

The **JOURNAL** for **DRAMA** in **EDUCATION**

Volume 37, Issue 1
Autumn 2022
ISSN 1476 – 9395

- **Editorial: How have we let the children down?**
- **Chair's Report: Making Sense of The Things We Do Not Understand**
- **Poem**
Michael Rosen
- **The White Paper 28th March 2022 - How our education system can level up and the case for a fully trust-led system.**
Matthew Milburn
- **Tipping Point, Throwing Point**
Why do we wait until children are in crisis to intervene?
Viv Cohen Papier
- **Belonging and Not Belonging**
Lex Butler
- **The Arts and Education and a Response**
Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton
- **What's happening when children are doing drama at depth?**
Geoff Gilham
- **Review: *Real in All the Ways that Matter: Weaving Learning Across the Curriculum with Mantle of the Expert***
by Viv Aitken
Reviewed by David Allen
- **Review: *Reading Shakespeare through Drama***
by Jane Coles and Maggie Pitfield
Review by Chris Green
- **Obituary for John Airs - 11th March 1941 – 20th August 2022**
Brian Woolland

How Have We Let The Children Down?



Charity Number 1135457



The National Association for the Teaching of Drama

For membership enquiries please contact

Liam Harris

liam.harris@natd.eu

Correspondence

Maggie Hulson

3 Garden Flats Lane, Dunnington

York YO19 5NB

maggie.hulson@natd.eu

For home and overseas subscriptions contact

Liam Harris

liam.harris@natd.eu

Online, NATD can be found at:

natd.co.uk

<https://twitter.com/#!/nateachingdrama>

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/Natd-The-National-Association-for-the-Teaching-of-Drama/251157451604739>

THE JOURNAL FOR DRAMA IN EDUCATION has a worldwide readership and is sent to individual and institutional subscribers in Canada, Ireland, South Africa, Greece, Palestine, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Australia, the Netherlands and the UK.

All members of NATD receive a copy as part of their membership.

The Editorial Committee welcomes contributions and letters for publication. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect editorial or NATD policy.

Editorial Committee

Dr Margaret Branscombe, Drama Teacher, Surrey

margaret.branscombe@natd.eu

Maggie Hulson, expert Drama Teacher and ITE practitioner, London

maggie.hulson@natd.eu

Guy Williams, Senior Teacher, The Connected Hub, Brighton

guy.williams@natd.eu

Cover design Lucy Fredericks

Notes for Intending Contributors to The Journal for Drama in Education

The Journal for Drama in Education is published twice a year and contains a refereed section. All articles that have been refereed will be indicated underneath the title on the contents page and within the *Journal* where the article appears.

The Editorial Committee welcomes contributions on any aspect of drama and education, contributions which reflect on NATD policy, and more general contributions on education. The Committee will consider all contributions and will publish articles that, in its judgment, meet the needs of the membership of NATD at the time of publication.

It is preferred that contributions are submitted by email to the address on the inside front cover. The author's details should be submitted on a separate page and should include the personal details which the author would like to accompany the article. For articles that are to be refereed, a short abstract of the article should also be included. Authors should also include full address, telephone number and email.

The Harvard system of referencing is preferred for all articles and must be used for contributions that are to be refereed. Footnotes should use Arabic numerals (1,2,3 etc.). A bibliography of cited works should appear at the end of articles using Harvard conventions.

REFEREES

Lina Attel - Director of the Performing Arts Centre, Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Jordan.

Dr. Gavin Bolton - Reader Emeritus, University of Durham.

Dr. David Davis - Professor of Drama in Education, Birmingham City University.

Dr. Brian Edmiston – Professor of Drama in Education, Ohio State University, USA.

Wasim Kurdi - Researcher, Qattan Centre for Educational Research Development, Ramallah, Palestine. .

Dr. Carmel O'Sullivan - Professor of Education, Trinity College, Dublin.

Dr. Allan Owens - Professor of Drama Education, University of Chester.

Dr. Jaroslav Provaznik - Principle Lecturer in Drama in Education, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.

Dr. Urvashi Sahni - President of the Study Hall Educational Foundation, India.

Dr. Paddy Walsh - Senior Lecturer, School of Education, Queen's University, Belfast.



John Airs

Contents

	Page
Editorial: How have we let the children down?	4
Chair's Report Liam Harris	11
Poem Michael Rosen	13
The White Paper 28th March 2022 - How our education system can level up and the case for a fully trust-led system. Matthew Milburn	15
Tipping Point, Throwing Point Why do we wait until children are in crisis to intervene? Viv Cohen Papier	20
Belonging and Not Belonging Lex Butler	25
The Arts and Education Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton	30
What's happening when children are doing drama at depth? Geoff Gilham	39
Review: <i>Real in All the Ways that Matter: Weaving Learning Across the Curriculum with Mantle of the Expert</i> by Viv Aitken Reviewed by David Allen	44
Review: <i>Reading Shakespeare through Drama</i> by Jane Coles and Maggie Pitfield Reviewed by Chris Green	48
Obituary for John Airs - 11th March 1941 – 20th August 2022 Brian Woolland	52
Biographies	55

Editorial: How have we let the children down?

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty
Among the fallen on evil days
'Tis Crime and Fear and Infamy,
And houseless Want in frozen ways
Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,
And worse than all, that inward stain
Foul Self-contempt which drowns in sneers
Youth's starlight smile

Shelley¹

It is the law in this country that children must attend school. If a parent fails to ensure that their child attends school they can be found guilty of an offence.² They can be fined up to £1000.³ Yet attending school in the UK is not free; in many ways there are costs to attending school, and it is the poorest that are the hardest pressed between these two social mechanisms.

In 2020-21 there were

3.9 million children living in poverty in the UK... That's 27 per cent of children, or eight in a classroom of 30'.⁴

And the figure is likely to be higher than that, for a host of reasons. For example, schools use the Free School Meal register to assess how many children from poor families they have, yet there are one million children in England who are not eligible for free school meals but are living below the poverty line; not enough to eat, not even a mattress to sleep on in some cases. The unseen costs to attending school can be prohibitive: calculators, revision guides, basic stationery, music GCSE courses, trips, school uniform, school shoes, PE kit, all cost money. They shouldn't, but they do. If school is a legal requirement, why is it not freely accessible to all? What can be more important than enabling, for example, a child to learn how to make things, or plan and cook healthy, delicious food for themselves? As drama teachers we know very well that to remove a child from the opportunity to use their hands/bodies actively and productively, to learn how things work on a practical creative level is to separate them from a powerful relationship with the world around them. Yet Design Technology and Food Technology,

¹ Quoted in 'Red Shelley' by Paul Foot, Bookmarks 1984, p.73

² [Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

³ [School attendance and absence - childlawadvice.org.uk](https://www.childlawadvice.org.uk)

⁴ [Child poverty facts and figures | CPAG](https://www.cpag.org.uk)

for example, frequently incur costs to the pupil. There are some young people who do not choose the GCSE course(s) they would like to because they know it will cost their families too much money.

Perhaps you will be thinking of a particular child or some children that you know as you read this. The Child Poverty Action Group⁵ has found that by simply talking to school students, schools can find some measures that can be taken to ameliorate the situation. This is good because, if a school's stance is right, it can help us feel that there is something we can do. We are all familiar with the newspaper reports of children too hungry to concentrate in class, and of teachers buying food for them, of teachers buying uniforms and mattresses for the children in their school. And this is not to gloss over the financial straits many teachers are increasingly finding themselves in, unable, for example, to find the money for petrol to get to a union meeting.

But is this tinkering at the edges? Of course, none of us is able to knowingly see a child go hungry and not put our hand in our pocket, but more and more responsibility is being devolved to schools and teachers for shoring up the effects of governmental negligence. A recent turn of this particular screw is the 'energy crisis':

One head revealed her school had been stung with a £67,000 increase in energy costs, which had to be paid for by making cuts to the learning resources used by pupils.⁶

And we know our young people are not happy. *The Good Childhood Report*⁷ 2021 tells us that

...at 15 years old, children in the UK have relatively low subjective well-being compared to the other European countries included in this comparison...

with many not liking their own appearance or seeing much future for themselves. This *Self-contempt* is the most damaging.

⁵ [Cost of the School Day | CPAG](#)

⁶ [Energy crisis: Schools left with 'black hole' in budgets as some face 80 per cent rise in gas bills \(inews.co.uk\)](#)

⁷ We calculated the number of children in each country who had low well-being and might be defined as 'struggling' across four measure: life satisfaction, happiness, sadness and sense of purpose in life. It showed that the UK had the fifth highest proportion of children (around 5%) struggling on all four measures; the highest proportion struggling on at least three; and the lowest proportion (27%) not having a low score for any of the four measures. *The Good Childhood Report 2020 – The Children's Society* (childrenssociety.org.uk)

As the government considers removing the cap on banker's bonuses to 'incentivise' big business, yet denies railway workers, postal workers or those lawyers carrying out legal aid work better pay because it would destroy the economy, we see children and young people let down in almost every conceivable way. The DfE Education White Paper 2022 sets out, amongst other things, next steps to all schools joining a multi-academy trust by 2030. When this is set within the context of an increasing flow of former leaders of Multi-Academy Trusts into positions of influence, power and responsibility in those government circles that spin around education and young people, it reveals a centralised vortex that is unlikely to leave any oxygen for creativity or the arts.

The current operant paradigm of education remains based on a very old system which reaches far back into history and essentially folds children up into desks, behind which they must remain for several hours a day, several days a week. Increasingly, the arts, the expressive, practical areas of learning are denied a place in the development of the child. And they must write about it in special ways, demonstrating a grasp of finicky rules applied to the nth degree. Of course there is nothing wrong per se with knowing how form works. It's a question of degree and ultimate outcomes. What are children not doing whilst they spend so much time folded up?

In the preparation of this Issue, we have been asking ourselves how we have let our young people down. We have asked our contributors to explore the inadequacies of society's response to the needs of the young as well as looking to place how our approach should be different. Principally, putting in place a child-centred, humanising education. Learning that is engaging and immersive, that engages the whole of the child and places significance at its heart.

In Michael Rosen's poem we see just how deeply this kind of learning matters. Whether one is an ant in a world of ants or a red corpuscle playing its part in the complex system that is the human body, Rosen's memory of this kind of learning has stayed with him throughout his life. It is the kind of memory that evokes a powerful feeling of the marvellous, what it is to be part of a moving whole, and the recognition of the long-term impact of an educated imagination. It is an homage to the teacher whose creativity goes beyond the classroom and the timetable, and it is also a question: what did they think they were doing?

In *The White Paper 28th March 2022 - How our education system can level up and the case for a fully trust led system*, Matthew Milburn examines the Government's latest attempt to 'fix' the perceived problems in education. He is uniquely well placed to offer analysis from the point of view of an NATD member, a Drama teacher and many years as an exceptional and visionary headteacher in what he calls the 'leveluplands'. His

scrutiny is balanced and measured. He identifies the areas of focus that might benefit from our attention. However, he makes a series of chilling observations that reveal the paucity and narrowness of the vision in the commissioning of the White Paper:

What the white paper fails to do is address why children are not learning well, why they are not coming to school or why, when they are forced to do so, they fail to behave in a way that is seen as acceptable.

He goes on to point out the most glaringly obvious omission:

In a post pandemic world, **surely** our focus should be on child development and wellbeing.

And he concludes by offering utterly straightforward and achievable resolutions:

If we are serious about change then the white paper should have scrapped league tables, encouraged student centred learning and trusted teachers and leaders to get on with running schools for the benefit of the children that they serve.

In *Tipping Point, Throwing Point - Why do we wait until children are in crisis to intervene?*, Viv Cohen Papier addresses the question posed by this Issue head on through examining what we do to the young people who are about to be unceremoniously ejected from the system:

I have worked with a wide range of students who have been referred to our setting because they quietly, explosively, all at once or bit by bit, detached from mainstream education until the prospect of their finishing their last year of secondary school at a mainstream setting was quite frankly untenable.

In what she calls an ‘ungenerous’ response she identifies a central cause:

...the children I work with experience this type of educational journey frequently because it is sadly ubiquitous in a system which is so focused on exam success that it is happy to cut loose the dead weight of children who cannot or will not conform.

And she places a series of utterly reasonable ‘what-ifs’:

If we had the time, the money, the staff, and all the additional resources that we need, what could we achieve for our young people, who at a baseline level are already having to deal with an economic crisis, a mental health crisis, a climate crisis, and the aftereffects of a global pandemic? If we stopped being so fixated on exam results as an interpretation of a child’s worth (and let’s be very clear, we *do* do this as a society), what other skills and joys might we nurture in our children instead?

She goes on to describe the impact that a different kind of learning, a different kind of teaching, a different attitude to the young looks like. She concludes with the story of young woman who cheerily greets her on the street after they have both left the school

with,

“Miss I’ve been permed!”

Central to her story is a poem – a bridge, a vehicle for exploring self, an emblem of a different approach – and a desire to find:

...a route which would lead to triumph rather than bitter disappointment.

In *Belonging and Not Belonging*, Lex Butler illuminates the contradiction for young people with whom she works of being inside the system and not wanting to be there. She places her own tension alongside theirs and, in a poetically beautiful piece manages to capture the pain, the excitement and the confusion that students and staff feel on the ‘outskirts’ of the system. From this perspective, it is also a sharp critique of the inadequacy of the education system as a whole. She describes the context of her workplace and the weight that young people bring with them:

The energies of poverty, trauma, neurodiversity, dysregulation and systemic racism swirl round our building, informing our work and care. Typically, intersectional disadvantage has crisscrossed students’ lives, assaulting their cohesiveness, splitting them into parts, causing internal chaos from when they were tiny. Sometimes it’s begun in utero, before they have even happened yet, remaining unsaid and missing from their knowledge of their own story.

It is a description of a specific workplace but it also stands for vast swathes of our society and the condition that so many people, old and young have to endure. But these are young people in transition and Butler identifies the brutality they are experiencing through the questions that become accusations:

They don’t know it yet but soon, ‘what happened to you?’ will go for good. ‘What’s wrong with you?’ has already started and, ‘it’s your fault’ is around the corner. By the time they are 18 the system will have stopped accepting accountability entirely for its part in what’s happened.

This is a highly sophisticated analysis of both cause and effect. It describes what impossibly stretched practitioners have to do to ameliorate the horror of the conditions they work within and the price they have to pay in standing there.

In her paper *The Arts and Education* Dorothy Heathcote sets out a challenge that the school curriculum should have at its heart a,

...a mandatory dedication to world stewardship rather than exploitation.

The article, printed here with the kind permission of Dorothy Heathcote’s daughter Marianne Heathcote Woodbridge, was discovered by David Allen in the Dorothy Heathcote archive and although it is undated, he estimates that it was written at the turn of the millennium. Heathcote always had the needs of young people at the centre of her work and argued that the four pillars of her life’s work carried through this principle. As far as we know, this represents the first full articulation of what has become known

as The Commission Model of education. It offers us the corollary of ‘How have we let our children down?’: ‘How can we best support our young?’ She observes,
Politicians treat the curriculum as if it were an exercise in stuffing a sausage...

And offers a pragmatic, achievable way forward, suggesting that educators give it a go, apprentices to the task of enabling the young to flourish:

Perhaps some could try it, learning as they/we go, some of their changes may become energisers of change to the benefit of future generations, and possibly even get the wordsmiths in power to offer a measure of support during the trial and error period.

Geoff Gillham’s *What’s Happening When Children Are Doing Drama At Depth?* looks in detail at a moment from the kind of drama evinced by Dorothy Heathcote. Another gem from the Dorothy Heathcote archive and printed here with the kind permission of Chris Cooper, this piece explores the ‘far from ...academic’ question of the nature of the reality experienced by children as they inhabit the drama. He does this because,
...to understand this must have enormous significance to the teacher who is responsible for structuring the drama so that children can experience the appropriate emotional/cognitive state.

Having established first principles, Gillham goes on to layout some essentials of meaning making for humans. He illuminates not only how metaphor can work by,
...connecting unlike events together because they demonstrate at least one crucial likeness...

but also examples the mechanisms of this as he discusses the children’s drama in Dorothy Heathcote’s video *Three Looms Waiting*. He demonstrates how Heathcote’s selection of the prison camp metaphor works for the children inhabiting it. Fascinating. Also fascinating are the comments made by Heathcote in the margins and at the end of this document.

As Gillham drills deeper into the meaning-making he analyses the signs and signals being used to express the metaphor and explores how physically and emotionally dangerous situations are managed expressively and safely by the careful construction of the metaphor. There is also the clear implication that the subtlety of the child’s response, their management of the signs and signals, is key, which in turn has clear implications for the work of the teacher. He concludes by asking us to think about a phrase which had,
...taken on a meaning which relates to, and for me expresses, the contradictions that I have been dealing with; the mental/emotional process involved in drama – creativity, if you like – is the process of “imagining the real”.

The ripples from this phrase are still with us.

This Issue completes with two book reviews, each of which is written by an experienced, knowledgeable and insightful practitioner. Both books are firmly located within the purview of the classroom teacher, and unpack the pedagogical stance so important to the development of a curriculum that does not let our children down.

Chris Green's review of *Reading Shakespeare through Drama* by Jane Coles and Maggie Pitfield provides us with a well-informed take on the book. He draws attention to Coles' and Pitfield's political experience and pedagogical expertise and places for us their central argument for a curriculum founded on a Vygotskian approach that consciously educates the imagination. Green points out the book's academic strengths as well as the practical classroom examples it offers. He suggests that the book will provide food for welcome debate and advocates that English and Drama teachers should take *the time to discover the book* in the interests of the future child.

David Allen's review of *Real in All the Ways that Matter: Weaving Learning Across the Curriculum with Mantle of the Expert* by Viv Aitken stands firmly on an extensive knowledge of the Dorothy Heathcote legacy and he demonstrates the contextualisation of the 'sea-change' that occurred in Dorothy Heathcote's work as she developed the Mantle of the Expert pedagogy in New Zealand. He explains how Viv Aitken's book offers *theoretical underpinnings; planning and sequencing; "tools"; "advice and cautionary tales"* with accounts of Mantles to illustrate the models. At the same time, he explains, Aitken locates her work in the New Zealand cultural context and explains the importance of developing materials that are relevant to the young people who live there. The book opens with a stunning Whatkatauki (Maori proverb) which Aitken develops as a metaphor for teaching, and Allen concludes by encouraging teachers to grasp this kind of work and to see the pedagogy of Dorothy Heathcote as a process of apprenticeship.

We are very sad to announce that John Airs died on the 20th August 2022. In honour of his extraordinary contributions to young people through Drama, NATD awarded him lifetime membership of NATD. He was the most delightful human being, a deep-thinking, highly political colleague and a highly sophisticated practitioner. He was a member of the editorial committee for The Journal for Drama in Education and is badly missed by all who worked with him. Brian Woolland's beautiful obituary pays tribute to the gentle man who,

...despite always being firm in his deeply held values and convictions...
brought genuine humility to his dealings with others.

Chair's Report: Making Sense of The Things We Do Not Understand

by
Liam Harris

I first encountered NATD 13 years ago. Guy Williams, my former teacher, invited me and a few of my peers to attend Conference as he knew we were heading to read Drama, Theatre and/or Education at University. I arrived at Oriel College, Oxford, in the midst of a torrential downpour, blown away and extremely intimidated by the grandeur of it all. As I checked in at The Lodge, looking desperately for someone that I recognised, the only person present was an unassuming man dressed in a dripping wet khaki anorak. He very kindly checked me in, gave me a set of keys and guided me to my room. He smiled softly as he left me to prepare for dinner, reassuring me that 'I'd fit right in'.

It took me a few years before I confessed to John Airs that I had mistaken him for a porter that night and how, the next day, I was surprised to find him leading my workshop. Of course, having been lucky enough to get to know John over the years that followed, it is now unsurprising to me that he met me with such simplicity and unwavering kindness.

He opened his workshop by sharing his understanding of what it means to use Drama within the classroom. Using a phrase of Edward Bond's (adapted from the principles of Greek Theatre), he explained that Drama was simply *taking that which we don't understand and inviting it into the room to explain itself*. Rather humbly, he also confessed to not being sure exactly what it meant and so we would work together to figure it out.

I will be eternally grateful to John for so many things, but the experience he so generously shared with those lucky enough to have worked with him in that workshop at Oriel College helped me to build the core of my practice as an educator. In an educational world of definite practices, I try to remember John's softly spoken proclamation that, regardless of how much you plan, you never quite know what a group of young people are going to give. Or indeed, what they are going to need.

It was with particular sadness that I learnt of John's passing in August this year. Especially at a time when the world needs all of the integrity, intelligence and humanity that John had to offer in spades.

We are currently living in a society where our leaders deem it acceptable to give tax breaks to the rich at a time when the poorest in our society are forced to choose between heating their homes and putting food on the table. We are living in a time when lifting

the cap on bankers' bonuses is seen to be more important than preventing the number of children living in poverty in the UK from rising (a figure that in 2021 already stood at 3.6 million.). We are currently living in a world that is systematically letting our young people down. And they know it.

If there was ever a time to bring something into our classrooms to make it explain itself, now appears to be the time.

I am extremely grateful to The Journal Committee for pulling together a collection of articles that begins the interrogation process, starting to unravel some of the threads affecting our young people. The task feels daunting and at times overwhelming, but the thinking revealed in these pages certainly gives me hope that we can deepen the exploration with our young people; they are relying on us to empower them to build a better world.

The NEC have been busy planning a series of in person workshops that seek to equip practitioners with the skills to interrogate play texts with young people (specifically those that frequently appear on exam specifications). We hope that we can support members in both taking an ambitious, child-centred approach to exploring play texts while also ensuring educators feel confident in meeting the needs of examination courses. This is a delicate balance and a tension that the NEC feels requires further exploration with its members. Please look out for advertisements on our social media channels to sign up for the workshops nearest to you, likely to be held early in the new year.

The Association continues to be represented as a member of the Drama, Theatre and Education Alliance (DTEA), alongside a range of organisations that champion drama and theatre education and involvement for young people. Most recently, the DTEA held a policy session at September's Labour Party Conference, where MPs were invited to attend a short performance and seminar that championed raising the status of Drama and Theatre in schools. My thanks to all those who contacted their MPs to attend the seminar.

The DTEA are also continuing their preparations for the #SeizeTheDay event where, between the 20th-27th March, practitioners are encouraged to invite their local MP into their school to experience a piece of theatre or workshop that demonstrates the power of drama in education. If you feel able to do so, please take a look at the DTEA website for more information about how you can get involved in this nationwide programme: www.dtealliance.co.uk.

In the uncertainty of the current climate, where schools are balancing paying their energy bills and being able to pay their staff, it can feel as though the weight of the world is on our shoulders. I think we should take comfort in the approach of John: it's not our job to have the answers, but simply never to stop asking those interrogating questions.

Poem

by Michael Rosen

Michael Rosen sent a poem to some people that he knows. When asked if we could publish it, adding a note saying that 'of course Michael is addressing drama teachers too', he agreed, saying that they didn't have 'drama teachers' as such, in 1950s/1960s grammar schools!

What did they think they were doing
those English teachers
staying on after school
to put on plays?
I was an ant in a play about ants.
Then I was a servant
in Much Ado About Nothing.
Hours and hours rehearsing
in winter classrooms.
My father did it too,
bringing home the problem
of how to make blood for Julius Caesar's toga
and snakes for Cleopatra.
They got no money for it
these English teachers.
Sometimes headteachers were pleased
sometimes mildly irritated
that the hall was out of action
for their assemblies.
We left school.
They retired.
They're all gone:
Mr Jones, Mr Brown, my father.
There are one or two photos
blurred pictures of unbelievably young people
with too much make-up round the eyes;
some marked up play scripts,
the character's name underlined in red,
stage directions - 'move stage right'.
voice directions - 'urgent'.
Did they know that we would carry the memories
for decades?
60 years since 'Much Ado'.

Did they know that it'd be easier to remember
the lines and the Leichner make-up
than how to do simultaneous equations
and the correct order of the cities down the Rhine,
though I can be a red corpuscle
and describe my journey from the left ventricle
to my fingers and back
(it involves all four chambers of the heart).
Did they know that some of us
would do more and more and more
of things like saying words out loud
or writing words for others to say out loud
or just working with a few other enthusiastic people
to get something done.
Did they know that?
I once bumped into Mr Brown
on Russell Square Station.
He was in his 70s
I was in my 60s.
I had a lot to tell him.
He had a lot to tell me.
There wasn't time.
We said, 'Let's meet up.'
We didn't.
He died soon after.
He had an obituary in the Times.
They asked me to add a bit.
I wanted to say that
those hours in the winter classrooms
being an ant mattered then
mattered again and again
and still matter.
Well, they matter to me.
But did he know that?
Did he know that they would go on mattering?
And if he knew
where did he and Mr Jones and my father
learn that the kids in their plays
would go on thinking about
being ants and servants
for the rest of their lives?

The White Paper 28th March 2022

How our education system can level up and the case for a fully trusted system.

by Matthew Milburn

Matthew Milburn worked for 17 years as a headteacher in two large maintained secondary schools in the very heart of the “leveluplands” that are Barnsley and Oldham. In the last few years of his career he was an Executive Headteacher and worked as a National Leader of Education supporting colleagues and schools in Oldham and across the north west. Having retired from teaching in 2020, Matthew remains involved in coaching Headteachers. He is a Patron of NATD and has been a member since 1987.

The white paper “Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child” was prepared under the then Secretary of State for Education Nadhim Zahawi. He held the office for less than a year. He left to become Chancellor when Boris Johnson lost the confidence of allies and suffered a flurry of resignations from ministers in the summer of 2022. Zahawi chose to remain loyal to Johnson and left Education for promotion, days before Johnson announced his resignation as Prime Minister. I mention this, as it speaks of his personal judgement and his commitment to education and the role. It also speaks of the upheaval that happens every time there is a new ambitious minister who wants to make their mark on education. It is not the first time that a Minister for Education has thrown things up in the air, then left schools to pick up the pieces. The lack of consistency and chaos of government does nothing to inspire confidence amongst teachers, children and families. Elements of the white paper seek to address the retention crisis in schools. Perhaps a future White Paper should address the **retention** not of teachers but of Education Ministers?

The white paper is very wide ranging and seeks to improve a raft of areas within schooling. In summary it lays out the government’s strategy for improving the following aspects of the education system:

- “Levelling up” which it defines as making sure that young people in the “worst performing areas” do better in English and maths.
- Wide and systematic sharing of evidence based practice that is proven to raise English and maths outcomes for children.
- Improving the quality of teaching through further training opportunities, improved literacy teaching and improved salaries for those who “work in the schools with most need.”
- A new curriculum body to create high-quality resources, a longer school week and improved behaviour and attendance rates.

- Targeted support for children who fall behind in English or maths. Tutoring and small group tuition to form part of the school system and secure funding for the Education Endowment Foundation to support evidence based practice.
- A trust led system to drive up standards, including trusts established by local authorities. New standards to require trusts to work collaboratively. Education Investments Areas to focus funding on areas with entrenched challenges.

The White Paper is well written and in some respects it is hard to argue with. For example we should of course welcome support for early years leadership and in particular speech and language in early years. Drama has a key role to play here and there should be even more specialists who enable structured play to support language development in early years. We should welcome the opportunity to make education more evidence based and certainly look to support school workers who want to undertake further training and development. We should support focussing funds on areas of most need as long as these are fairly identified.

The media focussed on the notion of a longer school week which made the headlines and I suspect this was designed to play to voters. I'm aware of only a handful of schools that would not seek to offer a school week of 32.5 hours, which is to become the minimum. My last school offered a 33 hour week and we struggled to do so without breaking the 1265 directed time rule for teaching. For many, to meet the criteria of more time in school, there is likely to need to be more unstructured break or lunch time not directed or teaching time. In my experience it's during periods of unstructured break or lunch that the majority of behaviour issues arise. A longer school week would be great if it was properly resourced. Point 59 in the White Paper says "...we will expect all state-funded mainstream schools to deliver at least a 32.5 hour week within their budgets." My view is that the consequence of this new legislation will mean either schools will be under pressure to break the 1265 directive or colleagues will have time-consuming behaviour issues to follow up due to more unstructured time.

Many great schools already offer an additional period to older pupils and let's not forget the number of amazing learning experiences that teachers offer out of school time. The challenge is to get youngsters from less privileged backgrounds to genuinely engage. Pupil premium should address this but it needs to be pupil premium with a buddy. In other words the child that is pupil premium is allowed to bring a friend along to the rehearsal or visit to a gallery. Such children need support on many levels and money alone won't solve the problem.

An aspect of the white paper that gained far less media coverage was the shift to permitting Local Authorities to form trusts. I suspect the reason that the media were less interested in this element of the paper is that they know that parents and the wider

community aren't that interested in school governance.

I really welcome the move to permit Local Authorities (LAs) to have a greater role in the school system. No one would argue that in a pre-MAT (Multi-Academy Trust) world, LAs were perfect. In my experience they acted like a parent to schools who acted like stropky children! School leaders would moan, rebel and kick against them but they would also be very glad that the LA was there when things went wrong. For example, the school I was a deputy at had a serious fire and within 24 hours the LA had their own crisis team demolishing the buildings and setting up temporary accommodation. LAs also have an element of local accountability that MATs do not have. This has many benefits not least reducing further the risk of financial mismanagement and vastly inflated CEO salaries that we have seen from some less scrupulous MATs.

Clearly pupils who are excluded need to go to local schools for additional support and these should be working in partnership across the locality. The obvious response is to make these local authority schools. A genuine risk is that MATs will end up running the schools for the children who behave nicely and the LA ends up running those who exhibit more challenging behaviours. We have already seen MATs that have actively cherry-picked "nice" schools and my concern is that the motivation for now allowing LAs to run trusts is that they will end up with the more challenging settings.

The white paper calls for schools to work in partnership to enable a flourishing school system. If the government was serious about this then they should remove the biggest driver of competition within the system; publicly published league tables. It is in this area that it becomes clear that the white paper is just tinkering around the edges not addressing the real issue. Since the 1980s, the entire schooling system has been built on the principles of game theory. It's really simple; come up with an (often arbitrary) set of performance indicators that can be used to judge a service and then apply them rigorously to say which is providing the best service and which is the worst.

The white paper conflates school improvement with improved outcomes in English and maths. It says that schools need to improve attendance and behaviour data. These are things that can easily be measured using performance indicators. What the white paper fails to do is address why children are not learning well, why they are not coming to school or why, when they are forced to do so, they fail to behave in a way that is seen as acceptable.

The white paper refers to a deeper and wider knowledge base, meaning that for young people to succeed there is a raft of key knowledge that they need to master. Again, it's difficult to argue with this – I think knowledge is, of course, vital – however humans need to be in the right frame of mind to learn. They learn well when they feel motivated, curious and supported. They learn well when their needs and interests are recognised and

reflected in the curriculum. Many youngsters need to be protected into learning by skilled teachers who are able to balance the ‘curriculum for children’ with the ‘curriculum for teacher’.

Covid knocked everyone off balance and the best teachers will recognise this and start from where the children are, to build profound and important learning experiences. Literacy and numeracy are of course important – but a child will learn best how to use words and numbers when they feel motivated, interested and excited by the challenge. Forced learning breeds resentment and antipathy that is all too common in secondary schools in particular.

The white paper asserts that more robust exams, have “set children on a path to success.” Where is the evidence for this? The Education Endowment Foundation is much lauded in the white paper and has done many great things around school leadership. However, the Foundation’s work on school improvement is exclusively judged against school results as measured by the same crass performance indicators mentioned above. In a post pandemic world, **surely** our focus should be on child development and wellbeing. Special Schools have systems that assess such outcomes and these are far more profound than basing judgements on whether a child achieved a Level 4 or 5 in English.

Pedagogy would improve if teachers were encouraged to listen and respond to children. The top down, knowledge rich model promoted by the white paper militates against such an approach.

Teacher recruitment and retention would improve if schools were encouraged to listen to colleagues via coaching and mentoring. The new Early Career Framework fails to put enough emphasis on coaching new teachers, offering instead yet more toolkits for managing behaviour and subject enhancement. By caring about the workforce and properly listening to people, we will get far greater commitment and retention.

The creation of a new arms-length curriculum body that will create resources for lessons could be useful but will not be a panacea. It won’t replace the need for face-to-face interactions that are so vital to human development and fundamental in PE, drama, and many of areas of the curriculum. I’m old enough to remember Teachers TV and other online materials that sought to create similar resources in the past; they were closed down by the tory/liberal coalition government.

The Foreword of the white paper does mention the need to address “the educational and emotional impact of the pandemic” but then argues driving up standards in English and maths will address the problem. For all the fine words, it is flawed as it fails to address the issue of league tables that promote crass competition between schools, MATs and LAs. If we are serious about change then the white paper should have scrapped league

tables, encouraged student centred learning and trusted teachers and leaders to get on with running schools for the benefit of the children that they serve.

Tipping Point, Throwing Point

Why do we wait until children are in crisis to intervene?

by Viv Cohen Papier

I am mid lesson, and as I lean in further to speak to the student whose book I'm bent over near the front of the room, my attention is almost entirely focussed on the increasingly louder conversation happening at the back of my classroom. My TA, in a mirror image of my own hunch-backed pose, is trying to convince a 'challenging' student to leave the class. He is refusing.

The reason that he is being asked to leave the room is because I have told him to; he has fallen foul of the 'binary behaviour policy', which aims to crack down on so called 'disruptive behaviour'. As per the behaviour management approach of the academy chain and satellite East Sussex school in which I completed my teacher training, and where I am at that moment mid-NQT (newly qualified teacher) year, students who 'disrupt the learning of others' by talking, flipping rulers, pulling faces, moving out of their seats, arguing with the teacher or any other number of seemingly endless and quite frankly arbitrary infractions will receive a 'warning' on the board. If they receive two warnings, they are automatically sent out of the lesson, to the isolation unit of the school — a separate classroom and attached pastoral office at the farthest flung reaches of the building — where they will spend the next 24 school hours, sunk into apathy and staring in the same direction as those peers who have found themselves in a similar predicament.

As a trainee and then as an NQT, I found this system baffling and unwieldy. I could not bear to condemn students to what I imagined as a prison cell for an entire day, where I envisioned them rotting away, ostracised from the rest of the school. I soon learned that actually it was not as bad as all that, and at least in our school students were not confined to sensory isolation booths where they were made to stare at the wall, as in others, and were even given the luxury of toilet breaks. However, the feedback from my lesson observations was clear; the advice for how to solve the behaviour management problems in what was a locally notorious school was always the same: "get rid of them". The system, I was told, was there for a reason. Other students deserved to have learning which was disruption free. Why should they suffer because their peers would not follow the rules? Of course, if the student in question had a diagnosed condition of autism or ADHD we were encouraged to exercise possibly the most Kafkaesque take on the policy I ever heard, courtesy of the deputy head, which was that it was a "rigid system in which you have to be flexible". In practice this normally meant that students with diagnosed need had their behaviour infractions ignored until either teacher or student reached tipping point, at which time they were sent out of the lesson anyway.

And so it was that my year 10 student — who had a diagnosis of both autism and ADHD,

as well as various complex issues in his home life — was not so silently simmering away, having been on the receiving end of his two warnings and, quite reasonably, burning with injustice. As an adult who has a little more in the way of impulse control and a little less in the way of hormones, it is easy to tut at the way this rage manifested itself; he threw a chair. Thankfully it missed both myself and my TA but it certainly had the intended impact, though luckily not physically, of making his displeasure not just known but entirely unignorable.

This type of scenario plays out in classrooms across the country on a regular basis. National statistics data from the 2020/21 academic year for suspensions and permanent exclusions states that “the most common reason across all permanent exclusions was persistent disruptive behaviour [...] The same reason was also the most common across all suspensions.” In the above incident the emotional crescendo to a long history of disruptive behaviour was quite literally illustrated by my student’s rather clever use of chair-as-missile: stress and anger made manifest. Even the most blinkered of adults could not misinterpret that action as anything other than a crisis. But a crisis does not always look like a single incident, or indeed may not look like any sort of loud, explosive incident at all. Having spent the last four years in alternative education, I have worked with a wide range of students who have been referred to our setting because they quietly, explosively, all at once or bit by bit, detached from mainstream education until the prospect of their finishing their last year of secondary school at a mainstream setting was quite frankly untenable. From students whose anxiety has rendered them incapable of setting foot in the school building, to those who arrive at our setting with pages-long ‘rap sheets’ of ‘unacceptable’ and ‘challenging’ behaviour, the children who are sent to us are, without a doubt, in crisis.

But why do we wait until students are at this breaking point, the end of their school career, this last-chance-saloon, to intervene? My inner cynic feels that perhaps it suits us as a society — and in schools as a microcosm of that society — to ignore the problems until, like a chair hurled across a room, they cannot be ignored. I would go so far as to say that we fail the quiet students who are ‘just getting by’ just as much as we fail the loud ones who are ‘kicking off’; many students are literally counting down the days until they can be free of secondary school, but because their distress is internalised, they cannot be rescued from their despair. If I were feeling ungenerous, I would say that the children I work with experience this type of educational journey frequently because it is sadly ubiquitous in a system which is so focused on exam success that it is happy to cut loose the dead weight of children who cannot or will not conform. Indeed, this view *is* very ungenerous to my colleagues in mainstream who do try and who do care. But they are hamstrung by a system which moves inexorably forward, Leviathan-like, towards exams and their associated, all-important results. There is a limit to what individual teachers can do to cater to their students’ unique needs and talents within a mainstream educational structure which is still, in 2022, set up to treat them as though they are all

the same.

Truth be told I do not have the answer to the question posed above. In fact I have more questions than answers: What would it look like if we did not leave things till breaking point before we intervened? If we had the time, the money, the staff, and all the additional resources that we need, what could we achieve for our young people, who at a baseline level are already having to deal with an economic crisis, a mental health crisis, a climate crisis, and the aftereffects of a global pandemic? If we stopped being so fixated on exam results as an interpretation of a child's worth (and let's be very clear, we *do* do this as a society), what other skills and joys might we nurture in our children instead? I have seen first-hand on more than one occasion that taking time — that most precious of resources— to connect with students and approach their needs on an individual basis yields results. I do not mean exam results, that holy grail on which we pin all hopes and by which we seem to measure all worth, but results of human connection, of children who are able to open up and feel confident — who do not need to mask their insecurity with aggression.

There are many things about working in an alternative setting that are different to working in a mainstream one, but if pressed I would have to say that one of the key differences is just that: time. As teachers in an alternative setting we have time; while we are still subject to the same external pressures as a mainstream setting, to a greater or lesser extent, we are not bound by the pressures of the exam system nearly as much. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it, outsiders are not expecting our kids to achieve big results. In addition to this we give our students time, and space, which are inextricably linked; we don't force students to learn at a rate which doesn't suit them (what on Earth would be the point of that?) We move slowly and we are led by their pace as much as possible; we look at the bigger picture, holistically speaking, and understand the need to connect with students and build their confidence slowly, before we try to support them to excel academically.

We provide time, breathing space and understanding — but we are set up for this. Many schools across the country are doing excellent work with onsite alternative provision units and pastoral teams which work hard to support students with additional needs, but this still serves to, on some level, exclude these students from the rest of the school. Oftentimes students and parents remark that they wish the young person could have come to us sooner— in year 10, or even in year 7 — that they wish their previous school had approached their needs and behaviours in the way that we are. But I am keenly aware that it is much more straightforward for us to work on the bespoke basis that we do. It is easy to sit in an alternative setting and criticise the failings of mainstream education but the reality is that, in order for the mainstream system to change, to become something which doesn't just ship kids out when they become unmanageable, it needs wholesale reform from the ground up. A utopia that is currently unachievable when those in power

are still content to bury their heads in the sand and pretend that our education system is fit for purpose.

Towards the end of my NQT year (at the completion of which I would depart mainstream education for good) a year 9 student volunteered to stand up and read a poem she had written in my lesson; I was almost overwhelmed with surprise and pride. Some months before, she had stood up (after receiving her second behaviour warning and being told to leave the room) and, tipping over her chair, loudly denounced me as a cunt. It took some convincing to take her back. "You're on a journey together" my NQT mentor told me. I replied acerbically that the student may be on a journey, but that I was being dragged behind her horse, a form of Medieval punishment that I did not exactly find enjoyable.

The student did return to my classroom but was often absent; as was the case with most 'repeat offenders' they were almost always isolated from one subject or another, meaning that even if they were on their best behaviour in my lessons, they still might end up missing the majority of them. Acting on what is now firmly established pedagogy but what as a very green teacher was then just a hunch, I went to find her in the isolation unit. There, I explained that, as she had missed a lot of lessons the previous term, I thought that perhaps she often arrived at my classroom not knowing what we were doing. This term we weren't studying a book but a series of poems; every lesson would cover a different poem, so she wouldn't have to worry about not knowing what we had done in the previous lesson, because she would be in the same position as everyone else. Her demeanour noticeably changed from that day, as did my understanding of behaviour as communication.

As with my year 10 student (who told me, in his own way, that he would miss me when I left: "what if we get someone shit?") what we needed was time. I mention the above scenario not in order to be self-congratulatory or self-serving, but because to me it illustrates what can be so simply achieved in theory but in reality is so hard (almost to the point of impossibility) to do in a school of oftentimes more than 1,000 students, with endless deadlines and pressures on teachers: find the time to connect with students on a human level. That is why needs get ignored until they are unignorable — there are too many students, not enough teachers. Not enough time.

Many weeks after she had stood up to recite her poem, the same student knocked on my classroom door. She had been isolated again, though not from my lesson, which hadn't happened since our conversation. English book in hand she proudly showed me the same poem, now carefully illustrated: how she had passed her recent time in isolation. I wish I had taken a copy. I wish too that I could remember more of what she had written. I recall only that it was profoundly personal, and that I was deeply moved. Her poem had ended on an unmistakable note of hope and had allowed me a glimpse of something I had not yet seen in this girl who had, up until that point, largely expressed herself via

rather more negative mediums. If I were to allow myself a real flight of fancy, I might say that it was in part *because* of the poetry that she too was given a glimpse into another world, a place in which she could find words to express some of those things for which words don't always come easily. I might even say that she was empowered to access words which speak to, and for, the soul, rather than those which enable formulaic answers to an exam question. But that does seem awfully fanciful, doesn't it?

Eventually she was permanently excluded, a couple of months into year 11, something I learned when I bumped into her in the street and she greeted me cheerfully ("Miss I've been permed!"). I had long since realised that she *was* on a journey, as we all are, and I can't help but wonder why she, like so many other students, was not given the time or space to complete that journey via a route which would lead to triumph rather than bitter disappointment.

Belonging and Not Belonging

by Lex Butler

I work as a Teaching Assistant in a kind of PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) for 40 Year 11 students who have been dropped from Mainstream for good. Schools across my city nominate 2 students at the end of Year 10 to join. Some have been pencilled in for a long time, maybe as far back as Primary. Educated schools put together healthy transitions for students making the switch but annoyingly for us, some students have actually been threatened with coming to us for years and their arrival is a prophecy fulfilled. Some kids have expected to end up here, or have family who came and have good faith in the unit already. Some are horrified, ashamed, some didn't know their school was sending them, and arrive in shock, no goodbyes and no closure. Some are excited, or relieved, some are angry. Everybody is anxious. No one comes here unless things have been very hard already.

The energies of poverty, trauma, neurodiversity, dysregulation and systemic racism swirl round our building, informing our work and care. Typically, intersectional disadvantage has crisscrossed students' lives, assaulting their cohesiveness, splitting them into parts, causing internal chaos from when they were tiny. Sometimes it's begun in utero, before they have even happened yet, remaining unsaid and missing from their knowledge of their own story.

Who is here

We are one of 3 PRUs around here. Some alumni validate the unit with their notoriety but make others feel like this place is dangerous and symbolises failure. For some students we will be more of the same, for others a light at the end of the tunnel and some will not engage with us at all, no matter what we try. We only get 9 months. It's not enough time. They are approaching the end of a 12 year school career of twists and turns, managed moves and expulsions. Some come with infamy, last year's videoed misdemeanours still popping on local Socials when they just want to move on. Some come cloaked in invisibility, silent non-attenders, children who have been written out of school and disappeared. Some students come and we can't figure out why Mainstream sent them and we remain baffled the whole year. In the eyes of the system they are all nearly at the end of being a child. The last vestiges of protection that this has awarded them so far is about to be removed, but they haven't seen that coming yet. We have though and we worry about each new changeling who comes through the door. Our unit is a gateway into the transitional space between childhood and official adulthood. Here we try to rewind and work with the child while the system tries to pull them more quickly towards adulthood, towards culpability. They don't know it yet but soon, 'what happened to you?' will go for good. 'What's wrong with you?' has already started and, 'it's your

fault' is around the corner. By the time they are 18 the system will have stopped accepting accountability entirely for its part in what's happened. Their birthdays pile up quietly, and there will be a state handover of responsibility well before their prefrontal cortex has anything adult to contribute to this new crisis. We have nine months to try and give them tools for whatever's coming. Some students are suspicious of our febrile, urgent efforts to help and tell us so. I welcome this particular hostility; they need to be alert to the intentions of adults. Students here are at increased risk of exploitation by adults for crime. Talking about what grooming might look like and being vigilant about it is part of our remit.

Our unit is like a large bungalow. We work in family sized classes. In 'Nurture' where I work it's more like what 'Early Years' gets right than what comes later on.

Stories

Most days there's shouting and throwing things, fights and threats of harm. And there's more brutality, running on phones. Tiny physical assaults, threats issued, damage to street furniture, moped theft, arrests, balaclavas, weed, night time and street light. Palm size crime, landscape and propped up on desks, under cracked screens are the background to life here, like the Greek Chorus warning and foreshadowing the students' immediate futures and expanding our Safeguarding workload.

It's soft here, it's brutal. It's quiet, it's loud, it's safe, it's dangerous. It's a refuge from trauma, it's a site of trauma. People are hurting here, and healing. And moving on. We laugh a lot. Students are very funny and make unspeakable jokes about hard things we didn't know about. Sometimes we have to talk about it and email Safeguarding.

Who else is here

Students get lots done here. Teachers adapt the syllabus and make it fit. It's not long enough to cram in all the years of lessons missed, but there's room for other kinds of learning. The Careers Advisor gives them glimpses of the working world and employers, she believes in them and their ability to build and manage life long careers and they believe her back. Our SENCo (a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, is the school teacher who is responsible for assessing, planning and monitoring the progress of children with special educational needs and disabilities [SEND]) grabs this last chance to get funding sorted for things like Autism or ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) for those who seem to fit the criteria. Other stakeholders sign in and out of this building regularly for meetings. The Visitors Book says things like Social Worker, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), RUOK? (Young people's substance use and sexual health service in Brighton), Youth Offending Team, Educational Psychologist, therapist, Police. Sometimes in meetings I'm in or I hear

about, there's talk of BPD (Borderline Personality Disorder) or Bipolar on the horizon for some children. These possible labels, frames and pathologies are raised by professionals in support of the child. Still, I am ambivalent about these narratives and about the stories I help tell.

Who they are becoming

There is huge energy in a place made up of people who have been rejected by systems. They are unwanted, they don't fit. Standing on the outside, these children know the systems are run for the privileged and don't believe the fantasy that their money and power is related to hard work and moral goodness. They know people in prisons and they know what crimes politicians are allowed to commit. They have an outsider's intellectual understanding of what the media tells them. They are outliers. They are political. They disrupt system narratives, they are an affront to systems, it's a place of chaos and creativity. It's like what Art School aimed to be in the 90s; anarchic, free, playful, conceptual, rejecting convention and defiant

They are early adopters, they are open to new ideas, they have new ideas, they are new ideas. They reinvent themselves, when things that shouldn't go wrong, do go wrong. They have survived hard things already. They know things already. They have seen things. They are things. They are things they name themselves. They make solutions, they are resilient and wise. They are sceptical, they are conspiracy theorists.

After school, when the PRU is empty, it's like it has poltergeists, the energy is in the fabric of the building. There are sticky spots and strange stains where items have been propelled and exploded against walls. There are random objects meant for shelves balanced on high beams, too high for anyone to have got to. There are names and statements written in whiteboard marker in impossible places. There are remote controls carefully sellotaped with a whole reel of tape to things that we all need but now can't use. Masking tape wound round all the posts so you can't get into a room and can't get out. Screwed in things are unscrewed and dismantled, heavy things tipped up. There's no point putting it back, not until after graduation.

Things I say

I see my role here as being to help students tell stories about themselves, to themselves. I am one of the many lanyard people in their lives narrating their story, sharing their history, putting my notes into databases and emailing it all on, so I am careful with what I contribute. I don't want to be complicit in systemic gas-lighting. I listen when they tell me their own stories and I lean in to the parts where they have endured hard things and the parts where they have somehow managed to just get on with it, when bad behaviour just looks like resilient adaptation to me. I talk to them about what trauma is and I say,

‘That must have been very hard for you’ in the places where they make brilliant jokes about their own pain. A compassionate, “It’s not that deep” is a customary counterpart to this. A wondering if I’m okay. Nine months is long enough to build attachment, and we do.

Things I don’t Say

I am not trained to cope with the high level of trauma here and I don’t have the support I need to cope with its impact on me. There’s no staff room for after a student has kicked off, called me the kind of bad things I have believed about myself since before they were born. There’s nowhere if someone has disclosed something unbearable. The first half term up until Halloween, before we really know each other, is the hardest. Adrenaline peaks and crashes around my nervous-system on a loop. At the end I spend my summer holidays wondering if I can do it all again. But I’ve always been committed to working with disadvantaged young people. And it is so exciting here. Students have taught me valuable lessons about my own rage, the lack of its protective force in my life. They have taught me about fighting for myself. I don’t tell them that the chaos, anarchy and creativity remind me of my own childhood which made art school seem a bit pedestrian. I don’t tell them that the clamour of their trauma drowns out my own. I don’t tell them I feel at home here, that I secretly have things in common with them that no one else gets about me.

We can’t discuss our politics so I don’t say to them that there is a hierarchy of dysregulation in this country. That though their rage and destruction and harm to others is unacceptable to everyone, not everybody’s dysregulation, rage and harm is unacceptable. I don’t say, that when I catch a bit of PMQs (Prime Minister’s Questions) and watch the MPs shouting, self-soothing, rocking, in false self, in denial, puffing themselves up, putting each other down, it reminds me of our unit when dysregulation is in session and has swept over the group. I don’t say that these MPs look to be in freeze, fight, flight, fold. I don’t say that I guess it’s probably from attachment trauma from boarding school, that time when their cohesiveness was assaulted, until they were all bits and crucial parts of them got split off, when they were only tiny. I’m terrified of the trauma of that lot. When we are dysregulated we lose all empathy. All of us. And for some reason we let a load of adults suffering with unprocessed PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) get together in a room to trigger each other. And when they have kicked off, are dysregulated and least able to access their empathy, when they’re at a peak of narcissist rage, we allow them to make decisions for all of us. I’m not scared of students in balaclavas on mopeds as much as I am of a room full of MPs weaponising their trauma, privilege and hate and taking it out on the most intersectionally disadvantaged in our community. It’s why I just can’t walk away from the PRU, the poltergeists, the young sages, their trauma and mine. I tell myself I’ll go round just one more time and then I’ll get out the gateway, hand my lanyard in, do something easier, but I never do.

Like me, students have complicated feelings about being here. For children who have often lost a lot already and are set to lose more, getting barred from mainstream is a significant loss in itself, though it treated them badly, neglected them and let them down. But still, humans are endlessly relational, we orient around parental objects, no matter how toxic, just ask the Boarding School lot. All their friends are in Mainstream, going Live on socials from busy corridors, bursting with people, stories, drama and life, which our students see, Live but remotely, from our bungalow, more of a shed, honestly. “This shed is so dead”, they say bitterly, and I have to agree, that in some ways, it is. It’s all of those things to me, all at the same time.

This Summer has been different. Energy headlines popping on my Socials, warning me about my future, about the Winter, and the notorious, unregulated Big Six. Concerns about the stresses of the job have been bumped by my creeping doubt that my wages will cover the predicted increases in my bills. I have no faith that a roomful of MPs are going to make it all ok. The Energy Calculator shared to the family group-chat informs me that I will likely be pushed out of this highly skilled but poorly paid job by the end of the year. I’m just going to get through the first term and see where I am. Same as usual.

The Arts and Education

by Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton

(This unpublished article was recently uncovered in the Dorothy Heathcote Archive. When asked when it was written, David Allen suggested: “Dorothy started developing the Commission Model in 2001. So the internal evidence from the article suggests to me a date c.2001-2 when she was working at the Queen Elizabeth High School on the Hexham Hospital Garden Commission.” Dorothy’s daughter, Marianne Heathcote Woodbridge has kindly given permission for it to be published. Gavin Bolton has also kindly agreed for his observations to be published. The numbers that appear in yellow boxes represent the sticky notes that Bolton placed on Heathcote’s original text. His notes follow Heathcote’s article. The article has not been edited in any way – it is a faithful transcription of Heathcote and Bolton’s original notes. We are grateful to Del Woodward for undertaking the task.)

1.

The present situation is somewhat summed up by John Lyly’s statement in his prologue to “Midas” in 1589 “If we present a mingle mangle, our fault is to be excused, because the whole world is become a hodge podge.” His reference to the theatre can currently apply to how teachers feel at this time. What I shall be speaking about is NOT intended to be a criticism of my profession. I am interested to see what could be a way forward from the “mingle mangle hodge podge.”

The current paradigm that operates in our system of education (appropriate as it was in early times) is now ineffective and sterile. The other model tried in the 60s, which is now ridiculed, is no longer suitable either because of the considerable changes in society and the advances in technology affecting communication and work processes. The present paradigm has fragmented the educational ‘diet,’ whilst the one in the 60s working towards a holistic humanities approach did not demonstrate a clear commitment to intellectual rigour within the affective design.

Both these paradigms therefore cannot serve well either the aspirations of teachers at the ‘coal face,’ OR the technocrat politicians who give lip service to Northrop Frye’s comment on education. He says, referring to literature but it applies equally to all the curriculum arts and science, “The dialectic axis of criticism, then has at one pole the total acceptance of the data [information] and the other pole the total acceptance of the potential value of those data. This is the real level of culture and of liberal education – the fertilisation of life by learning in which the systematic progress of scholarship flows into a systematic progress of tasks and understanding.”

Politicians treat the curriculum as if it were an exercise in stuffing a sausage where each new “ingredient” intrudes upon those already occupying space and time, so teachers are

overwhelmed and become incapacitated as they attempt to accommodate to the variety of demands upon energy and resources which are showered upon them as fragments of piecemeal edicts.

Teachers have tried hard to conform (because they realise the changes in society and the demands of modern technology and its effects) and most of them would agree with physician Marsilio Ficino's translation of Plato "...that all inventions in the arts is motivated by a desire to discover truths and that those who teach, love their pupils... the arts, as the artist, in order to succeed must esteem both the work he is doing and the people for whom he makes his art."

I maintain that the present paradigm cannot successfully use the arts if they are to be tacked on, or stuffed into the current fragmented situation FROM WHICH THEY HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN EXPELLED!

The 'hodge podge and mangle mangle' of Lyly. First subjects juggled, then it's marking, then record keeping, then standards, then league tables...now in April its edicts on homework. All commendable goals in themselves but difficult to put in process. Teachers have to earth bind the dreams of wordsmiths into detailed actions. As Blake said after a disastrous visit to a friend "If you would do well to others you must do it in minute particulars." Minute particulars have a habit of taking time, imagination and energy to put into practice.

2. We require a new paradigm. And such do not catch on quickly and may easily not survive to become the norm. [Witness such as Pestalozzi, Montessori, Dewey, Froebel and such]. What I propose is radical but I offer it in its seeming complexity as a way to alleviate the current log jam of teachers who feel undervalued and lacking in control of their own circumstances to deliver. Perhaps some could try it, learning as they/we go, some of their changes may become energisers of change to the benefit of future generations, and possibly even get the wordsmiths in power to offer a measure of support during the trial and error period.

3. The current paradigm was born of a society where social strata and the growth of industry required people to have learning sufficient to enable them to serve the machines, the transport, the evolving technology and the social station in life they were born to fill. The valuing then of literacy and numeracy are as essential now as then, and most intelligent commentators recognise that a balance of rigorous science and humanities is essential if the education envisaged by Northrop Frye could ever be realised. Unfortunately, even the most erudite seem to drive their ideas forward on a basis of content, the data, the facts, the collected information – and the "potential value of those data" is reduced to how market forces, industry, commerce and plain cash will be served. Thus teachers are "sick (in the medieval sense) of a

withdrawing of the loving learning” which most of them want to generate with their classes.

4.

The paradigm I propose will be based upon three foundations, concepts which could enable a curriculum giving equal value to arts and sciences and without schism. These three will provide the standard and style of any area of learning a school contracts to engage in.

1. The notion of enterprises;
2. The notion of publishing and
3. The Notion of responsibility to carry through to recognisable outcomes those enterprises deemed suitable to the staff and students and their learning needs.

I propose that these three should function within a mandatory dedication to world stewardship rather than exploitation.

1. Enterprises. First a definition: an undertaking – esp. a bold or difficult one. Project, venture, adventure, initiative, speculation, plan, scheme, design, programme, activity, endeavour, effort, operation, task, concern.

5.

Those who participate with the enterprise are deemed to have (or to develop) initiative, resourcefulness, adventurousness, assertiveness, boldness, daring, nerve, audacity, verve, courage, pluck, mettle spirit, vigour, energy, zip, drive, dynamism, go, purposefulness, purpose, dash, push, ambition, determination, resolve, motivation, willpower, zeal, enthusiasm, keenness, and in colloquial terms ‘get-up-and-go, gumption, guts, grit, spunk, pep, vim and zing’!!!! (Oxford complete word finder).

So an enterprise will comprise an undertaking which may be of long or short duration which a school staff will select in order that data (information of the kinds deemed necessary for the stage of development of those participating in it) can through that participating reveal its potential and value to those who work at the tasks involved in the enterprise. A school can select as many enterprises

6.

as they feel they can service at any time. An enterprise divides time as commitments not lessons. A “school of music” enterprise could function at different levels of skills and with differing envisaged outcomes. All work at whatever level would be based upon commitment to fulfil those – from carols for Christmas, a song book collection, variations on ‘Happy Birthday,’ commitments, instrumental skills, composition, choir work, orchestra and whatever else a staff considered relevant to a school of music enterprise. Once that is accepted and a workable format found for a staff team to feel comfortable with, then all relevant levels and aspects of science,

7.

8.

notation, sound, human celebration through music, mathematics,

reading, writing, listening, telling, and composition would be the data to be studied. The curriculum available within the enterprise parameters would be undertaken via the context and the shared power structure to fulfil the purpose of the enterprise as the teachers decide a design for.

2. Publishing: The current paradigm makes little use of the work undertaken and produced by children other than to be examined and scrutinised by teachers, and an occasional display of work in performance, or in specialist rooms. Enterprise work is not only dedicated to outcomes but it must publish on a regular basis all aspects relevant to the work, and these must be open to scrutiny not only by peers, but by arrangement and the goodwill and interest of people in relevant enterprises outside the parameters of the school. It is the publishing aspects which require enquiries into models of laying out information, writing reports, enquiries, information. Aspects of coordinating data, lectures, discussion panels, video of work in progress, research schemes, brainstorming. We are living in times of a huge range of possibilities for publishing ranging from enterprise, internal memos to public forums such as radio, video, internet, fax, pamphlets, art and design material. Selection of the final relevant form would be relevant to those who would receive it or agree to be 'clients' of the enterprise.

9.

An important factor would be that all materials generated by the data to serve the learning purposes would become an archive available as necessary for model or cross reference purposes. All the work produced becomes a bank account, a store house for reference and can be recycled by other enterprises which would use materials in ways not originally intended.

All enterprises would be as a result of commissions – some invented by teachers, or their friends working in other organisations, or sought out by head teachers by contacting organisations. Some commissions would service the school itself or other classes or outside communities such as homes for the elderly, or local day centres. It only takes a combination of a) deciding which learning areas a teacher team wishes currently to stress and b) the imagination to set up a commission truthful enough to make it worth the doing.

3. This naturally leads to responsibility for outcomes. Commissions contrived or genuine and actual, have a built-in promise once embarked upon, to reach conclusions and produce whatever is required by the commissioners. Enterprises would be driven by need for skills to be mastered, inventiveness to

10.

solve difficulties, imagination to frame questions and find more and more complex ways of resolving them. The group (society in process!) would be the working unit, with the drive towards individual responsibility and colleague collaborations just as enterprises function in the greater society and the work would be driven by the need to publish and create ‘products.’ These would be the natural outcomes for any particular enterprise. This paradigm is not a charter for producing little workers to serve later as compliant time servers in a society dedicated to consumerism and competition. The ‘time out’ which has always been an ideal held sacred in formal schooling will still hold good – the difference being that enterprises, publishing and responsibility for quality work and fulfilling commissions engages participants in breaking the mould of “just getting through school work” so that real living can begin afterwards and at weekends.

How might this paradigm begin?

A school staff should generate the first enterprises which would be based upon the student curriculum needs (age, previous skills, level of abilities as a basis for commencing work) and the realistic assessment of staff individual and group skills knowledge. Also their group strengths and access to help from the wider community. This must be honestly, and rigorously assessed. So the first group (or one!) of enterprises can be launched within a realistic framework of what can be serviced by teachers, building and equipment and the experience and skills of their pupils.

11.

An example of a music school enterprise (and it could only be selected if some teachers have musical skills, interests OR can draw upon the services of people outside school as necessary) in lower primary classes could be: making a collection of all the songs they know, designing a format for publication, illustrating them, discussing their meanings and relevance for different occasions, listening to rhythms in poems, making tunes to sing them to (where appropriate) printing them off from the computer and exhibiting the final forms in a space where groups can explain to sympathetic visitors – a few parents, some high school students, the head teacher - their considerations for the final format.

12.

A choir event can be the final publication when they have a real purpose in meeting a challenge to organise the event, visit a venue, or host a visiting audience. This to be videoed and then they can meet “reporters” who wish to write up the event. Using a drama slant they could together invent the history of the choir and create situations from the earlier invented times. A choir might even be the basis of a soap opera with autobiographies, portraits and the saga archive being created.

13.

Obviously any branchings as discussed above would be selected to work naturally from the context; of first song collectors, then singers, then exploring the lives of the choir in their invented village/town/housing estate, block of flats, and must be based in providing reasons for using curriculum aspirations. Even a 24hr clock is necessary for touring choirs to live by, as are railway, bus, boat and air timetables.

In this format teachers would function as creative designers, team workers, leaders of task based rigorous work and engender the consistent master/apprentice schools of the guilds. All the work to be recorded, analysed and held for scrutiny by parents governors and assessors. A new songbook might be then available for other schools to use.

Warnings

14.

Teams would have to master the task of servicing the enterprise as colleagues in order that all participants are elevated out of the pupil frame of reference and therefore share fully in the responsibility of commissions. This work services Vigotsky's 'zone of proximal development' as the format is based in tasks and the enabling classroom talk (as opposed to interrogatory) permits challenge to standards and energy to be faced with confidence.

15.

The curriculum covered would be driven by the teacher's imagination to develop tasks and real purposes for the work. Douglas Barnes says that for understanding to be achieved there has to be a journey. Enterprises provide such a format.

I would go on to consider:

- balancing amounts of work for all participants coping with an alien way of allocating the time available.
- teacher assistance in detail focused planning, considerations of standards, challenge and progress,
- record keeping,
- interactions of school enterprises with those of the community,
- different approaches to preparation,
- resources on a wider basis than equipment.

And help in using the arts and sciences in symbiosis rather than schism and opposition. This is how society functions naturally when it values enterprises which service within a framework of stewardship rather than exploitation.

Gavin Bolton's Response

Monday morning
Dear Dorothy

Sorry for the delay in returning your 'Arts and Education'. Having been in London all week [it went very well] there have been a number of social engagements with friends over the week-end, so your important document has lain unread and neglected. I will pass on my reaction to your sample role-play later. At the moment your proposal seems more urgent, especially if you are required to write about it to Tim Brighouse.

Rather than marking your only copy I have adopted the 'number' device!

I am both intrigued and frustrated by the *overall* impact it makes on me as a reader. Please be tolerant of my curt notes – I am merely trying to be brief about key paragraphs – I am more impressed than my notes convey!

Notes

1. Your title 'Arts and Education' may be misleading, for, although you continually refer to the arts, there are, at times in the document, indications that you see your new paradigm as the basis of an approach to the *whole* curriculum – one aspect of which is the arts.

Because I miss out on the subtlety of implications of your quotes from people such as Lyly, Fry and Plato, I find them *blocking* my understanding of your paradigm rather than illuminating – it's probably just me!

2. I'm not sure *who* your document is addressing – presumably people who will readily make connections with your quotes and who need to be reminded of "The current paradigm was born of society..." but to *me* as a reader it gives an insufficient view of the present paradigm and could therefore be dispensed so that you can get on with the 'meat' of your proposal.
3. In summary, you want a return to 'a love of learning' and rigorous scholarship across a humanities, arts, science span.
4. Yes. Enterprise; publishing; commitment to keeping a promise.

5. Presumably the duration has to be capable of being kept within the *pupils'* sights.
6. 'commitments, not lessons' – a *key* outcome, which older teachers might interpret as the old 'project' method.
7. 'a school of music' exercise' – it puzzles me why you have selected this kind of example. Do you imply a school specialising in music and finding all the other curriculum activities within that framework or have you chosen this area merely as one example of many areas which will be commissioned. If the latter, then why would it have to open out into other curriculum areas such as reading, science. Or is it that you are discussing the place of the arts in the curriculum *only*. In which case the notion of 'publication' is more obviously achievable, in that current attitude to the arts sees 'performance' as a built-in form of publication. On the other hand *other* subject areas, say, maths, do not in the minds of teachers lend themselves to a published form.
8. I agree
9. Another key area, very difficult for the current generation of educationists, let alone teachers, to grasp.
10. I like this idea of schooling being part of 'real living'.
11. Again, you are using a particularly narrow example, but this time, in elaborating, you do not appear to be expanding the possibilities so broadly across the curriculum.
12. 'Drama slant' – the reader would have to understand that you are using 'drama' here in its broadest sense of 'inventing a fiction'. Just like 'making up a story' would be.
13. Clocks & timetables – back to 'the music school' being all embracing. So, once again I am saying to myself, "Does DH mean an *actual* Music School?"
14. You *add* warnings, but in fact 'colleagueness' is absolutely central to this vision. In fact, it is so important your whole account could have *started* with "Can you imagine a teaching context in which teachers treat/frame pupils as 'colleagues' in a deliberately assumed teacher posture, temporarily sustained

during the carrying out of agreed tasks...etc etc.” This part of your vision requires schools to turn teaching upside down and, unless seen from the beginning as absolutely central, it is no use teachers thinking they understand other aspects of what you are suggesting – they, may grasp, say, the notion of ‘commissions’, but fail to see the assumed ‘colleagueness’ of the practice – and still try to make ‘commission’ work!

15. The reader can capture the image of ‘journey’ without the reference to Douglas Barnes – the same goes for Vygotski and ‘proximal development’!”

Love,
Gavin

What's Happening When Children Are Doing Drama At Depth?

by Geoff Gillham

A paper read at the Cockpit Theatre, London January 1978

Followed by some brief notes made in response

by Dorothy Heathcote

I would like to share with you questions that at the moment are engaging me rather than give a talk about what I think I know. These questions revolve around the nature of the mental processes that children experience when drama at depth occurs. It may be that these questions will be applicable for those teachers more concerned with areas of artistic experience.

Let me take as an example Dorothy Heathcote's film 'Three Looms Waiting' – (I choose this as an example of drama at depth)- and specifically the play by boys in a community home about a prison camp. To those who have seen this film the moment where one of the boys breaks down under the pressure of having to recognise and admit that he is a 'stool pigeon' will be well remembered. The question relevant to my discussion about this moment is best expressed by several alternate questions:

a) Did he experience being a stool pigeon?

or

b) Did he experience an emotion analogous to being a stool pigeon?

and

c) Did he know he was not in actuality a stool pigeon?

d)

(I rule out the question: Was he acting? Being? a stool pigeon?, since this concept confuses the ¹event more than it clarifies it, in my view!) When I asked Dorothy about this lesson before this talk, her description of the event was that there was no pretence "once the agreement had been made by all the boys to be in a play - after they had agreed to be captured...". Having cited the example, I shall leave it to return to later. The questions I have posed relate to attempting to define what kind of reality the children are inhabiting within the drama. The question is far from an academic one, since to understand this must have enormous significance to the teacher who is responsible for structuring the drama so that children can experience the appropriate emotional/cognitive state.

To explore the question I need to go back to first principles: The world exists objectively, whether or not I exist, and whether or not I know it objectively. The objective world has laws, which laws it is the function of science to abstract. But to say the world has laws is not to say that it has meaning. Meaning is socially derived, that is, human beings

¹ Here Dorothy Heathcote has written 'good' in the margin

bestow significance on the world. From that philosophical framework it seems to follow, therefore, that the significance which I give to a phenomenon is related to the experience that I had before associated with the phenomenon.

A process of categorisation of 'events' is begun at birth. But since no event is precisely similar to any other and since also I change in the process of interacting in the world, I can fit events that are quite unlike each other into the same category provided they share a likeness in the one significant particular which identifies the category. I quickly learn to identify signals which carry, for example, the significance of hostility-to-me, whether or not I met the person or the particular situation before. Is it not true that the degree of sophistication in my categorisation is directly related to the subtlety with which I am able to respond to them? My ability, in other words, to be an efficient participant in a situation is dependent on my ability to be a perceptive audience. (The converse is certainly not necessarily true).

It has to be said that this categorisation process is for the most part unconscious, even if for the teacher, and especially the drama teacher, the ability to be conscious of it is an enormous aid and arguably a necessary one. It is noticeable that the process of connecting unlike events together because they demonstrate at least one crucial likeness is also the process of making, and responding to, metaphor. The metaphor, a carrier of meaning, can be shared, (and frequently is) but it is not, for all that, in the objective world except in so far as we too are in it giving that significance to the situation. So, within a drama we can identify three realities:

- 1) the present objective reality
- 2) an absent reality
- 3) a metaphorical reality constructed out of (1) and the memory of (2), with in the minds of the children.

It follows then that elements within (1) must remind the child of elements in (2). The unity of, and the tension between, (1) and (2) bring into being (3). Let me relate this to the prison-camp play I mentioned at the beginning.

The present objective reality, here, is the existence of a group of boys and a woman (and a television crew!) in a room in a community home. The group make a decision to 'do a play' about a prison camp and they interact with each other. An absent significant reality is selected (which in this case is paradoxically omnipresent) by the children: the wish to be free knowing that they cannot be free. This reality is expressed by the boys as doing a play about an escape which fails. This metaphorical reality of the drama is then structured and engineered by Dorothy in collaboration with boys. It is necessary for Dorothy to bring forward from the present objective reality the elements (signs and signals) that will remind the boys of the of the absent significant reality (e.g. the boys' blankets as a symbol of privacy, the vocal tone and body language of her own role etc

etc).

So part of this argument can be formulated as follows: the creation of a metaphorical reality is achieved through the process of extracting from the present objective situation signs and signals appropriate to an absent significant reality, for use in the construction of that absent reality with in the present situation.

Yet it seems to me this is only half the story. If this were the complete picture of the mental processes and were these processes completely successful, the metaphorical reality would be identical to the absent significant reality (or at least believed to be so). Moreover, the present objective situation would be experienced as the absent significant reality with the consequential real effects. (The boy who betrayed the prisoners could go away and hang himself like Judas). ²It is this apparent paradox that I want to explore further.

Some boys are playing cowboys and Indians. They are unconsciously exploring their attitude to killing, to being killed, to violence or mastery. Out of the present reality they select 'props' and a 'set' – a wall in the school yard becomes a tree or a rock, two fingers make shift as a six-shooter, or an approximate arm position becomes a rifle or a bow and arrow. There is total belief in the metaphorical reality - a teacher or an adult can cross their path and not even be noticed by the boys. If a boy gets killed he must 'take it' even if he is not required to be dead until the game (play) finishes. Indeed, in most cases 'being killed' is an exquisite feeling, allowing the savouring of dramatic falls while holding the part of the anatomy which is the recipient of the fatal wound.

What is it that allows such belief to occur in the child when so much, to the observer, is unreal? Examine a scene from the play where one boy creeps up on another and then springs on him stabbing him in the back with his knife. The knife - the crucial prop here - is visually represented by a clenched fist as though round the knife handle. The sign is adequate for the make believe (the metaphorical reality) to occur. I can enjoy the experience of killing or being wounded fully, because I am **not** killing or being killed³. If the sign were a wooden stick, care has to be exercised in not hurting or being hurt – the mechanism of the make-believe being blurred by the intrusion of the present objective reality.⁴ If the sign were a real knife, clearly the knife would no longer⁵ be a sign but the thing itself. A child who has categorised the significance of a knife⁶ will not play cowboys and Indians with it. The make-believe is short-circuited and made impossible.

² Here Dorothy has put a tick

³ Dorothy has underlined this sentence.

⁴ Dorothy has put a double tick here

⁵ Dorothy has put a double tick here

⁶ Underlined by Dorothy

This is obvious when you think about it; but to me, turned round the other way and placed against my previous formulation and what emerges is startling.

The creation of a metaphorical reality is achieved through the process of extracting from the present objective situation signals and signs appropriate to an absent significant reality, for use in the construction of that absent reality within the present situation.

BUT

Belief in the metaphorical reality can only be achieved if other signals in the present objective situation affirm that the metaphorical reality is not, objectively, the absent reality for which it stands.⁷

To make this point I have used as an example one which contains physical danger. But I think that this is just as true of emotional danger. This is justified, I think, by the example – after all, the boys playing cowboys and Indians are exploring what it is like to kill or be killed from an emotional point of view. If, with this in mind, I return again to the questions posed at the beginning of this talk relating to the boy's feeling state as a stool pigeon, I would answer my questions in this way: that he did experience being a stool pigeon and that he knew he was not in actuality a stool pigeon. To put this dialectically, he both was and was not a stool pigeon. He both believed in himself as a traitor and not as a traitor. Because he was not (objectively) a traitor, he could be one.⁸ Whether this is simultaneous belief and non-belief, I am not sure.

Taking up Dorothy's remark about pretence I would say that there most certainly was pretence but that the boys would not experience the drama as a pretence. Perhaps this is what Dorothy would say!

If my analysis is correct about what the processes are that the children are going through during play and educational drama at depth, then the implications this has for the teacher structuring the drama are great. But since this does not come with in the area of this symposium I shall leave my discussion of them to another time.

Frequently a phrase can take on a meaning to us even if we do not understand its meaning to another who first uses it. (Perhaps this is true of all phrases!) In closing let me share one such phrase which has taken on a meaning for me quite different from that intended by its author (Martin Buber). It has taken on a meaning which relates to, and for me expresses, the contradictions that I have been dealing with; the mental/emotional process involved in drama – creativity, if you like – is the process of “imagining the real”. Without yet fully grasping its meaning the concept of imagining the real has the

⁷ Dorothy has put a double tick here.

⁸ Dorothy has written ‘yes’ next to these four sentences

tantalising feel of a piece of a jigsaw puzzle that will make the rest all fit together.
What do you think?



Below are the notes written in Dorothy's hand and kindly typed up by David Allen of the Dorothy Heathcote archive. Some of the writing has faded with time and so the words underlined are a best guess.

Geoff - I have taken a copy!

This is very clear - and related very much to an area I as yet cannot quite understand the absolute rules of: namely when we require which type of symbol in order to perceive the reality and authenticity of experience (the inner as opposed to the outer form).

e.g. The gun in [illegible] (..... by arms)⁹ can more easily be relinquished with honour because the gun demonstrated by energy is a nobler thing than a steel shape...

Under which circumstances do we need the

(a) correct solid shape?

(b) the appearance drawn into existence? i.e. shaped on paper or board

(c) the outer appearance of gun blatantly not a real one? etc. etc.

I often know which one, instantly! But I don't understand the alchemy of this knowing though I seek to make the laws clear enough to teach it to others. Because there are laws. One day I will, I expect! "Imagining the real" comes close to all this.

⁹ Suggested by ed

Real in All the Ways that Matter: Weaving Learning Across the Curriculum with Mantle of the Expert

by Viv Aitken

Published by: NZCER Press, Wellington, NZ, 2021 ISBN: 978-1-99-004008-5

Reviewed by David Allen

Dorothy Heathcote first visited New Zealand in 1978, and returned in 1984 and 1987. In her new book *Real in All the Ways that Matter* (2021), Viv Aitken argues that it was during her visits to New Zealand, that Dorothy's thinking about Mantle of the Expert "started to consolidate" (21). Viv cites the example of a drama from 1978 called "Sanctuary," about a group of runaway children who set up and run a collective farm.

"Sanctuary" actually starts with Dorothy asking the children what they want to do a drama about. She says:

We can make drama that has sense for us. Now, I haven't got any plans; because it didn't seem to me right - I fly all way to New Zealand, I've never been before, I know very little about your cultures, I know very little - I know nothing about how it feels to be a New Zealand person, because I only know how it feels to be an English person.

So I thought we ought to start by saying: if we could choose anything at all to put in our drama – because drama's only people having one or two problems, you know, and sorting them out; if we could choose what to make our drama about, I thought you should be the people that choose. ("Sanctuary" 1978)

This way of starting work with a class is more associated with Dorothy's earlier, so-called "living through" or "Man in a Mess" phase, than with Mantle. In the "Sanctuary" drama, the children are not in the frame of experts at first. Rather, they are in the frame of a group of young people who want to find independence in the adult world. As they create their "sanctuary," they *become* a responsible team, and make decisions on, for example, the division of land for different crops and animals. The drama is an interesting hybrid, then, between "living through" and Mantle. If, as Gavin Bolton claimed, there was a "sea-change" (2003, 93) in Dorothy's work in the 70s and 80s, perhaps this was the moment when it occurred. As a system, Mantle became a way of endowing children with agency and responsibility; "Sanctuary," on the other hand, was a drama *about* a group of young people claiming the right to agency and autonomy. Nevertheless, a newspaper article at the time reported: "The children felt they had a real reason to learn about the skills their area of responsibility required. They wanted to become 'experts'" (Anon 1978, 1).

The drama ended with a "visit" by a teacher-in-role, as a sister from a neighbouring

convent which had loaned funds to start the collective farm. The children had to demonstrate and explain to her what they had achieved. This is a strategy which Dorothy used frequently: to reinforce children's learning, they teach others what they now know. One teacher observed that they had gone "far beyond normal drama" (ibid.).

On the video of "Sanctuary," the children themselves are invited to look back on the experience. One child observes: "I was happy that it wasn't a game. It was something, you know, that really made an impression on our lives." Others agree that it seemed real to them; here are some of their comments:

"You can do what you want. You find your own words. You don't have to do what anyone tells you."

"It seemed so real, because you had to do things like in real life that you have to do, like doing legal documents."

"What made it real for me is that she took it so seriously, and never, ever, was there a smile flickering across her face when we said something. And, you know, her seriousness and her sort of trust in us our capabilities, to be responsible for what we did, sort of just - you were forced, you forced yourself to sort of, to take it seriously, and to believe in it."

"I liked it because she accepted us as we were, not as just children, or pupils in school. She gave us freedom that you don't usually get in school, where you can do almost anything."

"I found it real because I could really feel and believe what was happening around me. ... It felt really good, because being on the farm is something that everybody does together. And that's what I felt like these past few days." ("Sanctuary")

There is a sense in which every Mantle is a kind of "sanctuary" - a space apart, where children are given the freedom and responsibility to run something for themselves. And indeed, this is surely a major reason why Mantle appeals to young people: because it gives them the "freedom that you don't usually get in school", but also because it "is something that everybody does together".

The title of Viv's book stems from an experience she had, when she was doing a Mantle with a class of 9-year-olds:

One of the children asked whether what we were doing was "real" or "made up" and I replied, "we're creating a story together using imagination". The child seemed satisfied with this clarification. Just then another boy in the class spoke up: "It's real" he said quietly and emphatically, "in all the ways that matter." (p xiii)

The book is a lucid and accessible guide to the Mantle system. It contains sections on theoretical underpinnings; planning and sequencing; "tools"; "advice and cautionary tales", and so on, as well as accounts of projects which Viv herself has led. In her

introduction, she states that she wanted to write about Mantle “in a way that celebrates the unique context of Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes embracing our bicultural foundations” (9). She claims that teachers in New Zealand have previously had to make allowances “for the dissonance we experience while working with teaching resources written by authors from the UK, the US, Australia, or other contexts”; her aim was to “write a book that uses language, references, and source material that feel local and appropriate to New Zealand teachers” (9). This is apparent, for example, in her references to Māori traditions and beliefs. The book begins with a Whakataukī (Māori proverb):

*The tapestry of understanding cannot be woven by one strand alone
Only by the working together of strands
And the working together of weavers
Will such a tapestry be completed (xi; italics in original)*

The book is subtitled *Weaving Learning Across the Curriculum with Mantle of the Expert*, and in the section on planning and sequencing, Viv uses the metaphor of weaving korowai (which are “literally ‘mantles’” [113]), not simply to relate it to the New Zealand context, but to “evoke the idea that teaching is a complex artistic undertaking with significant and even sacred responsibilities attached” (116). I think Dorothy herself would have relished the weaving metaphor, and it is appropriate to Mantle in many ways. She loved objects that were handmade, the product of craft and tradition, with the traces of human handling and use – septic (as she would say), rather than antiseptic. The weaving metaphor suggests something very practical, but which also includes a spiritual dimension. (Dorothy herself referred to the “spiritual basis of all action” in Mantle [2009].) It may also invoke the idea of apprentices learning their craft; as Sandra Hesten noted in her PhD thesis, Dorothy put faith in a kind of “apprenticeship” system, passing on her methods “live” to “the student ‘apprentices’ during her classroom praxis” (1994, 3). The metaphor also suggests the way that Mantle itself is composed of multiple strands; part of the teacher’s skill and craft lies in being aware of the different elements, and how to combine them. Ultimately, in an age when harried teachers all too often reach for a prefabricated “SOW” (scheme of work) from a book or a website, which they can simply deliver, it invokes the idea of the teacher as artist, not technician. Moreover, every time we undertake a Mantle, we are “weaving” something new; it can never be the same twice.

Dorothy’s work was sometimes viewed as a kind of “magic” which only she could perform. But she was dedicated to two things: reflecting on and analysing her own praxis; and breaking it down into building blocks which other teachers could use. Viv does an admirable job of explaining different concepts such as sign; sequencing; affective and cognitive learning; frame distance, and so on. Nevertheless, for many teachers who are new to the system, all these different elements may seem overwhelming: how do you master them all? The truth is that you never do master them completely; you can only keep working on the craft. Dorothy herself felt that she was in some ways always an

“apprentice”: when she presented a keynote at the “Weaving our Stories” conference at Waikato University in 2009, she called it “Mantle of the Expert: My *Current Understanding*” (2009; my italics), and stated that she was still “slowly discovering the operant laws” (2009) of the system.

Viv’s book will be valued as a resource, not only by teachers in New Zealand, but by “apprentice weavers” everywhere.

References

- Aitken, Viv (2021). *Real in All the Ways that Matter: Weaving Learning Across the Curriculum with Mantle of the Expert* (Wellington, NZ: NZCER Press).
- Anon (1978). “Drama in Education.” In: *Education News* (NX), August 1978, Vol.4 No.3, pp.1-2.
- Bolton, Gavin (2003). *Dorothy Heathcote’s Story: Biography of a Remarkable Drama Teacher* (Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books)
- Heathcote, Dorothy (2009). “Mantle of the Expert: My Current Understanding.” Keynote at the “Weaving our Stories” conference at Waikato University, NZ. Transcribed by Viv Aitken and published online at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ugZEpTfm2nopG7L3k681hgj6f9qQHRlftHaov1u05xg/edit>. Accessed 3 September 2022.
- Hesten, Sandra (1994). *The Construction of an Archive and the Presentation of Philosophical, Epistemological and Methodological Issues Relating to Dorothy Heathcote’s Drama in Education Approach*. Ph.D. thesis: Lancaster University.
- “Sanctuary” (1978). New Zealand: Department of Education. Video recording.

A recording of “Sanctuary” is preserved in the Dorothy Heathcote Archive, Manchester Metropolitan University. An excerpt can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLMrA6ds6PY>

Reading Shakespeare through Drama

by Jane Coles and Maggie Pitfield

Published by Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK ISBN: 9781009001984

Review by Chris Green

The *Cambridge Elements* series (from Cambridge University Press) has established a reputation for offering fascinating, condensed explorations of topics across a whole range of disciplines. This ambitious imprint aims to satisfy the demands of both an academic, and a broader, readership. The volumes are slim yet packed with ideas, and often the topics covered manage to consider the pressing issues of the day in a flexible, accessible format. Books about Shakespeare are beginning to appear frequently in the series (under collection headings such as *Shakespeare Performance* and *Shakespeare & Pedagogy*). The excellent recent title *Shakespeare, Blackface and Race* by Coen Heijes, for example, seemed to meet an urgent need - and the title currently under consideration in this article (*Reading Shakespeare through Drama* by Jane Coles and Maggie Pitfield) seems just as timely.

It would certainly be a cliché to call this a "little gem" of a book, but the message here is clear and shining. Academics and schoolteachers alike know that the study of Shakespeare, of Drama, indeed of literature itself, is under threat in the UK in a way rarely seen before. This book is part of the fight back. It is an overtly political book, and its authors suggest that it needs to be just that at a time when study of the Arts and Humanities is being attacked by politicians (not just in the UK) and when universities are withdrawing funding for related courses. From their own experiences of classroom teaching and political activism (throughout what some might describe as an unprecedented thirty-year period of educational turmoil in the UK) Coles and Pitfield make the case not only that English and Drama in schools have become areas of political debate, but also that this is exactly what these subjects should be.

There is a sense of "enough is enough" in this book, which adds another voice to the recent rising up against the populist 'neoliberal' educational agenda which many teachers (such as those connected with the UK National Association for the Teaching of Drama, the English Association, and the National Association for the Teaching of English) perceived to be endorsed in the controversial recent UK Ofsted English research review. Coles and Pitfield are open about their political perspective (they are trade unionists; they are anti-exams; they are committed to non-selective schooling) and yet this book is always more than just a polemic or a diatribe. It is a sensitive addition to the pedagogical debates about approaches to teaching Shakespeare in the classroom, to the role of drama methods in English teaching, and to the need for a creative and imaginative curriculum which will enable young people to flourish in the uncertain adult world they are about to join.

In particular, this book adds a voice to the growing disquiet about the undiluted 'knowledge' curriculum and the promotion of cultural capital in the classroom. The authors make clear connections between such an approach and political intentions of social control (and even the unfortunate recent rise of mental illness in the young). Instead, they advocate a broadly Vygotskian approach to the teaching of Shakespeare in schools, suggesting that adolescent readers should be "meaning-makers and cultural producers".

This is a brave vision, but it is probably fair to say that it is the one which nearly all experienced teachers of Drama (and English) in the UK believe in their hearts - and from more pedagogic objectivity - to be true. Names such as Hirsch, Gibb and Gove are dismissed by the authors and replaced with a tradition which extends from Newbolt himself, via the Play Way method of Henry Caldwell Cook, to Dorothy Heathcote, Cicely Berry, Rex Gibson, James Stredder and beyond. The army is swollen by the ranks of the Royal Shakespeare Company ('Stand up for Shakespeare'), the Folger Shakespeare Library in the US, Shakespeare's Globe, and even the 'Active Shakespeare' methods originally endorsed in the 1989 version of the UK National Curriculum. The reassuring mantras flow thick and fast: "This is not a [Shakespeare] text; it is a script" and "Role playing does not smother critical faculty; it enhances it".

The central message is that classroom teachers need to be brave (and encourage their managers to be so as well) and realise the essential importance of 'play' when approaching Shakespeare's works. Instead of repackaging canonical knowledge for others in a passive and depersonalised way (witness the recent growth of preserved and inert classroom PowerPoint presentations, for example) teachers should see literary culture as a "living and socially-situated practice". To return, as the authors frequently do, to Vygotsky -

"In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself ... Drama, more than any other form of creation, is closely and directly linked to play, which is the root of all creativity in children. Thus, drama is the most syncretic mode of creation, that is, it contains elements of the most diverse forms of creativity."

And it is not as though 'playing' with Shakespeare is seen as an easy way out by the authors. Quite the opposite. Peggy O'Brien (founding Director of Education at the Folger in Washington, DC) is quoted as saying: "Learning Shakespeare through doing Shakespeare involves the very best kind of close reading, the most exacting sort of literary analysis". Why not use drama methods to teach all aspects of English? The study of literature, it is suggested, is a 'long game' for students, and dramatic methods can help to gain students' interest from the start. Teachers should trust Drama's capacity to illuminate aspects of language and imagery, and "use actions to free words". Indeed,

dramatic techniques can be key in encouraging students to determine their literary attitudes towards texts.

Enlightened teachers and schools have always, of course, used creativity to enable students to access higher order thinking skills. This is the truly effective way to improve examination results! The same goes for the genuinely rigorous assessment methods adopted by some determined Awarding Bodies. As the authors remind us:

"The normalisation of 'teaching to the test', accompanied by officially endorsed systems and rubrics for doing so, leads to an impoverishment of the curriculum and serves as a barrier to experimentation. It is also an important factor in the de-professionalising of English teachers, compromising their role as pedagogic decision makers."

The book suggests that Shakespeare is ideal for these classroom methods because there is, of course, so much ambiguity, uncertainty and 'instability' in his works. Could an active approach to the teaching of Shakespeare in this context even encourage a more balanced, tolerant, 'non-binary' and counter-extreme approach to the world at a time when these qualities are often sorely lacking in students (the authors seem to be suggesting)? These are important claims.

This is a practical book, one which is full of classroom examples and interviews (although this is possibly a less successful element of the work when the authors might have had so much more to say about their pedagogical and political theories). Important points are made about the need for active, creative work in the classroom as part of the COVID-19 recovery plan, for example. The book adopts a serious, academic tone - and yet manages to avoid excessive jargon (although the section entitled *Disrupting Monocultural Hegemonic Discourse* - important topic though that is - did stand out in that respect). The book does not shy away from tackling the cultural place of Shakespeare in our "brave new world". To some he is indeed as "pale, male and stale" as they come. The authors are certainly keen to explore possible new approaches to where Shakespeare should sit in school curricula and examination specifications (perhaps placing his works in context - including the work of some of his "sisters" - and using him to explore both the race and LGBTQ+ agendas). The authors suggest that - in our recently radically changed society - we must be determined as teachers to privilege students' voices, and to be responsive to their diverse experiences and cultural practices. Again, Shakespeare has the power to lead the way in these respects (it is suggested).

Plenty of the premises in this fascinating book are still open to debate. The volume will divide opinion, but so much the better. Perhaps the book will have answered one question clearly though. Year 10 student Joshua is quoted in the book as querying: *But you don't need Shakespeare, do you?* And Joshua goes on to state: *It's not going to help us in the future.* Perhaps Joshua is not quite ready to enjoy *Reading Shakespeare through*

Drama by Jane Coles and Maggie Pitfield yet, but it could just be that his future, adult self (happy and successful) will be very glad that his English and Drama teachers in the past took the time to discover the book.

Obituary for John Airs
11th March 1941 – 20th August 2022
by Brian Woolland

I first met John at a drama course in 1985. He and Chris Ball had recently started working together as drama advisory teachers in Liverpool, and I had recently been appointed as a lecturer in drama at what was then Bulmershe College, and which later became a part of the University of Reading. I warmed to John immediately. He took part in the work of the group with great insight and generosity. Those are qualities he brought to his drama teaching and to all his dealings with people. We developed a friendship which grew ever stronger over time. From very early in that friendship I appreciated that John was a profoundly good man, a man of the greatest integrity.

We worked together on several occasions – all of them richly rewarding and stimulating. I invited John and Chris to run an extended weekend workshop for PGCE and B.Ed students at Reading University. They returned the invitation, and I spent several hugely enjoyable weeks working with them in Liverpool – in schools and with teachers on courses. There is a stereotypical image of drama teachers being extrovert, loud and performative. John was none of those. He brought a fierce intelligence to all his work, and when leading a session, he was quietly reflective and thoughtful, which was strangely liberating and, in its way, quite inspirational. I don't think he ever really knew quite how influential he was.

Before John and Chris started working together, John had taught English and Drama at Quarry Bank School, Liverpool (which was renamed Calderstones Comprehensive), where he soon took on responsibility for drama. While a student at Edinburgh University and a member of DramSoc he acted in and directed numerous plays. In Liverpool, he directed for Neptune Theatre (now renovated and renamed The Epstein), which was where he and Chris Ball met. Students he taught at Quarry Bank included Jude Kelly, Les Dennis and Clive Barker and numerous others who openly acknowledge how inspirational John was for them. I witnessed this at first hand when with John in Liverpool. I lost count of the number of times people said to John with beaming smiles, 'Oh, Mr Airs. You taught me...'

When Liverpool Education Authority set up an advisory team for drama, it was to be for just one year but was then extended to two years. John and Chris set about the work wholeheartedly, and the work was seen to be so effective that their contracts were extended further, and they worked together as a team for more than ten years. Everything they did together was truly collaborative.

They worked with children of all ages in nurseries and schools, they ran courses for teachers in Liverpool, they led workshops for NATD, they wrote books about teaching

drama, they wrote plays. In 1987, one of these, a radio play, *The Speaking Clock*, won a Sony Award for best children's radio programme. Their books included *Speaking, Listening and Drama: KS2 Years 3-4*, *Key Ideas in Drama* and *Drama Guidelines* (not to be confused with the London Drama publication), which was subsequently republished by Heinemann USA as *Taking Time to Act*. They were valuable resources. It was, however, their large-scale immersive projects that John looked back at and spoke of with greatest pride and pleasure in the years of his retirement. These projects involved children and teachers from several different schools (including special schools) and sometimes students in higher education. The dramas took place in castles, museums, cathedrals, quarries and parks. They usually involved well over 60 pupils from a range of settings, professional actors and 20-30 teachers. Over the years, organists, falconers, composers, film directors, camera operators and television companies participated in these projects, often volunteering their time and expertise. Schools and universities recognised that these exciting pieces were not only a focal point and stimulus for drama work but also for history, PSHCE, geography, literacy, maths etc. The drama would last for as long as 4 hours, and always the children made key decisions about the course of the narrative and reflected on the characters and the unfolding story. Articles about these projects appeared in the Times Educational Supplement, and some were documented by the BBC.

Sadly, I didn't personally take part in or witness the giant dinosaurs (puppets) being unloaded from a police horse box into an enormous quarry in Runcorn where children from Liverpool special schools would devise strategies to protect them from Major Killthelot (also a large Welfare State style puppet) and from a vantage point overlooking the quarry would relay information on the quest via walkie talkie to fellow pupils below. Nor did I participate in the search for Quasimodo and Esmerelda in the Anglican cathedral, or the projects in Calderstones Park or Chester Cathedral. But I know from talking with John and others who took part that this was the kind of work which really does change lives, and that it was cross-curricular in the fullest sense – in that it enabled all those taking part to see that what really matters in education, as in life, is our collective humanity, not small, restrictive labels; and that what we do in one area always affects others.

After taking advantage of a pension enhancement scheme, John became a freelance education consultant, working with lecturers and students at John Moores University, Liverpool Hope University, Edge Hill University, and LIPA. He was made an Honorary research fellow at Liverpool University.

John was a long-term member of NATD, serving on the National Executive Committee and on the editorial board of *The Journal* – where he was as rigorous, insightful and supportive of others as he was in his practical drama work.

John was a true socialist, who believed wholeheartedly in the benefits of collaboration, and in the power of the collective – which was evidenced in his approach to educational drama, where everything he did demonstrated that respect for the learners and their emotional safety was essential if true learning is to take place. His socialism was driven by a deep sense of the need for fairness and humanity. That was why he also espoused so wholeheartedly the Palestinian cause and was an active member of Liverpool Friends of Palestine, with whom he visited the West Bank village of Bil'in. He also worked with teachers (most of them from Palestine) at one of the Al Qattan summer schools in Jordan. Several years later, I led workshops at the same summer school. I found it remarkable (but not surprising) how fondly he was remembered by all who'd worked with him.

And despite always being firm in his deeply held values and convictions, he brought genuine humility to his dealings with others.

I stayed with John and Jane on numerous occasions and was always welcomed with such warmth and generosity. Because of the distance involved in travelling, we did not see each other as often as I would have liked. But it was a friendship which grew in depth and strength. There have been numerous times when I sought his professional advice; and just as many when I felt enriched by his company, his sense of humour and his intelligence. I already miss him greatly, as I am sure do all who knew him.

John is survived by Jane (they would have celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary next year), Robbie (John's stepson), their son Jamie, and two adored (and adoring) grandchildren, Jack and Molly.

John Airs died in the Marie Curie Hospice, Liverpool, in the early hours of 20th August 2022 after a long struggle with cancer.

Brian Woolland
September 2022

With many thanks to Chris Ball and Jane Airs for their help and advice in writing this.

Biographies

David Allen is Artistic Director of Midland Actors Theatre. He is the author of numerous articles and books on drama and theatre. He runs the Facebook group, The Commission Model of Teaching, and also manages the website www.mantleoftheexpert.com, and convenes the Dorothy Heathcote Now conference. MAT has been lead partner on three Erasmus plus projects on Dorothy's work, collaborating with partners across Europe.

Gavin Bolton is now retired. His early career in the classroom led him first to the role of Drama Advisor to the Education Authority in County Durham and then he joined the staff of Durham University in 1964 and taught there until his retirement in 1989. He was an Adjunct Professor at Victoria University in British Columbia, and a visiting professor at New York University and the University of Central England at Birmingham. His thinking on Drama in Education continues to be highly influential. His professional relationship with Dorothy Heathcote was typified by regular and robust dialectical exchanges that helped both to refine their thinking.

Lex Butler is an artist and Teaching Assistant at a Pupil Referral Unit. She has worked with vulnerable children and young people for over 20 years. She has recently become a foster carer for teenagers in Brighton.

Viv Cohen Papier completed her teacher training and NQT year at an East Sussex Academy, before moving to a year 11 only PRU in Brighton, where she continues to teach English and is currently Assistant Headteacher. Her involvement in the development of her school's behaviour policy solidified her view that 'all behaviour is communication' and she feels passionately about the power and importance that language holds when allowing children to express themselves.

Geoff Gillham "...was one of the most important and innovative writers for and directors of TIE internationally. He was not interested in writing plays that young people watched passively but quickly saw the potential of TIE to actively engage young people in productive learning through theatre and drama, making meaning of their lives and the world they live in. Above all Geoff passionately believed in the power of theatre to humanise and in doing so become a force for change in the world." (David Davis: In his Introduction to *Six Plays for Theatre In Education And Youth Theatre*.)

Chris Green is Head of the English and Drama faculty in a large secondary school in the UK. He is Principal Examiner for the Shakespeare component of the A-Level in English Literature at a major UK awarding body. He is a Trustee & Director of the British Shakespeare Association, and is Chair of the BSA's Education committee. His most recent publication was an edition of *The Merchant of Venice* for HarperCollins. Chris is

a member of the Executive committee of the National Association for the Teaching of Drama.

Dorothy Heathcote developed a vision for child-centred education and a drive towards the development of drama pedagogical theory alongside practice throughout her career from 1950 through her retirement up to her death in 2011. NATD consistently fostered the organisation's relationship with this extraordinary practitioner. Always keen to promote and learn from her, NATD made her the president of the Association and she was a regular keystone at the annual conferences. She was also a much valued contributor to the organisation's journal, in which she published some of her most thought-provoking work.

Matthew Milburn worked for 17 years as a headteacher in two large maintained secondary schools in the very heart of the "leveluplands" that are Barnsley and Oldham. In the last few years of his career he was an Executive Headteacher and worked as a National Leader of Education supporting colleagues and schools in Oldham and across the north west. Having retired from teaching in 2020, Matthew remains involved in coaching Headteachers. He is a Patron of NATD and has been a member since 1987.

Michael Rosen is one of Britain's best loved writers and performance poets for children and adults. His first degree in English Literature and Language was from Wadham College, Oxford and he went on to study for an MA at the University of Reading and a PhD at the former University of North London, now London Metropolitan. He is currently Professor of Children's Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London where he co-devised and teaches critical approaches to reading on an MA in Children's Literature, having done the same at Birkbeck, University of London. He has taught on MA courses in universities since 1994. He was the Children's Laureate from 2007-2009 and has published over 200 books for children and adults, including the recent bestseller 'Many Different Kinds of Love' and 'On The Move.'

Brian Woolland worked as a senior lecturer in theatre at the University of Reading, before resigning his post to develop a freelance career as an educator, writer and theatre director. He has written and directed plays for theatre-in-education companies and in prisons as well as in mainstream theatres. He contributed to numerous NATD conferences. His first historical novel, *The Invisible Exchange*, was published in 2022.

Back-copies of The Journal for Drama in Education

The following back-copies are available at £3.00 each. (Earlier back-copies are also available. Details of these can be found on the NATD website natd.co.uk). Please make cheques payable to NATD specifying the Issue you require e.g. Vol 36, Issue 2. Please write to: Guy Williams at guy.williams@natd.eu or
74 Rotherfield Crescent, Brighton, BN1 8FP.

Volume 36, Issue 1. Winter 2021

Includes: *'A Great Gathering': The Dorothy Heathcote Now Conference*, David Allen; *Dorothy Heathcote: Teacher power and student choices*, Cecily O'Neill; *What sort of society do we want? Introducing: Humanising education with dramatic inquiry: In dialogue with Dorothy Heathcote's transformative pedagogy*, Brian Edmiston and Iona Towler-Evans; *My Work and Dorothy*, Vaishali Chakravarty; *Dorothy Heathcote (DH), the archive and me: What sticks out?*, Sandra Hesten; *The Alchemical Model of Leadership: From Classroom to Boardroom*, Bogusia Matusiak-Varley, Eleni Kanira and Sarah Mills; *An overview of articles written by Dorothy Heathcote and published by The Journal for Drama in Education*, Curated by Maggie Hulson.

Volume 36, Issue 2. Summer 2022

Includes: *Who Am I? Who Can Tell Me Who I Am?*, David Davis; *Countering the Insistence of Neoliberal Consciousness and Mentality - Materialist Approaches to the Intensive Practices of Speaking and Acting: Lacanian Analysis and Drama in Education*, Bill Roper; *Response to Bill Roper*, David Davis; *An interrupted discussion with Bill Roper*, Konstantinos Amoiropoulos; *Approaching the real: Attempts in early years classrooms*, Konstantinos Amoiropoulos; *Response to Kostas Amoiropoulos*, Bill Roper; *Remembering Bill Roper*, David Davis; *Bill Roper*, Konstantinos Amoiropoulos.

The Mary Simpson Fund

For nearly 20 years, members of NATD who require financial assistance to attend our events have been supported by the Mary Simpson Fund. Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton were close friends of Mary. Gavin outlines the history of the woman in whose name so many teachers have been able to attend our Conferences and Regional events.

Mary Simpson nee Robson 1907-92

Having begun her career as a primary school teacher in 1924, Mary Robson was appointed to the newly set up Emergency Training College in 1946, (becoming a two-year training establishment after three years and then, in 1961 amalgamating with Neville's Cross College, Durham) under the auspices of the University of Durham. It was based at Wynyard Hall, property of Lord Londonderry whose estate is on the edge of Teesside. From the start, a feature of the college was the insistence by the Principal that it should revive the pre-war tradition of the Londonderry family of promoting the Arts by arranging concerts and play performances for the local community. This is how Mary, an artist, actress, theatre director and much-loved trainer of teachers established her reputation in the Northeast. Her early productions included 'Tobias and the Angel' and 'Peer Gynt'. One of her students at that time recalls that 'She nurtured everyone and brought out the best in them. She was kind, gentle and unassuming with a twinkle in her eye and a wonderful sense of humour.'

Such was her reputation that Professor Brian Stanley, Director of Durham University Institute of Education, in 1950 offered her the post of working with experienced Drama teachers (there was no other such post in the UK) but she turned this down because she wanted to continue to work in Art as well as Drama. Her non-acceptance of such an invitation is not without its significance in the history of UK Drama Education, for Dorothy Heathcote would not have been appointed and her whole career and influence on the world's drama teaching would have been much less influential had she accepted it. And my career too would have been seriously affected, for it was Mary Robson who introduced Dorothy and me to each other when I was appointed Durham Drama Adviser in 1961. She invited us both to tea (a popular way of entertaining guests all those many years ago!) and because I replaced Dorothy at Durham University two years later when she moved on to Newcastle, we were able to share our work for the next 30 years!

In 1969, Mary retired and in 1978 she married her cousin, John Alfred Simpson (popularly known as Alf Simpson), also an artist. She died in 1992.

Mary bequeathed a sum of money to continue the nurturing of students and young Drama teachers. In 1992, Dorothy Heathcote and Tony Grady recommended to the NATD committee of that year, that using this money a fund could be set up to enable all members to attend Conference. That fund still exists in Mary's name and continues to ensure that all who wish to can attend our events. We are always looking for ways to top up the fund and at each conference there will be an event or activity that encourages you to contribute. Please give generously. In addition, you may like to consider paying your membership fees by standing order and adding a small monthly amount that will go directly into the fund. Please contact the Treasurer for further details and a standing order form.

If you would like to receive support from the Mary Simpson Fund, please write to the Chair of the Association indicating your reasons for needing support and the proportion of the Conference fee that you would like to receive.

The Tony Grady International Fund

Tony Grady was twice Chair of the national executive of NATD. He was an outstanding leader, always careful to develop the theory and practice of drama and theatre in education, always with the needs of the young firmly at the heart of all endeavour. Tony was also on the editorial committee of *The Journal* of NATD for seven years, again providing a focus and leadership that was second to none. Underpinning all of Tony's work was a great humanity born of which was his leadership of 'NATD to think and work as internationalists'¹. He was a founder of the International Association for Drama and Theatre and Education, and led developmental work in Bosnia, Serbia and Kosova, always working to bring international delegates to NATD conferences.

In 2003 Tony died, much mourned and missed, not only for his insight and guidance, but also because he was a good mate to so many of us. When the arrangements for his funeral were being discussed his partner, Angela asked that, instead of flowers, money should be donated to NATD to create a fund for bringing international delegates to NATD conferences. In this way, through the Tony Grady fund, NATD seeks to continue, both in conviction and in action, an internationalist practice.

We are always looking for ways to top up the fund. At each conference there will be an event or activity that encourages you to contribute. Please give generously. In addition, you may like to consider paying your membership fees by standing order and adding a small monthly amount that will go directly into the fund. Please contact the Treasurer for further details and a standing order form.

If you are a practitioner from outside the UK and would like to receive support from the Tony Grady Fund or you know of someone who would benefit from it, please write to the Chair of the Association indicating your reasons for needing support and the proportion of the Conference fee that you would like to receive.

¹ Margaret Higgins 18th December 2003 – letter to NATD