Analysis to date.

‘The child is crucible. What I’m doing is stirring its knowledge all the time.’

Dorothy Heathcote

This analysis is of material gathered in the information-gathering events and activities described above. Descriptions of the activities, with their abbreviations for this Report, are to be found in the box below. We will categorise our provisional findings under each question, sequentially.

Evaluation Events & Activities 2019-21

- Hamlyn Q-1: Sign-up questionnaire of all Participating Staff by Hamlyn Foundation (Oct 2019)
- ERIL Q-1 Baseline questionnaire of all Participating Teachers by Evaluators (Oct 2019)
- ERIL I-1 Open-ended informal interviews with 5 Participating Teachers: Case Studies (Jan 2020)
- ERIL Q-2 Follow-on questionnaire of all Participating Teachers (Feb 2020)
- Observation of Training Days by Iona Towler-Evans
- Observation by Iona Towler-Evans of reflective discussion with Luke Abbott and teachers from one triad including one of the Case Studies, following a Development Day
- Participation by Iona Towler-Evans on Zoom discussions with Buddies and the Trainers, Luke Abbott and Tim Taylor: feedback from 3 experienced Buddies, and their perspectives on the Buddy Programme
- ERIL I-2 Second interview by Iona Towler-Evans with one of the PTs along with four of his children (Year 6), one PTs video exchange with her children during lockdown online, Buddy exchanges, Trainers’ reflections and online communications, online resources to support teachers and their children during lockdown, constructed by one of the Trainers, Tim Taylor
- ERIL SS-1 Interviews with 4 Senior Staff (SS): 34 Head Teachers: Carreghofa (January 2020), Llansantffraid (March 2020), Morda (April 2021), and Senior Teacher (Deputy Head (also the Co-ordinating Teacher for the Training Programme).

[EH2]

Research Questions Individually Analysed

Research Question 1:

Why do teachers believe that it is worth learning to use the Mantle approach?

Evidence Base:

- ERIL Q-1
- Hamlyn Q-1
- ERIL I-1

[EH3]

Summary of Findings

- A significant number of PTs were committed to teaching the curriculum in a more meaningful way. This was particularly noticeable in the Welsh schools, where the curriculum has recently changed.
- A significant percentage of teachers expressed considerable understanding of the principles behind Mantle pedagogy before the PTs actually began their training
- This was particularly true of the 5 teachers whose narratives we explored in depth
- Seeing the effect of Mantle on children's learning, independence and responsibility was a key factor in their belief that Mantle was worth doing
- Most expressed a desire to work collaboratively with others
- The role of the Co-ordinator within the schools' network was highly significant in fuelling their beliefs in Mantle as a worthwhile approach, particularly as she was a qualified Mantle practitioner, who demonstrated the practice to colleagues

Responses to this questionnaire indicate that all 27 teachers believed that Mantle was worth learning, and were committed to the programme, so they would grow as teachers and the children would learn the curriculum in more meaningful ways. They welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues. They also expressed the view that they wanted the children to grow as people, as well as learners. The holistic approach of Mantle seemed to offer a good fit to their motivations as teachers at the start of the project.

Responses: Hamlyn Q-1

Responses to the more open-ended questions in the Hamlyn questionnaire indicate that there was considerable understanding of the principles underlying Mantle of the Expert pedagogy before the PTs actually began their participation in the training programme: the informal opportunities the teachers had been provided with before the course began had given them insight into the potential of the pedagogy, and seemed to be a motivating factor in their application to participate in the training. A significant majority mentioned Mantle's relevance to teaching the curriculum; this was particularly noticeable in the Welsh schools, where the curriculum has recently changed. Increased engagement and creativity in all its forms were also seen as strengths; also the importance of the sense of purpose in independent learning.

Responses: ERIL I-1

Children's Engagement

All five of the teacher participants in the Case Studies drew on children's engagement in the work as being a key reason why they believed that it was worth learning to use the Mantle approach, and for wanting to join the programme. Dian had visited Woodrow First School in Worcestershire who teach their curriculum through Mantle pedagogy, and had been inspired by the children's engagement. With Helen's support she started to trial it in her classroom. Emma had attended training by Helen on Mantle, and had felt supported by Helen in her planning. Dian and Emma had experimented with using role and attempted Mantle contexts prior to the programme. Catherine from Newtown had trialled structures she had located on the Mantle web site, a site developed by the Trainers. All five had felt motivated by witnessing children's engagement in the Mantle.

All PTs referred to the way in which children were engaged; they were attracted to learning, demonstrating independence, initiative and investment in the work. Four of these participants had clearly been inspired through observing children's engagement with this approach to learning and had started to experiment with the pedagogy prior to their enrolment on the training programme. Emma, who was fairly new to the school had heard from colleagues about the approach and how it had inspired and engaged children., and therefore wanted to learn more.

“It is worth continuing with the Mantle approach because of the ownership children feel and have over their work... writing is much more powerful... and the boys in particular have been much more inspired to write”.

‘Dian’ November 2021

“The amount that the children retain and learn is huge. If the Mantle is a success, I can see that they become obsessed and it becomes part of what we do in class – at the moment the classroom itself has become a research base in the Antarctic.”

‘Emma’ November 2021

It was evident that even before the programme begun, these five teachers felt that Mantle was worth doing, because they had seen first-hand or heard evidence of its effect on the engagement of children, particularly those within their own classrooms.

Participating Teachers’ readiness to commit to the training

The influence of the practice and effect on children’s engagement of a well-respected colleague had an effect on teacher participants’ readiness and commitment to participate in the programme. All five Case Study teachers talked about the approach prior to the programme through social relationships, teacher-to-teacher contact and visiting Morda. Four of the participants had seen children working in this way through Helen Chapman’s practice at Morda. These included Anna, the Teaching Head, Catherine, a teacher within one of the triad’s schools, and Dian and Emma, two teachers from Morda.

Four of the five teacher participants cited Helen Chapman, senior teacher at Morda, as the person, who had inspired their interest in Mantle. Helen had completed an intensive course organised and taught by the Trainers, Luke Abbott and Tim Taylor, as part of the NEU Professional Development initiatives (National Education Union). Helen had been inspired by the training led by Luke Abbott and Tim Taylor and wanted to implement the practice as widely as possible. The PTs made comments, such as ‘I’m already committed to it’ as well as excitement about ‘training from experts in the field’.

All five PTs regarded themselves as already teaching creatively, using play and drama. Bob, from the Welsh school, had followed a course on reflective learning, involving drama, Dian was very interested in participatory stories with children, while Anna, Catherine and Emma had followed a creative curriculum. Yet their perspective was that Mantle would offer them a new dimension to their teaching. This was something they had identified from seeing the effect of the practice on children and trialling it in their own classrooms.

Anna, a Teaching Head (from the school in Wales) explained the reasons for taking on this new initiative, as “opportunities for training and staff development which is funded for developing our skills for the new curriculum for Wales”, so her reasons were influenced by her perspective as Headteacher from her wider whole school view, where she saw Mantle as offering ways of addressing the key dimension of the new Welsh Curriculum

The collaborative approach of the Training Programme

The training was set up by Luke Abbott and Tim Taylor to make it possible for teachers to collaborate with colleagues, and this was addressed through the Development Days, triads and the setting up a Buddy programme. The collaborative approach of Mantle for staff as well as children offered an attractive opportunity for teachers enlisting on the course.

All five Case Study teachers welcomed the opportunity of collaborating with others within their own school, across schools and beyond their county. For Catherine this was particularly important. From a small rural school, she yearned for such an opportunity. There seemed to be very little opportunity for her to collaborate with teachers even within her school, and while she and the other PT had a good working relationship, planning together had not been possible prior to the programme. She said, “There isn’t anyone to plan with on the same age group”. The school was a one- form entry school and they taught mixed age groups. She was currently working with a Year 1 /2 class. She expressed the view that “we are cocooned in our schools for about 10 years and you forget.... Going round other schools seeing what their displays are like, how their children interact with their teachers....looking forward to that”. For Catherine, learning to use the Mantle approach was worth it for her because she could share ideas with other people and learn from their different contexts.

Responses: SS I-1

The Senior Staff interviewed also reflected a positive attitude in anticipation of the programme. Their prior experience of observing Mantle and teaching it contributed to this view

Research Question 2:

What changes do the teachers assess have occurred in what and how the children are learning, especially those coming from disadvantaged circumstances?

Evidence Base:

- ERIL I-1 & I-2
- ERIL Q-2
- ERIL SS I-1

Summary of Findings

- It was generally recognised that the enthusiasm, engagement, independence and retention of the children was increased;
- An improvement was seen particularly in the engagement of children perceived as of 'low ability', and those who experienced barriers to learning with improved ownership of learning.
- It was recognised that a change had taken place in 'how the children talked about their learning': a deepening of the ownership of learning was noticed.
- It was seen as giving a larger purpose to the children for their work: 'a real purpose for learning'.
- A change in the relationship between staff and children was perceived generally, with nuances in the way this was regarded.
- A recognition was evident of the emotional dimension of the work by the 5 Case Study Teachers, and the children interviewed.
- Some concerns were general regarding potential tension between working through Mantle and the requirements of Ofsted, SATS etc.: the 'system'.
- This linked with concerns about various subject areas; again, the response was nuanced.

Responses: ERIL I-1 & I-2

Children’s independent and collaborative learning in a changing classroom culture

Working far more independently and collaboratively was a feature of Mantle that all five Case Study PTs had identified, in the way that children were learning through this pedagogy. The following responses illustrate the views of all five teachers

In the later interviews, Catherine noticed a significant shift in the way that the children in her class were engaging with learning. The use of the wall in her classroom had now been transformed from a display of children’s work organised by the teacher to a notice board where children displayed their research for sharing with the entire group’. She said, “Children perceived as ‘low ability’ were all enthused with sharing their research, and demonstrating great independence in doing so”.

In a Mantle programme, which addressed her Geography curriculum, in particular, the children were framed as people concerned about the conservation and protection of animals in Kenya.

“I have been astonished actually, at how enthused they have been with their learning about finding out about these animals and actually quite caring...they have really grasped it with both hands -we’ve done lots of geography and some maths. They were really enthused by the learning.”

‘Catherine’ January 2020

Bob also emphasised the engagement of ‘certain children, especially SEN’. He also commented on the shift in relationship, and the effect of re positioning children as people taking on responsibility.

“Relationships in Mantle are on a par with the students.”

‘Bob’ January 2020

In November 2021 Emma summarises what she notices about children’s learning through Mantle. She indicates a changing culture in the classroom, where the children are empowered, invest in the work and become obsessed with it. This reflects Heathcote’s Attraction to Obsession Model.¹²

¹² O’Neill, C. (2015)

“The amount that the children retain and learn is huge. If the Mantle is a success, I can see that they become obsessed and it becomes part of what we do in class – at the moment the classroom itself has become a research base in the Antarctic. If the Mantle is a successful one, I feel it could go on forever and we could keep developing it through what the children want to explore!”

‘Emma’ November 2021

Emma claimed that the significance of shifting children’s position and perspective on the work through the use of role, opens up new, rich worlds for them to explore, and broadens their immediate experience.

“They are able to fully take on a role and not be themselves for just a short space of time. It allows them to experience things which they may not have the opportunity to experience. It gives them the opportunity to imagine and be creative.

‘Emma’ November 2021

The Children’s perspective of what and how they are learning in Mantle

The children’s perspectives provide evidence of changes in the way they work through Mantle, and indicate the teachers’ implementation of this pedagogy, which is new to them and the children

In May 2021, Bob agreed to set up a Zoom meeting with himself and four of the children in his class, one of whom he considered experienced barriers to learning, to talk about their Mantle on the Fire of London. After a brief chat with Bob, who had by this time trialled a number of Mantles, he was keen that I should speak with his children. They spoke with great authority about their work and how they felt about working in this way. Bob did not intervene in my conversation with the children, and trusted them to carry the conversation.

The children articulated their views about learning this way. While they describe the ‘what’ of their learning, for example the curriculum, such as history and geography, their narratives indicate an inclusive approach and demonstrate how they are learning

When I asked the children, if they found this way of working different, Fay (Yr 6) enthusiastically said, ‘It’s always different’ and shared her joy at investigating how the fire of London started. They were framed as scientists. She often prefaced her description of the work with ‘we decided to.....’

Addressing the curriculum through Mantle brings a new dimension that goes beyond the events, and the example below illustrates the 'feeling' dimension to the work but always in a protective fictional context. This reflects Heathcote's premise that as a teacher

"you do have to reach into contact with the feeling aspects of knowledge".¹³

Here the children explore the implications of that knowledge, and illustrate how the work on the Fire of London has enabled to them to do that.

"I have heard this story before () but I have never got behind it before, what people actually feel like. I was more intrigued about what the people of London felt like. I was acting as Thomas the baker, who accidentally started the fire. Thomas, the baker was blamed. I quite like being Thomas, being blamed. People always think they are right. I thought up, what his excuses might be. Was it an accident?"

'Keith' Year 6

Fay continued to describe her favourite Mantle which indicates the depth of the approach when children explore different points of view.

"I loved it when we created the story of the Mountain King. We create scratches on the trees, the noise we heard and finding the beast. The beast was kind of human, he was rejected, he couldn't be loved"

'Fay' Year 6

While the official curriculum provides the 'givens' of any learning context, in Mantle the added dimension of 'negotiables' is key, those areas which the children can negotiate together with their teacher and make decisions about.

"I like mapping out the different areas. I liked that we didn't have to choose a set answer, there were different options, different directions we could go, lots of different possibilities."

'Carl', identified with ADHD, recently arrived from a different school, and had initially experienced some difficulty settling in.

¹³ Heathcote, D. (1988)

The value of working collaboratively and building relationships was also identified by the children as a strength in this way of working.

“Great to make a giant map, everyone in class has ideas together, you get to know them better.”

‘Richard’, Year 6, referring to the ‘Mountain Rescue’ Mantle, available on the Mantle website.

Bringing new imagined worlds in to the classroom which children inhabit as if they are in the immediacy of events in other places at different times, brings a shift in children’s position and perspective and the excitement of play: ‘The ability to play seriously is absolutely fundamental. It is the mark of the artist and scientist, the inventor and all innovators’.¹⁴ This is one of the skills teachers need, according to Dorothy Heathcote, the inventor of this pedagogy. Children’s natural inclination for imaginative play is evident in this programme.

“I like thinking on the spot, it’s more exciting, and we can go to different places at different times ‘I loved it when we created a map around the story of the Mountain King.”

‘Fay’, Year 6

“Once you get a picture in your head like of the hole in the road you inquire and then you are in the world-you have to adapt to that state of mind’

‘Richard’, Year 6, on a Mantle which Luke had demonstrated during the Training Day

The teachers’ perspective on what and how the children are learning

Motivation and investment of children

All five Case Study PTs identified the motivation of children to participate and learn, as they invested in the Mantle contexts.

Within the context of this practice, the children are working for an imagined ‘client’ (people who need our help) and this had an effect on the way children learn, from the teachers’ perspective. Anna, the Teaching Head noticed the effect of this on her class:

¹⁴ Heathcote, D. (1988)

“What I did this week, I could see how it captures straight away. We do lots of role play, but the way it went off...two boys staying in to write the letters to send the letter off ‘.

Bob observed the effect of this on the shifting power in the classroom:

“I noticed particularly that relationships between children are different, and the power in the classroom has shifted and that has made a difference to the way they learn”.

Catherine noted the effect of the client on how the children were writing; she had reminded them of the need to be viewed professionally by the client, and describes her assessment of one child’s work which she shares:

“She’s used commas in there I haven’t had to say to her explicitly ‘You need to do this’. That child has automatically done that independently and I have got another child who doesn’t really get very motivated about writing but has actually produced that and was quite enthused by it”.

Children who experience barriers to learning

This independence and motivation in their learning is something that Catherine noticed as significant in the work of children who experience barrier to learning: She said:

“Children perceived as ‘low ability’ were all enthused with sharing their research, and demonstrating great independence in doing so”.

This is supported by Bob who affirmed that, in his view, the approach worked “definitely in those who are reluctant or withdrawn” and Emma who felt that, through using Mantle all children were being brought into learning collectively. Emma (November 2021) asserts:

“They completely engage, even the children who have SEN are included and enjoy the narrative... In one particular child in my class, who has limited speech, lack of confidence, and a disadvantaged background, she was able to work as a team and follow others and learn from them as they took on roles. They were able to take in what was happening and absorb what the others were doing to allow her to have a go and not be scared.”

Referring to current Mantle on penguins, Anna describes a change in the engagement of one child:

“...a boy in my class who is very difficult to teach - doesn’t engage - isn’t interested - doesn’t concentrate, he is Year 1 - he is not really ready for school - but he did respond to penguin drama.”

Dian believes that “the approach creates a more level playing field for the children from the start; for example, it’s not a barrier to your learning if you have never heard of Ernest Shackleton (her current Mantle) before, because we are going to plan an exploration like he did and find out about the man as we go along...”

This implies a shift in position for the teacher and child who are exploring together within an inclusive context.

Responses: ERIL Q-2

At this quite early point in the training, the viewpoints on Mantle's success for disadvantaged children were varied, and no consensus themes were identified. However, all five Case Study teachers noted the positive impact the practice had on marginalised children and reluctant learners. Future evaluation will address how far this is reflective of all PTs' experiences

Responses: ERIL SS I-1

The four Senior Staff interviewed supported this inclusive view of Mantle of the Expert pedagogy which they feel connects to all children, including those they categorise as disadvantaged.

Research Question 3:

As they use the Mantle approach what significant shifts in their practice have teachers reported?

Evidence Base

- ERIL Q-2
- ERIL I-2
- ERIL SS I-1

Teachers are generally reporting shifts in their practice. The in-depth Case Studies (ERIL I-2) provide significant evidence of changes in the way teachers position themselves in the classroom.

Summary of Findings

- Initially observing the work in context, including for some, visiting schools who had established practice of Mantle, raised teachers' awareness of the potential of the pedagogy
- Teachers' vulnerability to change was evident, along with a desire and readiness to make this change, and a realisation that Mantle was no 'quick fix' but demanded a shift in teacher position
- Teachers reported that they were paying attention to what children brought to the work and attempted to include their contributions within the context
- They valued the space and time for children to reflect on their learning
- Seeing the purpose for learning from children's perspective, was reported as significant in their practice
- Teachers were learning how to step into the world of the drama and address the curriculum
- A recognition of the importance and value of the TA role and building a team approach with adults and children was evident

Responses: ERIL Q-2

Three of the questions in the ERIL Q-2 addressed in different ways the issue of shifts and changes in the teachers' practice and understanding. Five PTs declared that their practice had changed; they referred to 'trailing different techniques' and continuing to do so, 'using drama more and thinking through the process more', that their drama now had 'more focus and was aware of giving children more control over their learning'.

The subjective element of feelings about change in practice was addressed: here the support built into the course could be a decisive factor. Most of those who responded to this question expressed positive feelings.

Responses: ERIL I-2

As Case Study PTs reported significant shifts in their practice, a feature they all shared was an openness to changing their practice in the way they taught the curriculum, and a realisation that the Mantle approach is no 'quick fix'. They were also enthusiastic about what is possible through Mantle, and aware of the demands it makes on them as teachers. They saw Mantle as offering children a rich pedagogy, which not only shifts their way of working as teachers, but changes the entire culture of the classroom. Their awareness of the demands of the work is evident from their sharing of their struggles within the process of trialling it in their own classrooms.

Elements of Mantle identified as significant from the PTs' reporting of their developing practice are as follows:

- *Paying attention to what the children bring to the work and including their contributions within the context*
- *Giving space and time for children to reflect on their learning*
- *Seeing the purpose for learning from children's perspective*
- *Learning how to step into the world of the drama and address the curriculum*

"I use the curriculum to find children's area of interest to drive the curriculum."

'Catherine' Teacher Yr 6

"I am... aware of giving children more control over their learning."

'Catherine' Teacher Yr 6

Paying attention to what the children bring to the work and including their contributions within the context

There is a shift in focus in teachers' practice from 'delivering' the curriculum to paying attention to ways in which the children can enter into the context of learning and find the curriculum purposeful and relevant, in collaboration. This reflects a different view of the child, the child as 'crucible' rather than the 'child as vessel.' Heathcote describes how a teacher suggested her view of the child as they discussed paradigms:

'The child is crucible. What I'm doing is stirring its knowledge all the time.'¹⁵

This is a paradigm crucial to Mantle. Catherine has transformed the way she views the child and their relationship to the curriculum:

"I have a much greater understanding of learning in context, and I look at the curriculum differently. I use the curriculum to find children's area of interest to drive the curriculum."

And she continues:

"I am also aware of giving children more control over their learning."

"I could see from her reaction that she felt valued and happy that her contribution mattered to the story."

'Emma'

Emma, describes how her practice has changed, and provides a 'before' and 'after' picture of her interaction with children (November 2021).

"Whereas before I would disregard a child's answer, I am now incorporating it into the story. For example, in our Mantle about Ernest Shackleton, asking for skills to join the team, a child said she was good at singing and dancing. Previously, I would have dismissed this answer, because it didn't fit in with my narrative. However, this time I said "You can entertain the crew and keep their spirits up!" I could see from her reaction that she felt valued and happy that her contribution mattered to the story. We later went on to discover that Ernest did actually have people who sang to entertain the crew!"

Emma is recognising that asking children what they think on its own is not enough, but treating them as colleagues who are all part of a responsible team shares the power in the classroom so that they can all work collaboratively to meet the needs of the 'client'. Emma shows she is prepared to be flexible in her planning and open to what the children bring to it, rather than sticking rigidly to a plan. She is clearly asking a question to which she genuinely doesn't have an answer in her head.

¹⁵ Heathcote, D. (1988)

“Excitement for both me and the children is more evident”.

‘Dian’ Teacher Yr 6

Dian’s view reflects this; she asserts that when the learning follows the interests of the children, their involvement is much higher: “Excitement for both me and the children is more evident”.

Giving space and time for children to reflect on their learning

Providing time for children to consider, reflect and influence the learning was also seen as a significant shift for Emma and Bob. Emma in November (2021) develops her reflections on her most recent Mantle:

“The main thing since the last training, is to give time for the children to answer and to absorb what I am asking them to do.”

Bob supports this view of children, who negotiate their own meaning through agreed inquiry questions, thus influencing the direction of the work.

Seeing the purpose for learning from children’s perspective

A key aspect of Mantle is the use of the ‘client’ someone the children will care about, and one that will contribute to the context and help carry the curriculum. When the children care about the ‘client/s’, they are motivated to help them. Catherine’s choice of the injured animals, depicted in an image, moved the children in a way which meant they felt compassion and concern for them and wanted to help. This gave them a real purpose for their work:

“What I wanted was for the children to have a real purpose for their learning about in this case Kenya. I have always had lessons where I had a purpose on maybe a small project, but actually this is more encompassing and it is covering lot of different areas of the curriculum- it’s all weaving together.”

“It’s a lot more thought through. It’s more of a purpose, it’s clever how you direct things.”

‘Bob’, Teacher. Yr 6

Purpose was also a feature which Bob referred to in his reflection:

“It’s a lot more thought through. It’s more of a purpose, it’s clever how you direct things.”

Learning how to step into the world of the drama and address the curriculum

Catherine shares her way into the drama, and her tentativeness is evident, due to her need to protect the children into the fictional world:

“As I set them up as a team to help protect animals there, I showed them a picture of a rhino - a baby rhino next to its mother that had been shot. It was nothing gruesome I didn't know if I overstepped the mark. I made it clear that it was a drama, a fiction.”

Catherine refers to her use of the 'client' who are Masai people, and the injured animals, needing our help. Her process of trialling Mantle with her own class has shifted the way she views the curriculum:

“I am honing my pedagogy and I have a much greater understanding of learning in context, and I look at the curriculum differently I use the curriculum to find children's area of interest to drive the curriculum”.

Anna explains that she is “using drama more and thinking through the process more”. She said she was developing her ability to negotiate stepping in to the drama and stepping out of the drama and that she was now paying attention to having “steps in place and covering the curriculum”.

Dian drew on her love of story and literature as she begun to apply the Mantle approach and found that with the young children she was working with, she needed to find ways of clarifying especially for the children, when we move between the 'as if' world and the everyday world of being children in the classroom This was an area she wanted to consider and reflect on. She explains that she is “more relaxed about slipping into /out of role”.

Responses: SS I-1

The Senior Staff recognised that Mantle offered a different route to learning where the class worked as a team where they negotiated the work. They had noticed significant shifts in practice and saw Mantle as far more than 'simple role play', and were convinced that here was a pedagogy that had the potential to draw in marginalised children.

John, Head of Morda recognized the different ways that teachers approached the work through a shift in the way they planned. He claimed that rather than preparing prescriptive work sheets “you are gathering some objects – you are thinking about where the children are going to be” and he saw the shift as more focused on the children and what they bring to the process.

Research Question 4:

As they learn to use Mantle successfully, what challenges do teacher participants encounter and how do they navigate those challenges?

Evidence Base

- ERIL I-1 & 1-2
- ERIL Q-2
- ERIL SS-1

Summary of Findings

- Teachers expressed an awareness of the challenges of the Programme, but felt they were in the process of finding ways of navigating these challenges.
- The issue of control and managing behaviour amongst ‘tricky’ children was expressed, especially when they might all be doing different things within the context.
- There was a degree of anxiety about curriculum coverage in the early stages, linked to PTs’ sense of responsibility for children’s learning, and wanting to get it right for them
- Clarifying for the children when working within the ‘as if’ of drama, and when we are back in the world of the classroom, was evident in the early stages
- Concerns were expressed about when, how and if we ‘correct’ factual information in an inclusive pedagogy. At this early stage PTs did not always feel clear about the ‘givens’ of the context and areas that are negotiable
- Involving TA’s in the process and ‘teaching ‘them how it works’, when they were at the early stages of understanding themselves of this new pedagogy
- The expectations of Ofsted and Key Stage assessments was a concern expressed by PTs and Headteachers, particularly from the English schools
- Teachers were finding ways of navigating these challenges as they knew they had a strong network of support including the continuous support and materials provided by the Trainers
- The Programme Co-ordinator and the Trainers were able to demonstrate how Mantle of the Expert was able to meet and exceed the requirements of the national curriculum
- The Trainers continuously responded to the needs and concerns of teachers; for example, showing ways in which TA’s could be involved positively in the learning
- As they adopted drama conventions such as ‘teacher in role’, some were concerned about the extent they would have to sustain their roles; this was addressed efficiently by the Trainers as an on-going dialogue was maintained throughout the process
- Providing different ways of evidencing the learning was a new challenge. However, the support network of Buddies, Trainers, colleagues all facing similar challenges, and the Co-ordinating Teacher made this an interesting challenge as teachers began to reflect on their views of learning.

“We slowly grow into understanding and change our perspectives inch by inch.”

Dorothy Heathcote

Responses: ERIL I-1 & 1-2

Change, as Dorothy Heathcote herself identified, is ‘wrought slowly’:

‘We slowly grow into understanding and change our perspectives inch by inch’¹⁶

The teachers valued the time invested into this programme, time for ‘failing’¹⁷ and time for recovering, reflecting and developing. In a culture of testing, curriculum coverage and inspections, however motivated teachers are to adopt a new pedagogy, there are inevitably challenges in the process.

In their position teachers are expected to be in control of the curriculum, the children, their welfare, their differentiated needs and progress, class management and liaison with parents. All five teachers handled these responsibilities well. Navigating a new and different pedagogy positions them differently and places them in a more vulnerable state. There is a greater focus on teachers as learners, while they teach. This reflects Dorothy Heathcote’s assertion that ‘the best way to learn is to teach someone else’.¹⁸

This vulnerability was also evident in the initial interviews (ERIL I-1). Dian felt she had more to learn than to teach or contribute. She felt a degree of uncertainty about navigating the work and how to make the distinction clear to the children, when they were in the ‘as if’ world of the drama and when they were in the everyday world of the classroom. Emma found it challenging to consider the work from the point of view of ‘the children I teach-some children need to be convinced to join the Mantle’. At this early stage of the programme, one of the most difficult things Emma found was ‘staying in role the whole time’. This was a clear misunderstanding of the use of role in the pedagogy. She is still grappling with incorporating dramatic tension and strong writing opportunities into the work. She is still enthusiastically working through Mantle and is very aware of what is needed she recognises how it works and its effect. Her response in November 2021 makes it clear that she still thinks it is worth grappling with and she is moving in and out of role with ease as the work requires, which demonstrates a shift in her understanding. She was able to navigate these challenges through knowing that there was support for her.

Anna, the Teaching Head expressed her concern regarding control:

“It’s that control thing - I hope I can let go and know my class is learning. I was still directing.”

¹⁶ Heathcote, D. (1997)

¹⁷ Heathcote, D. (1980)

¹⁸ Heathcote, D. (1997)

She describes her practice using Mantle:

“I had a go this week - with Reception/Year 1. I am going to go for it. I am struggling with my ‘control freak’ side. I am using the story ‘Lost and Found’ and the topic is survival. They have a letter from a scientist - a penguin has escaped. What I struggled with is them all going off doing different things. Some writing, others doing science.”

“It’s nice – it’s definitely captured the children”.

Anna, Teaching Head

She explains why this is a struggle for her:

“Because I am used to - all the children would have an opportunity to write a letter so I can tick off the skills. You have to think on your feet a lot - throw the seeds out for them. It was good, really to see how engaged all the children - it’s nice – it’s definitely captured the children”.

While power is shared in Mantle, not totally handed over to the class, the shifting position of the teacher is a challenge.

“I am really excited about it and I have got good ideas.”

Bob, Year 6 teacher

Bob pondered on:

“How it actually works. Practicalities of a fifty-minute lesson and fifteen-minute plenary - the logistics in the classroom. I have twenty-seven Year Six’ children.”

However, he does add, “I am really excited about it and I have got good ideas.”

Catherine was apprehensive about how to communicate to her teaching assistants, what was expected of them within this new pedagogy, and also what her TA’s expected of her, as she didn’t feel entirely certain herself. She felt that it had been a missed opportunity not to include the TA’s in the two year teacher development programme. Visiting other schools, talking with Helen and participating in the Development Days, she claimed helped her to navigate these challenges.

The tensions between covering the curriculum and participating in an authentic context was a challenge for Bob in this early stage of the programme:

“We have got to cover the curriculum. You think ‘What’s the point everyone writing a letter? (within a Mantle) but I don’t know how that will cover x, y and z’ “.

Dian (by November 2021) is concerned that the “Mantle session is not documented well enough by the writing that follows - I try to take more photos as we are working to account for the gaps.”

Dian is clearly concerned about providing evidence of learning, and that this new pedagogy may require a different approach. This raises the question, “What are we looking for in Mantle in addition to curriculum coverage?” and possibly finding ways of informally assessing in the moment.

“Reflecting on the work is just as important as working in role.”

Michael, Buddy Scheme

Bob found the relationship with his Buddy and the modelling by Luke and Tim on Training Days, and particularly with the children, began to shift the way he saw the curriculum and experimented with an entry route into the curriculum that drew on the interests of his class.

By May 2021 Bob had trialled several Mantles, which had been pre-planned by Luke and Tim. He enthusiastically described the Mountain Rescue Mantle (which he located on the Mantle website), where he addressed mapping and co-ordinating data collection. He said that 80% of his mathematics was being taught through the Mantle (May 2021). He was struggling with the concept of ‘role’ and ‘responsible team’, but described how his Buddy Michael had ‘helped him keep on track’. I witnessed one online meeting between Bob and Michael where Bob expressed some concern about time, raising questions such as “How long should I discuss with them?” His Buddy, Michael pointed out the importance of what was going on. “They are socialising” and continued “Reflecting on the work is just as important as working in role”. He advised Bob on how evidence can be generated in the form of notes, and photos of the children’s progress. It was clear that they had a good working relationship and were able to identify with each other’s ‘contexts’.

Luke and Tim set up the Buddy programme between all the participating teachers and an advance-skilled Mantle teacher. As the programme had been set up just before the pandemic struck, Buddies had not been able to meet in person. Luke and Tim were therefore proactive in setting up 3-way Zoom meetings, to introduce the Buddies online, and this appears to have strengthened support, particularly in Bob’s case. Further analysis is needed to explore the effect of the Buddy programme more fully.

Lockdown during the pandemic put schools in general under pressure in many ways, particularly during their home school learning focus, where interaction in the way that Mantle thrives on was not possible. Tim designed Mantle online resources which incorporated role and invited children’s creative responses and work for a client and these were reported positively by teachers, and indicated the involvement of parents in their children’s learning. Catherine ran a mini-beasts project using a Mantle approach which she ran from home via Zoom. Using the garden locations around her home she shared her problem, seeking the

children's advice. This was shared with Luke Abbott who was able to acknowledge the 'leaps you have made'. Continuing dialogue between the Trainers and the teachers was an integral part of the programme.

Responses: ERIL Q-2

Clearly, all respondents demonstrated an awareness of the needs for significant shifts in their positions as teachers and were committed to grappling with the struggles to bring about potential change. They were open about the challenges they encountered and expressed a real willingness to navigate those challenges. Most of the PTs appeared to have confidence that they were able to manage the change, and that they were on a journey spectrum trajectory towards efficacy in the technique.

Responses: ERIL SS I-1

Headteachers, as well as teachers, felt the challenges of the system; for example, Ofsted and National Curriculum targets. However, this was more marked in the English schools than it was in the Welsh schools, where the focus was on the new Welsh Curriculum. However, the Headteacher and Helen, the senior teacher from Morda, was confident that Mantle contributed to national requirements.

Another challenge was posed by the period of lockdown and online learning. While it succeeded in involving parents more fully in their children's dramatic play and learning, John (Morda) expressed concerns about the minority of children: "A large minority of children, including most of the disadvantaged children, have not had the same level of success. What's missing is the physical presence in the room where drama techniques and discussion can take place live".

Research Question 5:

How have teachers learned to use Mantle successfully and, in particular, how has the Morda Teacher Development Programme helped them?

Evidence Base:

- ERIL I-1 & ERIL I-2
- ERIL Q-2
- Observation: Development Days & Training Days
- ERIL SS-1

Summary of Findings

- By seeing the effects of the practice on children's response and learning prior to the programme and during the Morda Teacher development programme, particularly with their own children.
- The Trainers had set up a very supportive network using the Triad model and all participants felt part of a community of practice. The coordinating teacher was also instrumental in supporting, guiding, demonstrating, co-planning and team teaching in between Training Days and Development Days.
- The teachers had built trusting relationships with the Trainers who adopted a non-judgemental approach. There was a sense of 'we are all in this together' helping each other in a collaborative way.
- The expertise of the Trainers inspired the teachers to want to engage in the practice themselves.
- Experiencing Mantle as participants first-hand allowed teachers to really value the work from the inside.
- The Trainers and Co-ordinating Teacher consistently responded to the needs and concerns of teachers

Responses: ERIL I-1 & I-2

Motivation from seeing the effect on children

The five Case Study PTs have learned to use Mantle with a degree of confidence, commitment and success because they were motivated to do so, by seeing the effect of the practice on children prior to the programme (as a result of Helen Chapman's intensive training with the Trainers previously) and during the Morda Teacher Development Programme.

A Community of Practice

The challenges they encountered in teaching through Mantle were navigated by the teachers because the Trainers, had set up a very supportive network in place, within schools, and within the triads and between Buddies. The teachers were not meeting these challenges in isolation. This network of support was particularly welcomed by the teachers. Helen Chapman was also instrumental in supporting, guiding, demonstrating, co-planning and team teaching in between Training Days and Development Days. All teachers felt a part of a community of support, all confronting similar challenges

A Non-Judgemental Approach

Dorothy Heathcote said, 'There is no such thing as failure, only learning',¹⁹ and this theme ran through all the Training and Development Days. Working as colleagues was characteristic of the relationships between Trainers and teachers, Trainers and children. Luke, Tim and Helen all adopted a non-judgemental approach which made the participating teachers feel safe.

Experiencing Mantle First Hand

The Training Days were set up so that Luke would lead the group in to a Mantle themselves as participants. He would intentionally set up the drama context and invite them in, which they all did, and at intervals step out of the fictional context to reflect on the learning that was happening. This 'seeing it in practice and 'experiencing being inside the as if'' were reported as significant by all five Case Study PTs.

The Quality of Training which responds to the needs of teachers

The experienced Trainers were able to identify with the teachers' issues. They are both practitioners from a teaching background and continually engaged in practice and theory, within schools, nationally and internationally. Luke Abbott trained with Dorothy Heathcote and collaborated with her throughout her life. Tim Taylor contributed to many conferences along with Luke Abbott and Dorothy Heathcote and so is very knowledgeable about the approach.

Their approach to the training allowed teachers to observe the pedagogy in practice, reflect on the practice within a community of practice, experience the pedagogy first hand as participants and in particular witness it with their children. They were all ready to develop it in their practice. This is echoed in Catherine's comment:

¹⁹ Heathcote, D. (2006)

“Seeing it in practice and not just theory; watching children’s behaviour and how they interact has made me re-think my approach. I am adopting a different approach and method with support of excellent practitioners. The first development day was particularly valuable – professional conversations with colleagues and time and space to develop practice.”

Dian supports this view, and in addition cites the online Mantle, ‘The Troll Hunters’, designed by Tim, that “worked very well”. She said that using pre-planned Mantles gave her confidence to get started. She describes the best learning experiences as:

“...the days when we get hands-on immersion into the technique with Luke, Tim and Helen leading or observing them working with a class at school.”

These opportunities release the teachers from the responsibility of leading sessions, but allowing them to be part of the process.

Just as teachers respond to the needs, interests and concerns of the children within a Mantle context, Luke and Tim continually modelled a way of working with teachers, which was responsive to their particular needs. For example, Tim ran a session early in the programme specifically to address the engagement of TA’s in response to teachers’ concerns. He produced a video to demonstrate ways of including a TA within the context, and this addressed Catherine’s concerns about including her TA:

“I was showing my TA, as the video was on, and I say ‘Look, this is what we’ll be doing as a team and I will be this chap here – it’s what he did on the final bit of training we had on the Friday - well Robbins, (that’s my TA) - that’s going to be you on that chair - and you know what.....? -and again part of our task is - we’ll buy into it”.

Catherine welcomes the opportunity of hosting a Development Day:

“That’s going to be really good to be able to go out to other schools, and watch their approach in our school. It will be really interesting.”

Bob missed the first training but read up about Mantle, including Tim’s book, ‘A Beginners Guide to Mantle’ and the Mantle website. He also had access, as did all the PTs, to the course booklet, which he found useful.

Reflecting on the practice

The quality of this training is that Luke and Tim work with the PTs’ children and so they can demonstrate how they address any issues which may arise. A reflective period with three teachers from a particular triad is then held with the appropriate trainer. All five Case ‘Study PTs had great confidence in the Trainers as illustrated by the comments:

“You have experts in Luke and Tim. In County, they tell us about things, but this is done properly – you are given time, reflective time and support.”

Anna, Teaching Head (January 2021)

“We are getting training from the top quality. The person who wrote the book we are using as part of the programme is actually doing the training – it’s detailed, thorough and on-going.”

Bob (January 2021)

“It gives us a good insight. All our staff have an insight - a basic understanding-at workshops - they hear Helen talk about the experience.”

Anna (January 2021)

Responses: ERIL Q-2

Some fundamentals of the methodology seemed to be clearly understood in theory at this early stage. Questionnaire responses suggest that PTS were growing in their understanding of:

- Sharing power with children
- Seeing the work from the children’s’ point of view
- The importance of teachers’ skills of using inclusive language and negotiation

Observation: Development Days & Training Days

“We need to think as the child.”

Teacher’s reflection

They thrived in doing a significant job, and responded to the implicit question ‘Are you in charge of these woods?’”

Teacher’s reflection on ‘hard to reach’ children in Mantle project

During a reflective session following a Development Day, which Luke ran, opportunities were provided for teachers to raise questions about the practice and to further their understanding of the pedagogy and reflect on what they found useful, or challenging. The context was the running of a Woodland which contained an enchanted pond.

Catherine found it a very valuable experiences particularly being able to, “sit with the children and experience it with them”.

The children were totally engaged in running the woods, and the subtlety of how Luke invited them in to the fiction, increasing their engagement, and building tension through protecting the ‘enchanted pond ‘was a masterclass for the teacher.

The steps he took were clarified by Luke in the reflective session, in response to teachers’ questions. He described how he structured episodes he introduced and Catherine for example, could see opportunities for her own trial of the pedagogy:

“That initial session - might be a TA with a script - that jumps off to the next episode -that’s what I have to think about.”

Another teacher reflected: “We need to think as the child.”

Luke intervened with particular groups of children and posed the question, in response to a teacher’s observation “Do we need to know what everyone else is doing?” which really got teachers to question their relationships and positioning with their children within the process.

There were implications for teachers’ planning in this session, where Luke explained the ‘givens’ ‘of the context and those elements which are ‘negotiable’ with the children.

The way that language was used became a key focus for this period of analysing and reflecting. It was clear that language in context was being used, but not directly taught. It would emerge in conversation in action. Luke explained:

“Think of key words in vocabulary of children you would want them to have e.g. Wood, Terrain, Granite, Rock, Sandstone. Pitch your words - words represented and using them in conversation - use these words.”

As the lesson progressed, one PT noticed that children were beginning to use this language, but without it being directly taught to them “because they were immersed in the world of the woodland, along with their visiting teacher Luke, in the middle of the action of planning and maintaining the woodland, with the added tension of ‘how do we protect the enchanted pond?’”

It was noted by the PT that children who were ‘hard to reach’ “had found this way of working had repositioned them. They thrived in doing a significant job, and responded to the implicit question ‘Are you in charge of these woods?’”

Luke reassured the group that his role was to come in and support. The relationship between all three members of the Participant Teaching Group and Luke was collegiate and supportive; this was modelled consistently throughout the Training and Development Days, and the consistent online support and email exchange.

Responses: ERIL SS-1

The three Headteachers interviewed expressed their trust in the Trainers and in Helen (the Programme Co-ordinator), and this formed a solid foundation on which to build.

Research Question 6:

How do stakeholders believe engagement with Mantle has affected whole school culture and parental responses?

Evidence Base:

- ERIL I-1 & ERIL I-2
- ERIL SS-1

Summary of Findings

- The responses to this Research Question were necessarily limited during this early stage of the Training; however, some indications were gained from analysis of the in-depth interviews (ERIL I-1)
- As teachers gain in confidence as they apply the Mantle of the Expert approach in their classrooms, colleagues who enter their classroom can join in with their Mantle, as it has become a way of learning in the school. There is strong evidence to support this shift in culture particularly at Morda.
- Parents are becoming more aware of the pedagogy, as the children are talking about their learning at home far more.
- The lock down period brought unexpected involvement of parents who participated in role and play inspired by on line home learning, created by Tim, one of the Trainers and by the teachers themselves, for example, Catherine.

The responses to this Research Question were necessarily limited during this early stage of the Training; however, some indications were gained from analysis of the in-depth interviews (ERIL I-1 and I-2).

“Parents...like the enthusiasm their child is showing for a topic.”

‘Dian’ Teacher Yr 6

“Children are going home and telling their parents what they have learnt!”

Emma, Teacher Year 6

Responses: ERIL I-1 & 1-2

In the earlier interviews, Dian noticed the increase in parents’ interest in their child’s learning:

“I know that parents have commented positively about my own class and their love for particular topics. Parents have been hearing about the approach for a number of years now and it is expected that there will be opportunities for all classes to engage in drama during a Mantle. They like the enthusiasm their child is showing for a topic.”

Emma (November 2021) also supports this new way of working in terms of the shift in culture for the entire school as well as the community of parents:

“Children are going home and telling their parents what they have learnt! Children are bringing in books full of writing – this time it is about the Antarctica. One child had written pages about what he has researched at home about the Antarctic. I had a grandmother who gave me a book about Ernest Shackleton and said her grandson had been telling her all about what we had been learning in school.”

Other teachers’ interest in the approach was also remarked upon, which could suggest a future ease of embedding the pedagogy within the school:

“When I am in Mantle role and another teacher walks in, they immediately get into role too!! Helen Chapman came into my class while we were completing a ‘safety training session’ at the research base in the Antarctic, and some children were spoiling the Mantle. Remaining in role I explained to Helen, that the recruits were not taking the responsibility at the research base seriously, she immediately went into role too and spoke to them as if she were part of the team too.

In Morda, in particular this increase in teacher collaboration seems evident along with parent interest and engagement within the Mantle pedagogy.

Responses: ERIL SS-1

Helen and John at Morda noticed the greater engagement of parents in their children’s school experiences of learning using Mantle. The use of online learning resources created by Tim had had an impact on parents’ involvement in home/school learning during lockdown. Meinir said she would like to see her school culture as one which is “listening to learners. I want those children to be enthusiastic about learning”, and saw Mantle as a vehicle for this.

Anna was convinced that the approach will inspire the children to be creative and want to learn and try to pull those children in that are not always in.

Helen did not see a conflict between curriculum demands and this new culture of learning. She described an example of children within the fictional world writing a letter to the Queen where she says to the children, “We obviously need to make certain; we need to have a certain style, she is not going to respond if we speak to her like she is our friend is she? What sort of language would we be using?” The use of the people who need our help in Mantle (the client) drives the work and creates a meaningful context and purpose for learning.

The need for home learning, during the ‘lockdown’ brought some unexpected and positive involvement of parents. Parents were very positive about the Mantle practice at home and according to Helen, absolutely loved it.

Helen expanded: “I have had videos of children acting out the trolls, others making caves in their houses, letters in role, writing, great writing.”

Covid restrictions have obviously affected the gathering of data and the smooth running of the project; however, it has still been possible for the Evaluators to collect sufficient data from the PTs and the Senior Staff, and analyse relevant data to adequately assess the effectiveness of the Training Programme to date.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

Key themes emerging from this evaluation

In Heathcote's (2009) hand-outs to students in Ankara, Turkey, she refers to a web of tasks she and the students explored together while working on a Mantle of the Expert pedagogy. She explains:

'Rather than a road or railway with halts along the way, a more useful image is that of a river with many tributaries, all converging towards an estuary of comprehension'.²⁰

The Mantle of the Expert pedagogy reflects this approach, where learning across the curriculum is connected within a context which carries the curriculum, where particular areas of the curriculum meet in the 'river' providing a holistic engagement of learning.

This evaluation also takes this holistic approach, and what follows is teachers' development and changing pedagogy as indicated at this stage, from a range of evidence in response to the 6 key research questions. Our conclusion therefore reflects responses from Development Days, Training Days, Interviews, (both with teachers and children), Reflection Sessions, Buddy exchanges and Questionnaires.

Assessment of the PTs' development so far through the Training Programme, using the six Research Questions, has yielded some important common cross-cutting themes.

Qualities identified by the data

Some key features of the Heathcote approach were seen as valuable, elements generally expressed in both questionnaires and interviews as features of this Training. Commonly mentioned was the importance of the imagination in the learning process, increased enthusiasm of the children, and the deepening of ownership of learning. The majority of PTs referred to the high 'engagement' of their children, with particular reference to children who experience barriers to learning

Purpose for learning

The use of the 'client' or person/s who needs our help seemed to be significant in children's engagement with learning, where they felt their work had an authentic purpose. This was evident from interviews with the children and reported generally by the PTs right from the start of the Programme.

Relevance to the curriculum

The relationship of the approach to the teachers' expectation of fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum were mentioned as both strengths of the approach being learnt, and as challenges. While some teachers met with barriers to working in this approach with some of the disciplines, others, particularly those working towards the new Welsh curriculum, saw it as a useful and relevant approach to learning.

²⁰ Heathcote, D. (2010)

Challenges

Mantle of the Expert requires a shift in culture and positioning of teachers and children. Some of the challenges teachers felt about taking on a new pedagogy included the tensions related to Ofsted requirements (in the English schools), the issue of control and managing behaviour and addressing different ways of identifying, demonstrating and assessing learning. Classroom management and planning ahead was affected by the awareness of the need to be more responsive to the children's needs. This led in some cases to a sense of less control; however, in the later Case Study interviews, this problem had receded. Entering the 'as if' world of the Mantle, as opposed to the 'as is' world of the classroom, and navigating between the two, was seen as a challenge by some; although PTs interviewed who were employing Mantle after lockdown did not appear to find this so difficult. There was generally a clear recognition of the complexities of Mantle, and, at the early stages, awareness of lack of knowledge and skill, but a readiness to participate in the programme and grapple with these challenges

Supportive networks

Teachers' vulnerability to change was evident but seemed to be overcome to a large degree through the positive relationships they built with colleagues within their school across schools, and with the trainers. PTs were supported in navigating the curriculum, and managing behaviour through Mantle, through observing the practice, sharing concerns and ideas with others such as Buddies, through the support of the Programme Co-ordinator and reflection with the trainers. The training had been set up through a culture of sharing, a strong network and the continuing support of the coordinator and the collaborative and non-judgemental approach of the trainers. The PTs had complete trust in the co-ordinating teacher and the trainers.

Building a team

A team approach was often cited as having a positive influence on children's relationship with one another and on their attitude and engagement with the work. Likewise, the teachers too felt part of a growing team of people who were all contributing to this change of pedagogy. This was particularly true of the TAs who participated in the training and in contributing to the teaching contexts within their schools.

Experiencing the pedagogy first hand as participants

The PTs were able to experience the practice from the 'inside' as participants during Development Days, which encouraged them to realise the power of a Mantle approach which drew on their strengths, interests and contributions. This seemed to contribute to their commitment to learning how to teach through Mantle. The Development Days gave teachers opportunities to be in the fiction where the trainers skilfully applied role and drama conventions, in engaging and non-threatening ways. The five Case Studies all felt ready to trial the use of these conventions as they had experienced the approach in their own learning and could therefore see the value of them to children's learning.

Observing the impact of the pedagogy on children

Observing the practice, led by the Trainers, particularly with their own classes, was largely significant in inspiring the PTS to sustain their commitment to learning how to use Mantle in their practice. Observation of other schools who had embedded Mantle in to their curriculum was significant in motivating and inspiring Headteachers, Senior Staff and Teachers to want to be involved in the Training Programme.

Whole school culture and parental response

Positioning children differently, as in Mantle where they take responsibility for running something, often means that their engagement spills over to their home. Parents became more aware of the pedagogy as it was reported that the children were talking about their learning at home far more. The lockdown period brought unexpected involvement of parents who participated in role and play inspired by online hoe learning inspired by Tim Taylor, one of the trainers as well the teachers themselves. It remains to be seen how far the schools can use the Programme to work towards whole school targets.

The emotional dimension of the work

There was clearly a recognition of the emotional dimension to the work, while children explored through fictional contexts the lives of others. While elements of this were seen as challenging early on in the Programme, later interviews demonstrated PTs enjoying this deepening of response, and handling it well. This was particularly evidenced in the five Case Studies and the children's responses.

Shifting relationships and shifting positions

In Mantle the children are positioned as competent and capable, able to take responsibility and make decisions. This shifts the traditional view of the teacher as the 'knower' and creates an interactive, collegiate and collaborative culture in the classroom. Many PTs reported this shift, where power, decision making and responsibility was shared. These shifts in positions create new ways of teachers perceiving their children. Many reported how children were now engaging in a different way, particularly those who experience barriers to learning; the later Case Studies interviewed in 2020 and 2021 were particularly conscious of a more sophisticated use of language and questioning techniques as elements in this adjustment of power and control.

Time for reflection

A significant element of the Programme was that it gave time for reflection amongst PTs, which they particularly valued. They were able to share their reflections with one another and with the Trainers, during development days and training days; there were opportunities to raise questions and share responses. Reflection for children was also built in to their teaching through Mantle.

Conclusion Summary

A shift in pedagogy is indicated generally in the response of all PTs. The five Case Study PTs in this programme have engaged enthusiastically and made some significant changes to their pedagogy through teaching using a Mantle of the Expert approach. Teachers have confronted challenges and continue to grapple with the challenges of trialling a new pedagogy through the supportive context of this training model. The final evaluation will seek to identify more complex and sustained changes in teachers' practice. We will continue to look for answers to the six Research Questions, to explore how far the findings in this Interim Report will be confirmed in the final Evaluation.

Interim Recommendations:

Particular aspects will include the following:

- How appropriate this Training Programme has been for the Participating Teachers
- The sustained impact on children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds
- How far changes in teacher pedagogy have been sustained
- How far the PTs have made this pedagogy their own and gone beyond replicating pre-planned contexts
- The effect on whole school culture and parental response

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5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Appendix 1

ERIL Questionnaire November 2019 (ERIL Q-1)

Your Name/School: _____

Why have you agreed to attend this professional development course?

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

1 = I strongly disagree; 3 = I neither agree nor disagree; 5 = I strongly agree

Please explain. Feel free to write on the back of the paper if you wish.

1. My head has asked me to attend

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Explain:

2. I have seen, read, or heard about this way of working before

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Explain:

3. I have tried this way of working before

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Explain:

4. I am committed to learning how to use this pedagogy

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Explain:

5. I want to grow as a teacher

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Explain:

6. I want my children to grow as learners and as people

1	2	3	4	5
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| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Explain:

7. I want all the children to learn the curriculum in a more meaningful way

1 2 3 4 5

| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Explain:

8. I want the opportunity to collaborate with others within my school

1 2 3 4 5

| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Explain:

9. I want the opportunity to network/collaborate with others beyond my school

1 2 3 4 5

| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Explain:

Appendix 2

ERIL Questionnaire February 2020 (ERIL Q-2)

Mantle of the Expert Professional Training

Participant Questionnaire February 2020

Your Name: _____

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

1 = strongly disagree; 3 = I neither agree nor disagree; 5 = strongly agree

1. I feel more inspired by this way of working than I did when I started the project

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Explain:

2. I am more committed to learning how to use this pedagogy than when I started the project

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Explain:

3. I am now doing something completely different in my classroom practice

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Explain:

4. If you are doing something differently, how does it make you feel?

Explain

5. Mantle of the Expert enables us to expand the curriculum

1	2	3	4	5
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