

ACHIEVING RESILIENCE THROUGH PLAY AND DRAMA



Erasmus+

Session 6: Mantle of the Expert



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Approaches for the Teacher:

- A respect for children and what they bring to the learning situation
- A will to accept and use what they offer in the classroom situation
- Self identification as a member of the team...able to keep the team together, work them to capacity, forward their projects effectively, use their strengths and help them to know and overcome their weaknesses, stretching their potential
- Keep their “sights” true for the task in hand
- Remain accepting of the ways and present conditions of others while considering best how to interfere
- Seek to bring about shifting perspectives and understanding - includes yourself as well
- To affirm and receive from others
- To remain curious

“....the end product of improvisation is the experience of it”

(Pamphlet Drama in Ed 1967 - Heathcote. Reprinted 1999 in Collected Writings on Education)



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Mantle of the Expert

- Mantle of the Expert is used across the curriculum
- It provides a centre for all knowledge
- It is always experienced by the students in terms of the responsible human being (i.e. the Expert).

Mantle of the expert accesses students to a unique learning experience through non- drama and drama tasks.

“This is an *active, urgent, purposeful* view of learning, in which knowledge is to be *operate on*, not merely to be taken in.”

(Bolton & Heathcote 1993 p.32)



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Mantle of the Expert Always Has:

1. An enterprise
2. A client
3. A problem

1. The Red Cross
2. A village in India
3. An earth quake



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The Class Become...

“experts” in an enterprise that enables them to:

- Research the subject matter from an empowered viewpoint as “experts.”
- Use the given circumstances of the project – i.e: social/economic/history/environment etc to place the work in a context
- Set their own standards and stretch themselves.
- Problem solve and achieve a deeper understanding of the issues involved.
- Empathise and understand from a safe distance
- Build new skills
- Learn across curriculum subjects and through multiple intelligences.



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Teacher Guidelines for Mantle

There are four areas that make up Mantle of the Expert

1. Presentation – The Area of Expertise
2. Fiction – introduce “IF” to appeal to the class
3. The Power to Function
4. A Past History and an Implied Future

(Bolton & Heathcote, 1993, pp. 25-30)

- There is not an order to delivering the areas.
- The teacher decides the sequence.



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Fiction

Introduce “IF” to appeal to the class

The word *if* or the implication *if* must be introduced early to avoid children believing they will actually be setting up an aid agency

- Suppose that...
- If we could...
- If people would let us...

Slightly *raising the curtain* invites the class to look at the metaphorical stage where the action will take place.



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Engaging the Children...

The teacher uses tone, signalling and the object, letter, newspaper, article etc. to set a different level of expectation

“I recon we could show them”

Who is the ‘we’ the teacher is addressing?

She is not talking as a teacher - she is given a *hint* of the roles the children will be playing when the curtain goes up on the action

The children “slide” into the drama they are not asked “shall we do a drama about a natural disaster/ ambulance strike/the Titanic?”

They are invited to be involved and to want to know.



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Presentation – The Area of Expertise

- Great care must be taken in presenting the topic effectively
- Teacher talks and uses map/s, images, diagrams/film etcetera's to present the area of expertise the students will require

The combination of visual aids and a linguistic style that avoids any instructional note creates:

effective entry into the framework.



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The Power to Function

Mantle of the Expert works obliquely – learning about one thing by looking through something else. This facilitates *the power to function*.

Framework of *power to function*.

- You do not put the children into the high powered dramatic roles
- Children stand outside the role and analyse
- Children become knowledgeable about the situation
- You set the major task i.e. Oxfam delivering aid
- This will be fed by many minor tasks, which are the foundations of the process and the learning.
- They are not **in** the disaster – they are solving the problem of the disaster



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A Past History and an Implied Future

Build a past present and future through research tasks

An *in situ* context with a past and a future must be established.

To enter the work successfully the teacher and class *begin research* prior to taking on the Mantle and have a context for the work.

They will not be experts to begin with but will be informed – the in-depth learning will happen through the process of work when the Mantle of the expert is placed on them.



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Talks to Build Past History and Implied Future

Non drama i.e.

- Research
- Writing letters (of complaint/replies)
- Making delegate name tags/badges/lists
- Designing ACAS building/meeting office
- Maps for journeys
- Newspaper articles
- Imaginative catalysts

Or drama

- Visualisation
- As characters on task to discover, discuss, problem solve.



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- There are many approaches to take to engage the students in the programme. The level of the work and presentation of the “problem” to solve needs to be age appropriate.
- Object (Catalysts): Newspaper article/objects/ email/telephone call/letter/etcetera’s
- The presentation gauges the level of interest and involvement of the student.
- You are hooking them into the work.

The curtain rises and the drama begins!!!



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The Three Dimensions of Mantle of the Expert

INQUIRY LEARNING IS:

- Collaborative
- Process of investigation
- The curriculum is explored & created, not delivered
- Students ask questions & contribute ideas
- Students are guided and supported by the teacher
- Learning is planned around inquiry questions
- Opportunities are created for reflection & evaluation



THE ELEMENTS OF DRAMA FOR LEARNING ARE:

- People involved in events
- Happening now
- Involving tension
- Establishing different points of view

THE ELEMENTS OF MANTLE OF THE EXPERT ARE:

- A team of experts with responsibilities & the power to influence & make decisions
- Working for a client
- On a commission
- Requiring the team to do various tasks

(Taylor, 2011 cited Collins 2013)



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Contacts and the Web

For more details about getting involved and to keep up to date with developments visit our webpage and social media sites or contact us at team@playwork.co.uk

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