AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY
ON USING DRAMA FOR LEARNING:
IMPLEMENTING DOROTHY HEATHCOTE'S
MANTLE OF THE EXPERT APPROACH TO EDUCATION

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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* * * * *

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ABSTRACT

Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert approach to using drama in education involves students in the creation of an imaginary social world as a context for learning with teachers positioning students to assume the role of an expert professional. By assuming the role of experts in a fictional world, students adopt and perform the practices and responsibilities of everyday life professionals in service to an imagined client who has requested their help. Key principles of the Mantle of the Expert approach to education are compared with Etienne Wenger's communities of practice theory (1998) and a social worlds curriculum model for inquiry-based education developed by Richard Beach and Jamie Myers (2001).

When used as a design for learning with a kindergarten class, the Mantle of the Expert approach to education mediated the creation of a community of inquiry in the following ways: Students agreed to be framed or identified as expert animal caretakers and participated in the work of imagining a social context for learning. Students engaged as members of a community in practices to achieve collective goals requiring the acquisition of knowledge and skills particular to the social world of animals and veterinarians. Students negotiated meanings within these worlds using
the tools and resources of the classroom in order to contribute to the achievement of their goals and performance of responsibilities as veterinarians. They collaborated with each other and with teachers to construct their understandings of the needs of animals and the practices utilized by veterinarians to provide for those needs. Literacy practices were used as tools by the community in the service of constructing knowledge and reflecting on the work of the community. Students gradually took ownership of the inquiry and contributed to its development by initiating engagement in aspects of critique and transformation of world views regarding the problem of endangered animals.
Dedicated to my parents,
my first teachers
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Before this study I would not have imagined myself as a teacher using drama in the classroom. My understanding of drama was narrowly defined by experiences of improvisational role plays or scripted plays presented by high school drama clubs. I was first introduced to drama as a tool for learning during my graduate studies and was intrigued by this highly interactive approach to education. I read stories of how other people had used drama in their classrooms, and reflected upon the strategies that were discussed and demonstrated as I participated in classes and workshops. But, it was through my teaching experiences of using drama for learning that I was able to experience first hand and begin to understand the intricacies of how process drama, as it is often called, can be used to design authentic teaching and learning.

I was attracted to using drama in my classroom because of the way it engages the participant fully in the cognitive, kinesthetic, and affective domains of learning. In my earlier experiences of teacher education, these domains had been identified, but separated with most of the teaching emphasis assigned to cognitive development. In my experiences as a physical education teacher, the focus of my teacher education was upon kinesthetic development for the acquisition of motor skills. Nowhere in my
preparations for the classroom had the affective domain been addressed, and certainly the three aspects of learning had never been addressed in combination. I was never satisfied with this separation, or the inattention to the emotional or affective aspects of personal and social development. I recognized that process approaches to using drama in the classroom was a way of teaching authentically by engaging students in all three aspects of learning. In addition, I was excited about the social dimensions of process drama and perceived it as a way of transforming the classroom into a community of learners.

As a teacher of kindergarten children I was particularly interested in incorporating drama into my classroom activities. I had seen children’s enthusiasm for play and how children make sense of their world by engaging in dramatic play through which they can “practice life” (Bowell and Heap, p. 2). I wanted to learn to harness the creative energy of my students’ play in order to mediate learning that would explore their interests and concerns about the everyday world to create understandings that would hopefully transfer to their everyday lives.

Drama for learning is rooted in social imaginary play. As in pretend play without adult participation children create a shared fictional world when they engage in drama activities together. Social and cultural imagination is integral to drama for learning. Brian Edmiston explains,

We can begin to use drama when we start to create, experience, and interpret an imaginary world in addition to the everyday world of the classroom...[P]articipants use their social and cultural imagination to create a shared imagined world. The imagined world does not replace
the everyday classroom world, but rather begins to be created alongside the everyday world. (in press)

According to Edmiston, the everyday world can be thought of as the world of “What is...?” and the imaginary world starts to exist when students and teacher begin to wonder “What if...?” The everyday world can be described as IS. The world of the drama can be described as IS+IF because participants experience the imaginary world and the everyday world of the classroom simultaneously (in press). Teachers and students interact in both worlds, moving back and forth between them as necessary (Heathcote, 1984). Learning occurs when students “...interpret their imagined experiences for meaning to connect with their everyday lives and thereby develop more understanding about a facet of life” (Edmiston, in press).

British educator Dorothy Heathcote’s (1995) Mantle of the Expert approach to using drama in education involves students in the creation of an imaginary world as a context for learning with teachers positioning students to assume the role of an expert professional (Edmiston, in press). By assuming the role of experts in a fictional world, students adopt and perform the practices and responsibilities of everyday life professionals in service to an imagined client who has requested their help.

I decided to focus my study of using drama for learning on Heathcote’s Mantle of the Expert approach to education because of its likely effects upon student participation in the learning process and its potential for transforming classrooms into communities of inquiry. Having read examples of classroom practice, I believed that Mantle of the Expert would provide me with a framework for using drama in my
classroom that would more fully involve my students as members of a community
engaged in purposeful inquiry. The question that provided the focus for my study
was: How does using the Mantle of the Expert approach to education affect the
mediation (by teacher and students engaged in activities) of a learning community and
inquiry-based education? My goal was to study this approach to education in terms of
its effects upon classroom learning so that I would be better equipped to plan for and
utilize this drama approach in my classroom in the future.

This study was conducted in an extended day kindergarten classroom. The
ten students who had been identified for the program attended a regular kindergarten
classroom in the morning, then participated in an afternoon curriculum focused on
literacy instruction with me as their teacher. Based on the results of nine different
assessments in aspects of literacy development, all of the children had demonstrated a
need for increased engagement in literacy experiences in order to facilitate growth as
readers and writers. For example, some of the children had very little knowledge of
alphabetic symbols and corresponding sounds. A few could read and write first names
only. Most of the students began the year with limited understanding of concepts
about print, such as how words are formed, the directionality of text, symbols of
punctuation and how they function. Many of the children were inhibited in their use of
oral language to tell stories or express their thoughts and ideas. In spite of gaps in
literacy knowledge and background, each child also showed promise for learning, as
indicated by strengths in one or more areas of the literacy assessments.
The program was part of our school district’s Title I, federally funded programs and was presented to parents as an early intervention in literacy education. As their teacher, it was my responsibility to provide literacy experiences that would enhance the children’s knowledge of how literacy works, enable them to develop early literacy skills, and develop a love for reading and writing. I was provided with excellent resources including big books for shared reading, leveled texts for guided and independent reading, a computer with internet access and literacy games for the children, as well as books on tape, and my own personal classroom library, complete with a variety of fiction books and non-fiction literature on a wide range of topics.

Oral language development was an important aspect of our curriculum. The relatively small number of students made it possible for whole-group conversations to take place during class meetings or in relation to books we had enjoyed during shared reading. Children engaged in social interactions with one or two others during shared activities in learning centers. They listened to books on tape. Singing and movement activities were key components of the program. The encouragement of speaking and listening skills was instrumental in moving the children toward greater ease in the use of language to express themselves and work collaboratively in the group. Through the daily use of language in social interactions, the children had become more proficient in their use of language as a tool for sharing experiences, asking and responding to questions, and exploring areas of interest throughout the year. The use of oral
language in this classroom was a distinguishing feature of our curriculum because of its importance in early literacy learning.

I came to understand the oral language component of the curriculum as vital to the literacy focus of this classroom, but I was not always so comfortable with the presence of so much talking. My own childhood experiences of school had formed the expectation that a productive classroom was a quiet classroom. In this kindergarten class there was rarely a moment of silence. Also, I was aware of other kindergarten classrooms around me where children were admonished to be quiet and to finish their seat work. It became obvious to me that what we were doing in this classroom was different from more traditional models of classroom engagement. At first, I had to remind myself of the value of student interactions with adults and peers but, as time passed, I began to recognize that these interactions were of value for learning in general, and not just for the purpose of language development.

It became evident to me that the communications between students and the interactions that occurred with me while we were together as a whole group were key moments when learning was happening. The students were especially attentive during conversations when peers talked of life experiences or special events that had meaning for them. There was a depth of concentration during collaborative efforts as students worked toward a common goal such as building a structure together with blocks and interpreting the functions of that structure together. When students were asked to
work together to create an illustration for a class book, the conversation turned to
negotiating the visual details needed to communicate the event or idea from the book.

I also noticed during recess and when students were given free choice of
activities, how small groups of children formed to “play cats and dogs” with some
children acting as the pets, while others pretended to be their owners. Through my
observations of the children at work and play together or in conversation with one
another about things that mattered to them, I began to understand that these
interactions were tools for learning. Yes, they were growing in their ability to use
language to communicate. But, they were also learning from one another in these
interactions.

Furthermore, the interactions that were encouraged in this classroom were
beginning to distinguish this class as a place where talking is good, sharing ideas is
encouraged, and kids can teach each other. I sensed that our classroom had become a
community, rich with relationships and a history that had formed from daily
interactions and rituals of cooperative work and play. The children loved coming to
this room from their more traditional kindergarten setting. Whenever our normal
routine was interrupted for some reason and our class did not meet, the children were
vocal about their displeasure and wanted to know when we would be back together.

I was pleased with my students’ comfort and enjoyment of our classroom
experiences. I want students I am teaching to feel a part of a community where all can
participate freely and feel appreciated for their efforts and contributions. By mid-year,
I was feeling comfortable with the level of social interactions in our classroom. Students talked freely with one another about their experiences and showed a preference for working with a partner or in small groups whenever there was a choice.

But there was a problem for me. As the year progressed and the students grew more comfortable with each other as peers and looked forward to their times together as builders, artists, storytellers, writers, and playmates, I found that my role as the teacher needed to change. I was no longer needed to facilitate verbal sharing among students nor was I expected by students to provide them with learning activities. They had become proficient and seemed to prefer to negotiate with their classmates about how to use their time and the resources in the classroom. My shared reading lessons seemed for some students to be an interruption in their plan for the day. I was feeling that the literacy curriculum was getting tacked on to the “main event” which seemed to be the social exchange that occurred through their play and the conversation that grew out of their engagement with others during center activities.

At the time, I experienced this tension as a frustration in my efforts to teach my students. But I have come to understand these moments as potential opportunities for growth and change with possibilities for enhancing teaching and learning. Instead of playing tug-of-war with my students where I felt I was “tugging” them away from their activities with peers to join me for my literacy lesson, I began to ask myself the following questions: 1) How could the activities the children created for themselves and enjoyed so much be used to design learning events that would further their early
literacy development? 2) How could I participate with them in social interactions to affect learning processes and expand learning within our community?

Through reflection on these experiences I became interested in conducting an action research project that would engage my kindergartners in an inquiry-based learning experience. My understanding of inquiry-based teaching and learning was based on student-centered models of inquiry that use student questions and interests to determine research topics and plan strategies for investigation. This first inquiry project with kindergartners took place during a two week period at the beginning of March, 2003. The children had indicated their interest in animals through their discussions of favorite pets, selections of favorite animal books to read, and their play centered on pets and pet owners. One of our shared reading books by Joy Cowley, called *Three Little Ducks*, focused on a mother duck and three ducklings. The simple narrative with repetitive text provided basic information about the characteristics of ducks and their behavior, The children's interest in the story led them to generate additional questions on the topic. For example,

- How do ducks lay eggs?
- How do ducks swim?
- Why do ducks have webbed feet?
- What do ducks like to eat?
- How do ducks stay dry?
I concluded that their questions were evidence of a general interest in learning more on
the topic and we established their list of questions as the focus of our inquiry about
ducks.

One of my goals for this inquiry experience was that the students would
experience and interact with me as a co-inquirer. I intentionally positioned myself as a
learner with them by including my questions about ducks on the list along with theirs.
Through the reading of non-fiction books, shared writing, and further questioning, the
children and I developed an understanding of how ducklings are born and the cycle of
life as illustrated by the behaviors of ducks. We learned how their unique body
features make it possible for them to swim and hunt for food. We talked about the
dangers that ducks face and how the mother’s feathers assist her in hiding the baby
ducklings. We conducted an experiment to observe the effect of oil on water and
transferred this information to the way in which ducks preen themselves to spread oil
over the bodies and waterproof their feathers. Throughout the study I was impressed
by the level of engagement and motivation to learn. The children entered into lengthy
whole group discussions of the literature we were reading and commented extensively
on the information provided in photographic illustrations.

The focused inquiry brought about renewed engagement with literature on the
part of the children. Their interactions with the texts were sustained over longer
periods of time, and the children worked together through their social interactions to
construct an understanding of ducks. Interest in the subject continued for some time.
Some of the students returned to the literature during independent reading and a few of them talked about seeing ducks in their home environments long after the study ended. On a field trip to the zoo, the children in my class were able to distinguish the male ducks from the female ducks and delighted in watching a mother duck with her three little ducklings, comparing this real life experience with the book we had read in class. In addition to the content learned, I sensed that something had happened through the inquiry experience to my students’ concepts of themselves as learners. The experience of asking and exploring answers to their own questions continued throughout most of the remainder of the year and was seen in the way that students engaged with literature by asking questions. The experience of working together to come to new knowledge about ducks enabled some of the students to invite other students to explore other topics of interest as partners. For some children, I believe the experience helped them to understand what it means to be a learner, and gave them an experience of owning the learning process with their peers and me as the teacher. As one child observed, “We know a lot about ducks.”

This experience of inquiry with kindergartners was profoundly positive and influential in my thinking about teaching and learning. I discovered that students take to inquiry “like ducks to water” and the engagement in curricular decisions can lead them to take a greater interest and assume ownership in their own learning. Some of the students came up with ideas for inquiry stations in our classroom and felt comfortable with bringing their ideas to me for inclusion in our classroom.
While these observations convinced me of the positive influence of student-centered inquiry upon teaching and learning, I felt that I had not utilized the full range of social interactions that were present in the classroom of young learners. The inquiry experience had not engaged the children in the social interactions of play. Our class had not engaged in interactions that would have helped us to imagine the world of ducks, what it might be like to be a duck or those who are concerned with the lives of ducks. Our study had been largely intellectual and done from an emotional distance, only occasionally engaging the students on an affective level. For example, students had learned but had not seemed concerned about the kinds of predators that would hunt ducks, especially duck eggs or ducklings. My observations of their enjoyment and social engagement during play at recess and in the classroom at centers led me to conclude that teaching and learning with kindergarten children should include social learning through play and imagination.

But how would I do this? The answer to this question was in the connection between play and drama. According to Brian Edmiston, "[a]t its simplest, drama is wondering, 'What if...?' and then interacting with others in a 'drama world' as if that imagined reality was actual" (Wilhelm and Edmiston, p. 3). This was what I had observed the children doing when they played cats and dogs, or pretended to be Spiderman. They were answering the question, 'What if...?' by taking on the roles of others they imagined themselves to be. Their interactions were constructed from the positions they assumed in role (Edmiston, in press). The imagined world was carefully
developed through the creation of props, the negotiation of rules for behavior, and the activities that reflected the purpose of the play. When the children played cats and dogs, for example, they made leashes from plastic links, decided that they would take turns assuming the role of pets, and engaged in the activities reflective of the relationship between pets and pet owners, including taking walks and playing with pet toys.

But even if the children's play could be understood as a simple form of drama, I still needed a way to enter the imaginary social worlds of my students and utilize those worlds as intentional contexts for learning. I also wondered how my prior experiences using inquiry with kindergarten children could assist my effort to make teaching and learning with young children more effective.

I believed that my work with students would be enhanced if I could learn how to design and implement classroom learning experiences that engage all students as participants in a learning community where social interactions are valued as a tool for learning. I also wanted to empower my students to collaborate in the construction of knowledge using inquiry-based methods involving imagination and play. My experiences in graduate studies of using drama strategies had stimulated an interest in the use of Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert approach to education. Through reading and learning about Mantle of the Expert I had come to appreciate its emphasis upon sharing power with students, negotiating meaning as participants in a learning community, and providing a context for learning by casting students in roles as
"skillful experts whose help and advice has been requested by a client" (Wilhelm and Edmiston, p. 8). Armed with my initial experience of inquiry with kindergartners, and an understanding of drama as play, I decided to explore this drama approach with my kindergarten students as a way of establishing a community of inquiry (Wilhelm and Edmiston, p. 2).

In this paper I describe key aspects of what I have learned about the power of drama in a kindergarten classroom. While this class had been formed to provide early intervention in literacy instruction, and while the literacy goals of the classroom were supported through this experience, this report is not primarily about literacy instruction. Rather, it is a report that describes the effects of drama upon classroom relations, interactions, and inquiry. Using Dorothy Heathcote’s Mantle of the Expert approach to education, our kindergarten classroom was transformed into the world of animal caretakers. Presented with the challenge of becoming expert animal caretakers the children responded enthusiastically; collaborating to create the imagined worlds of animals, e.g., an injured stray dog and a tiger with a toothache. When asked to engage in activities that, in the everyday world, would provide care for the sick and injured animals, they constructed the knowledge necessary to understand the situation, to act and interact with each other, and assume the responsibilities of a vet. Something exciting happened to our classroom community and to the quality of learning during this work. This is a report of our work together and how it has influenced my thinking about teaching and learning.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

My experiences with the kindergarten children had helped me to see the importance of relationships and social interactions for learning, but I needed to read more about learning theories based on the social dimensions of learning. This included literature describing the importance of play in young children’s cognitive development, as well as the importance of imagination in the expansion of children’s learning. I read about the need for students to construct meaning from their experiences and interactions with others and how teachers function as mediators in this process. I also studied a detailed analysis of how learning occurs in communities that are engaged in common practice. My interest in inquiry-based education led to the study of alternative curriculum models that involve students in designing and taking ownership of learning by utilizing strategies for inquiry. And, because of my particular focus on drama in education, I examined literature that describes how drama can be used for learning, particularly Dorothy Heathcote’s approach to education known as Mantle of the Expert. I have presented the literature in three categories: Learning Theories, Curriculum Models, and Drama as Design for Learning.
Learning Theories

Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, recognized the importance of social interactions in development and stressed the need for social support and language in development and growth (Egan and Kauchak, p. 42). His concept of the zone of proximal development theorizes that learning occurs in social interactions that support student growth. According to Vygotsky, the zone of proximal development is “...the distance between the actual development as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). It is the phase in learning in which a student could benefit from assistance or help in order to perform a task independently. This assistance which can come through a variety of interactions between the student and teacher or the student and other more capable peers, is referred to as scaffolding or mediation. Vygotsky also recognized the role of tools such as language, actions, or material objects that represent social and cultural development, in assisting students to move through zones of proximal development (Egan and Kauchak, p. 42.). For example, using a stethoscope along with embryonic medical terminology and practices can assist students in the knowledge and skill of how to monitor a beating heart.

Vygotsky saw play as a leading factor in children’s development since play creates a zone of proximal development of the child in which “...a child behaves beyond his age, above his daily behavior, in subordination to rules defined by the
meaning of play...and in this way a child is propelled forward into higher forms of development” (p. 102-103). In play, a child creates an imaginary situation, which represents a specifically human form of conscious activity. The action involved in imaginary play teaches the child to guide behavior according to the meaning of the situation. The actions that are taken by children at play arise from ideas regarding the nature of play. This is in contrast to earlier stages of development when children are preoccupied with things or objects and actions arise from their interest in a given object. For example, a very young child may explore the world of the kitchen and be fascinated by the opening and closing of cupboard doors. The doors are the object of interest for the child. Actions are determined by this interest. The ability to create an imaginary situation is the first indication that a child is free to act outside of situational constraints (p. 99). The actions in play are taken with the purpose of participating in the meaning of the play, evidence of the development of will or the ability to make intentional choices.

Moll and Whitmore (1993) emphasize the transactional aspects of Vygotsky’s theory of development by studying the socio-cultural system of a third grade classroom and its influence upon classroom practice. Through their study, the authors have expanded upon common interpretations of the zone of proximal development. Rather than viewing the zone of proximal development in terms of the transmission of skills from adult to child, which the authors add is characteristic of typical classrooms, they focus on the social organization of the classroom and its emphasis upon co-
construction of meanings occurring through the activities that make up classroom life (p. 39). Key to their interpretation is the interdependent relations of students and teachers in developing the cultural means to assist with learning. All participants, including the students, make decisions about the focus of learning, and the selection and use of social and cultural resources. They utilize these resources of the classroom as tools for learning with the teacher functioning in the four mediating roles that follow: 1) guide and supporter, 2) active participant in learning, 3) evaluator of individual and collective progress, and 4) facilitator of learning by planning for environment, curriculum and resources (p. 38).

The goal of this mediated process is to make children consciously aware of how they are manipulating the literacy process, achieving new means, and applying their knowledge to expand their boundaries by creating or reorganizing future experiences or activities (p. 40)

According to Moll and Whitmore, learning is a joint, collaborative effort of students with teachers. Students are active in learning because there is a sharing of control, establishment of mutual trust, authentic tasks and resources, and the perception of students and teacher as learners (p. 40). They assert that a more accurate view of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development takes into account the collective aspect of classroom practice with the emphasis upon the active child "appropriating and developing new mediational means for his or her own learning and development" (p. 40). Hence they suggest the phrase, "collective zone of proximal development" as a more accurate descriptor of Vygotskian theory.
Building on Vygotsky's theory, Michael Cole (1996) utilizes Engestrom's (1987) understanding of activity theory to expand upon the notion of tools as mediators of culture. Early models of activity systems show a basic triangle of relationships between subject, acting toward an object, through mediators of culture. These mediators of culture have been viewed as either material products of culture or as patterns of behavior within culture. Cole argues that artifacts as mediators of culture should be regarded as both products of human history in the material sense, and as shared systems of meaning or ideal aspects of culture. (p. 118) Cole sees his expanded view of artifacts reflected in Engestrom's model of activity systems in which subjects engage in activities designed to accomplish a purpose or goal, utilizing tools, to accomplish these goals, but the emphasis in Engestrom's model is upon the aspects of social communication inherent in the activities of human conduct. While early models communicated mediation as individual action, Engestrom's model shows interconnected triangles indicating the interrelationship of subject, object, and mediating artifacts in the context of community, division of the labor involved in activities, and the rules that determine participation in a community.

Cole's work has value for me in my particular study because of its view of development as occurring within contexts of social activity which engage learners as members of a community in a common purpose or goal, accomplished through interactions with each other and with the mediating artifacts of culture. Cole
identifies his work with that of Jean Lave (1993) and others such as Etienne Wenger (1998) who have explored learning and development as a practice theory.

In Etienne Wenger’s work on communities of practice, I found an understanding of education as an “opening of identities - exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state...It places students on an outbound trajectory toward a broad field of possible identities. Education is not merely formative - it is transformative” (p. 263). Wenger addresses issues of education primarily in terms of identity and modes of belonging, and secondarily in terms of skills and information. For Wenger, education is a life-long process involving the continual renewal of one’s identity through the negotiation of learning in communities engaged in the complexity of lived situations. The practices of the community are in the negotiation of ways of being a person in that context (p. 149). Identity in practices is produced as a lived experience of participation in specific communities (p. 151).

So, what does this have to do with institutional schooling? How can Wenger’s theory of learning in communities of practice relate to the traditional classroom? First, he maintains that learning cannot be designed. Instead, it can be designed for; that is, on the one hand learning can be facilitated by a particular design and on the other hand, learning can be frustrated by the design (p. 229). By the same token, “Instruction does not cause learning; it creates a context in which learning takes place, as do other contexts” (p. 266). Therefore, for Wenger, the focus of design for learning is in creating a context in which learning can take place through engagement
in the pursuit of a socially meaningful enterprise. It involves imagination so that learners can be enabled to explore who they are, who they are not, and who they could be (p. 272). Finally, Wenger states that educational design must engage learning communities in activities that have consequences beyond their boundaries so that students may learn what it takes to become effective in the world (p. 274). Members of a learning community are mutually engaged in learning, and through this mutual engagement they invite newcomers into the learning community (p. 277).

Identity in a community of practice involves two kinds of work by participants: identification and negotiability (p. 210).

Identification is not merely a subjective experience; it is socially organized. It is not merely a static relation: it is a dynamic, generative process. Because it represents an investment of the self, identification generates the social energy that sustains both our identities and our communities in their mutual constitution. (p. 192)

Identification occurs in the three modes of belonging outlined by Wenger: engagement in the practice of the community and in the mutual recognition of the participants; imagining the work of the community in a broader sense or expanding the dimensions of identification across time and space; and alignment with the identity and enterprise of large groups (pp. 192-195).

The second work required by participants in the community is that of negotiability.

Negotiability refers to the ability, facility, and legitimacy to contribute to, take responsibility for, and shape the meanings that matter within a social configuration. Negotiability allows us to make
meanings applicable to new circumstances, to enlist the collaboration of others, to make sense of events, or to assert our membership. Just as identification is defined with respect to communities and forms of membership in them, negotiability is defined with respect to social configurations and our positions in them. (p. 197)

As with identification, negotiability in Wenger's theory, occurs within three modes of belonging: engagement, imagination, and alignment. Engagement in the community means participation in the collective production and adoption of students' ideas for meaning. Mutual engagement involving both production and adoption is important in order for there to be a shared ownership of meaning. In other words, members whose proposals are never adopted are marginalized in the community. Each member must share in both production and adoption (p. 203). Negotiation of meaning occurs through the use of imagination which enables stories and play to function as powerful communicators of meaning (p. 204). Members of the community can be aligned to and coordinated to participate in larger purposes or goals through negotiation and shared ownership of meaning. This alignment can also be forced upon a community without negotiability, but is described by Wenger in terms of compliance or submission and is not a function of mutual engagement (p. 205).

Wenger's theory represents a complex understanding of the social relations within a community of practice and the processes involved in learning within that community. A general tenet of the theory is the social character of human nature which determines the need to view learning as a process that occurs in relationship with others. Wenger goes on to specify that this learning occurs through the
formation of identities within communities that involve participants in processes of identification with the community and negotiability of meaning within it as they engage in a shared practice (p. 213). In this way a community of practice becomes a learning community, a living context for the acquisition of knowledge as a newcomer forming an identity of participation. And, the community of practice can be a context for exploring new insights and participation in the creation of knowledge.

What makes information knowledge - what makes it empowering - is the way in which it can be integrated within an identity of participation. When information does not build up to an identity of participation, it remains alien, literal, fragmented, unnegotiable. It is not just that it is disconnected from other pieces of relevant information, but that it fails to translate into a way of being in the world coherent enough to be enacted in practice. (p. 220)

Wenger’s theories on communities of practice underscore the dynamic nature of learning and, indeed, the dynamic nature of learning communities. They are not designable units. They cannot be packaged as a pedagogical device. “Communities of practice are about content--about learning as a living experience of negotiating meaning” (pp. 228-229). Learning in community comes from engaging identities in the complexities of lived situations (p. 268). Wenger has challenged me to expand my understanding of learning as a process of transforming identities through participation in the practice of a community. Thinking about learning in this way has also challenged my understanding of how to plan for learning.
Curriculum Models

The above learning theories stress the construction of meaning through social interactions, and contextualized learning, or learning that is framed within relationships that are structured around a common purpose, problem, or enterprise. Curriculum models that address these needs are problem-based or practice-oriented. One such curriculum model is the social worlds curriculum presented by Beach and Myers in Inquiry-Based English Instruction (2001). Their model is a problem-based curriculum that engages students and teachers in mutual inquiry into how social worlds are constructed and authored, both lived worlds and represented worlds such as those portrayed in literature or the media, for example. The inquiry takes place within a cycle of inquiry processes or strategies that revolve around research techniques.

The six part model for inquiry into social worlds includes the following interconnected learning strategies: immersion, identification, contextualization, representation, critique, and transformation. These strategies are presented in a cycle but are not perceived as steps in a linear process. Rather students can enter the inquiry through any of the points on the cycle and through their engagement in the inquiry, may move in and out of the six strategies as needed in order to pursue an unfolding path of inquiry. However, as a way of understanding these unique aspects of the inquiry process, the authors present definitions and individual discussions of how each strategy assists in the investigative work.
Through immersion activities students enter into social world experiencing it as a participant or observer. Identification involves defining issues or concerns that are present in the social world or as one social world relates to another. In contextualizing activities, students explain the activities, symbols, and texts used in a social world and how they produce the various identities, roles, relationships, expectations, beliefs and value systems of that world. The representing strategy engages students in the use of symbols to create a text that represents a lived social world or responds to a represented world. The cycle continues as students critique the social world in question, analyzing representations of that world to better understand the values and beliefs present in that world. Finally, the inquiry process leads to transforming and revising one’s meanings regarding the social world, with changes in actions and words to construct more desirable identities, relationships and values. The authors explain that the strategies revolve around research techniques such as, wondering, question asking, observing, note taking, interviewing, and data analysis. With a social worlds curriculum,

...[t]he object of instruction is not a list of skills or ideas, but the creation of an everyday thinking practice in which students use literacy tools to better understand how social worlds are constructed through words and actions, and how social worlds in turn construct possible identities, relationships, and values. (p. 18)

In the model for inquiry proposed by Beach and Myers, students and teachers are co-inquirers. All are “motivated by a shared need to achieve some level of understanding” (p. 22). This is a major difference in student-teacher relations from
transmission models of instruction or content-based curriculum models in which the teacher possesses a body of knowledge deemed desirable by external authorities in the field, and organizes instruction so that this knowledge is passed on to the students with varying degrees of success from one individual student to the next. The inquiry-based education model leads to a "practice-oriented classroom" which in addition to transforming the relationship between student and teacher to that of collaborative inquirer, suggests others alterations in assumptions about learning. For example, according to Beach and Myers, skills are learned as a consequence of students' membership in a group that is working toward some valued object or purpose. Objectives of a practice oriented classroom are to increase students' participation in activities that create social practices and belonging. Knowledge is constructed through social and symbolic interaction and is specific to the community activity. Decisions about learning are made together by the members of the learning community. Literacy practices are perceived as tools to be used in the service of learning through purposeful activities of multiple worlds (p. 23). In this conceptualization of curriculum, practices are the ways in which participants use language and action to construct social worlds. They are learned through participation in a collective activity motivated by a common purpose or goal (Beach and Myers, 2001; Cole, 1996; Engestrom, 1987).
Drama as Design for Learning

My reading of the literature on using drama for education and Mantle of the Expert in particular, helped me to begin to understand the principles of this approach and the guidelines for planning as a design for learning. I began by reading to understand how Mantle of the Expert differs from other models of education. Then I studied Dorothy Heathcote's guidelines for planning Mantle of the Expert.

In an article written by Dorothy Heathcote and Phyl Herbert in 1984, they describe several important characteristics of Mantle of the Expert which distinguish it from educational models based on the transmission of knowledge and culture. First, it is a socially-based approach to education, concentrating on groups rather than individuals. As such, it is a communication system that allows learning to take place simultaneously at conceptual, personal, and social levels (p. 173). The teacher shares in the group construction of knowledge and acts as an enabler of knowledge by placing the child inside the communicative network which is at the heart of the approach. The teacher is not the main communicant and the student's role is expanded beyond that of listener (p. 174). Endowing students with the expertise in a body of human knowledge endows the group with power to learn what is needed in order to perform problem-solving tasks (p. 174). The work of the group is generated by their role as experts and the particular function they have contracted to perform (p. 175). Mantle of expert enables drama to fulfill its primary function: the exploration of
the affairs of humankind (p. 180), but to do so from the positions of people with responsibility in the world.

Later, in their book Drama for Learning: Dorothy Heathcote’s Mantle of the Expert Approach to Learning (1995), Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton discuss these principles in greater depth and offer the following the list of features characterizing the Mantle of the Expert approach to education.

1. There is an agreement between teacher and students to take on a functional role as experts in the service of a client.

2. Learners engage in short-term tasks, always at one remove from actually making a product. The feeling of caring about what they are doing and the values they stand for are not simulated, but are allowed to accrue naturally.

3. The tasks are normally instigated by the teacher and the students are for most of the time in small groups, which frequently come together to make decisions about policy or corporate action.

4. In order to devise a task, the teacher assesses degree of skill, kind of knowledge and learning area involved, and the social health of the class.

5. Each task is seen by the teacher as a carefully selected step in a long series of graded tasks.

6. The chief characteristic of the teacher’s role is that of someone who is dependent on the students’ roles for advice and guidance about immediate tasks, but
who nevertheless has a strong sense of the fictional organization’s past history and of how things used to be done.

7. Above and beyond the specific identifiable skills and other obvious areas of learning, the teacher pursues a continuous goal of raising the students’ awareness of how responsibility arising from the particular expertise is part of a value system (pp. 23-24).

The drama activities are viewed within a framework of deepening levels of engagement or commitment in social-cultural development. Heathcote describes the levels as: 1) action that is performed because of 2) a motive that reflects 3) an investment or reason for action. This is followed by 4) identification of models that influence actions and then, 5) an articulation of a system of values that indicate a world view or how “life should be” (p. 20). According to Heathcote the teacher observes students as they operate within the different levels of this model of social-cultural development and responds to individual students at these various levels in ways that facilitate student awareness of the value system inherent in the responsibility they have taken on as experts (p. 21). In this way, Mantle of the Expert provides opportunities for student reflection upon value systems and ethical decision making.

A great deal of the power of using Mantle of the Expert as a design for education is derived from its ability to provide a context for learning. In the forward to Drama for Learning, Cecily O’Neill describes how contextualization in drama affects learning.
Thinking from within a situation immediately forces a different kind of thinking. Research has convincingly shown that the determining factor in children's ability to perform particular intellectual tasks is the context in which the task is embedded. In mantle of the expert, problems and challenges arise within a context that makes them both motivating and comprehensible. (vii)

Brian Edmiston also emphasizes the importance of drama's ability to provide meaningful contexts for learning in community. "In drama, meanings about matters of significance are continually created as teachers and students imagine, interact, reflect, and inquire together in situated, integrated contexts" (Wilhelm and Edmiston, pp. 14-15). Using Mantle of the Expert situates learning in the social world of a particular professional expert. From the vantage point of participation in that world, students work together to gain knowledge, skills, and clarification of values involved as they perform the work of the experts. As Heathcote and Bolton have written, "Mantle of the Expert provides a center for all knowledge; it is always experienced by the students in terms of a responsible human being" (p. 32). With Mantle of the Expert, knowledge is not decontextualized. Skills are not learned without connection to a real purpose or to the world beyond the classroom. Rather, "knowledge is operated on" as students meet the challenge they have agreed to take on in the drama as experts providing a service. The investigative relationship between students and the information to be researched serves the purpose for learning that has been established through the contextual design of the drama (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 32).
As experts in particular practices, students and teachers collaborate to learn what is needed in related practices in order to provide the agreed upon service. Social interactions are key to this process as participants engage in the work or practice of the identified professional community. A flexible design incorporates the ideas, actions, and corporate decisions of the participants as they negotiate the steps on their path to new understandings and meeting their responsibilities as experts.

According to Heathcote, establishing the frame of students as human beings responsible for an enterprise causes students to “aim beyond...[their] normal ability” (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 35). The teacher, functioning in role as part of the drama, can provide a model of high expectations for all engaged in the drama as experts. In this way, the teacher serves the drama by keeping focused on the general goals of the design for learning and staying in tune with the overall structure of the drama, while also allowing for flexibility in the particular ways the drama takes shape through the interactions and negotiations of the participants (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 35).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

*Action Research*

My interest in how a particular approach to education would impact teaching and learning in my classroom made action research the appropriate choice of methodology. Action research is a systematic process of inquiry conducted by teachers in their own educational setting in order to better understand their own teaching practice and how it could be improved (Mills, p. 6). The inquiry process begins when the teacher-researcher identifies an area of focus for the study that poses some kind of problem or challenge to the educational endeavor. The teacher-researcher decides to take some kind of action in response to the area of focus, then gathers data to provide insight into the effects of the action upon the educational challenge or problem. This data is then analyzed, interpreted, and evaluated in the reflection step to determine the impact of the plan of action upon the problem, and to determine what further action should be taken to respond to the focus area or educational challenge (Mills, p. 17). The systematic, investigative process may continue by repeating the cycle of these four steps: 1) further action, 2) more
observation and data collection, 3) reflection and evaluation of the data, 4) revision of
the plan and further action (Mills, p. 17).

While it is true that teachers often employ the steps of the action research cycle
informally as they go about their daily teaching experiences, this cycle of action,
observation, evaluation, and further action, is intended to indicate the formal steps
undertaken in a strategic manner by teacher-researchers to intentionally investigate the
different aspects of a given educational situation. The goal of the action researcher is
to derive a more thorough, though never totally complete, understanding of the
educational situation for the good of all involved. Action research is therefore
designed to bring about strategic action based upon understanding obtained from
careful reflection and analysis of carefully gathered information.

The experience of doing action research can help professionals to develop a
reflective stance that enables them to look critically at their own classroom practice on
a regular basis (Mills, p. 11). By asking why and how something occurred, or what
would happen if something were done differently, the teacher engages in the critical
reflection that leads to what Mills calls, the professional disposition, or a desire for
continuous learning about the creative process called teaching (p. 11). As teachers,
we are first and foremost, students. Not only do we need to love the experience of
learning with our students about our world, we must also be engaged in the continual
process of thinking about and learning how to improve our classroom practice for the
good of our students and ourselves. Action research can lead professionals to this
disposition that makes teaching the continual unfolding of new understandings that improve or enhance the learning experience.

*Action Research Plan*

I had utilized the action research cycle earlier in the school year to formulate a plan for using inquiry with my kindergarten students. Our student-led inquiry about ducks had successfully engaged the students in social interactions and collaborative learning to construct knowledge of ducks and the general concept of a life cycle. Based on my analysis of this experience, I returned to the action research cycle, to formulate a second plan of action. The challenge that I faced as a teacher was how to use students' social interactions and their propensity for imaginative play in ways that supported collaborative learning through inquiry. My hypothesis was that using Dorothy Heathcote’s Mantle of the Expert approach to education with kindergartners would assist in the formation of a learning community that effectively used social interactions and imagination to support students and teachers in an inquiry-based learning experience. The goal of my study was to test this hypothesis by engaging my students in inquiry using the Mantle of the Expert. If this approach to education helped to mediate a community of inquiry, how did this happen? What would I learn about teaching and learning from applying this plan of action with my class?
From my review of the literature describing Mantle of the Expert, I had learned about the particular features that distinguish it from other approaches to education. I had read about its power to provide a context for learning in which students found orientation for the investigation of knowledge and skills. I also believed that this approach was an appropriate form of action to take in my classroom because of what Heathcote has said about its relationship to play.

I consider that mantle of the expert work becomes deep social (and sometimes personal) play because (a) students know they are contracting into fiction, (b) they understand the power they have within that fiction to direct, decide, and function, (c) the 'spectator' in them must be awakened so that they perceive and enjoy the world of action and responsibility even as they function in it, and (d) they grow in expertise through the amazing range of conventions that must be harnessed...[in order to] function as people sharing the work of the enterprise. (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 18)

Because of these features, Heathcote saw the Mantle of the Expert approach as being close to the kind of real play that children invent for themselves (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 18). As a design for learning that approximated the play of children, I was confident that this approach to education could be a perfect match for my classroom.

A second reason for using the Mantle of the Expert approach is its compatibility with inquiry-based education, in particular the social worlds curriculum model developed by Beach and Myers (2001). Their discussion of the inquiry-based model for learning proposes that language instruction is best accomplished through inquiry about social worlds.
In proposing a reframing of the English curriculum around inquiry about social worlds, our overall goal is to help students employ and critique the multiple literacies used in social worlds. To best capture this critical role of literacy as both an activity and artifact, we distinguish between ‘lived’ and ‘represented’ social worlds. ‘Lived’ worlds are those actual peer, school, family, and community worlds in which we participate using language, symbols, and texts to interact, to engage in activities of shared valued, and to produce artifacts. ‘Represented’ worlds are texts that portray or comment on events and experiences in a lived social world. (p. 6)

The authors believe that through inquiry into a particular lived or represented social world, students

...acquire various social practices that include uses of literacy and collaboration essential for coping with real-world concerns, issues, or dilemmas... As they engage in the study of lived and represented social worlds, their activity shifts the traditional purpose of language arts study away from the transmission of convention and culture, toward critical inquiry into the activities and texts we use to negotiate community belonging and difference, to construct desired relationships and identities, and to transform convention and culture. (p. 8)

The Beach and Myers model is a socio-cultural constructivist process in which students participate in knowledge building through “...active participation in purposeful social activities that use texts to experience and negotiate meaning in social worlds” (p. 19). My belief that instructional strategies with kindergarten children should maximize their interests in social engagement and imaginative play could be explored through the use of the social worlds curriculum as described by Beach and Myers. This curriculum model, also described by the authors as a practice-oriented curriculum, complements and supports the Mantle of the Expert approach which
involves students in the creation of an imagined social world and challenges them to respond to a problem or challenge as experts in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

Finally, as a teacher who was primarily responsible for literacy instruction I found value in what Beach and Myers call, “contextual teaching and learning” whereby students uses of literacy are situated in social contexts. “[S]tudents will learn literacy practices primarily through active participation in purposeful social activities that use texts to experience and negotiate meaning in social worlds” (p. 19). Based on these reasons, I determined that a social worlds curriculum as presented by Beach and Myers and their accompanying model for inquiry, would work well with my goal of using Mantle of the Expert to mediate a learning community and inquiry-based education while at the same time attending to the attainment of early literacy goals as directed by my school district.

Data collection

Action research specialists such as Mills (2000), as well as Hubbard and - Power (1999) recommend that data collection occur in several different ways. The use of multiple data collection techniques, or triangulation, has been adopted in this study. I have used Mills’ categories of experiencing, examining, and inquiring to group the data collection methods that were used, and provide a brief description of the techniques as they relate to my particular research (pp. 50-66).
Teacher researchers who are studying their own teaching practices experience the effects of their practice through direct observation. One of the ways that teachers experience the results of their teaching practice is through participant observation. Participant observation was the primary data collection technique used in this study since one of the objectives was to learn how drama would impact social interactions, including that of the teacher with students. As a co-inquirer with my students, I needed to be involved in classroom experiences as much as possible. Therefore, most of my data was obtained as an active participant observer (Mills, p. 50).

At times during drama activities, I gathered data as a privileged, active observer which according to Mills, occurs when a teacher is not directly responsible for teaching the lesson, or leading the activity (p. 51). These times occurred when a fellow researcher was in the classroom and taking a more active role in directing the drama or inquiry strategies. I collected data in this manner when my professor and advisor for this study, Brian Edmiston, visited the classroom to engage the children in part of the drama. As a privileged, active observer, I was able to focus my observations on the dynamics between students and the adults who were working with them, to note the kinds of teaching decisions that were made by others in relationship to the actions of the students and their impact upon the learning experience.

In addition to the field notes collected as participant observer, I gathered and examined various other kinds of data that enabled me to see more deeply into the experiences of my students. A few entries from student journals were collected and
photographs were taken during some of the drama activities. There were also important sources of information in the shared writing of the class, in drawings, and in the representations that were generated during the inquiry process.

Teachers inquire or ask questions of students, parents, or other teachers in order to provide specific data that was not available through other forms of data collection. In this study, I interviewed a small group of students who were interested in talking about the experiences with drama and sharing what they had learned through the inquiry. The interview was recorded on videotape.

Analysis

In my analysis of the data I looked for patterns that would provide insight into how the particular drama approach affected the practices of our learning community and how it affected the inquiry experience. I looked for these patterns in the narratives I had written about students’ responses or in my own reflections upon observation of the learning experience. Hubbard and Power describe the patterns in data analysis as “...the pieces of data that fit unexpectedly next to each other, leading to a flash of insight” (p. 120). There were moments like these during the learning experience and later during my reflections when I gained a sudden insight about teaching and learning with inquiry through drama. These moments are the focus of my data selection and analysis.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS

I have combined my presentation of the data from this study with an analysis using the guidelines for planning the Mantle of the Expert approach as described by Heathcote and Bolton in their book, Drama for Learning: Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert Approach to Education (1995). These guidelines for planning are not to be considered as a step by step process to follow, but indicate the areas of the drama work that need to be considered in the overall design for learning. The four guidelines to planning are: 1) presentation, 2) fiction, 3) dynamic of action, and 4) a past history and implied future. I have provided a brief explanation of how these guidelines were used in planning for the experience as I describe the significant aspects of our learning through this approach.

It is important to note that planning for The Mantle of the Expert approach is driven by the curriculum needs of the students (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 17-18). Heathcote states, “Only if the teacher is able from the beginning of the project to visualize it in terms of curriculum learning will the full potential of mantle of the expert approach be utilized” (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 72). Before considering any of the four guidelines for planning, the teacher must already have identified answers to
curriculum questions because the drama is designed to be in the service of learning across the broader curriculum. The kinds of questions that identify aspects of the curriculum to be studied are as follows:

1) What sorts of knowledge or information are to be studied?
2) What skills are to be practiced through the knowledge?
3) What ploys are needed to help special needs of the class?
4) What will make them reach out and set standards for themselves?

(Heathcote and Bolton, p. 25)

The fourth question in this list is addressed in Heathcote’s Circle of Progression, a model of teaching and learning that illustrates the increasing degree of ownership that can be assumed by students through Mantle of the Expert (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 60). The four quadrants of the circle represent differing levels of student engagement and reflect the kinds of teacher actions in each phase of the experience that address the present needs of the student while enabling them to move on to deeper engagement with the topic. The Circle of Progression has been used to analyze the later stages of our classroom experience. More detail about the Circle of Progression is provided with the analysis.

_Dynamic of Action_

We interpret the events and situations of our everyday world through various perspectives or “frames” of reference (Goffman, 1974). For example, in my role as a
graduate student, I have engaged in studies with other teachers and professors which have helped me to develop a particular perspective on teaching and learning. I identify with others who share my point of view on teaching and learning and interpret my experiences in the classroom from this point of view, or frame of reference. This frame of reference helps me to make sense of the world of teaching and learning by giving me a place from which I can stand, observe, and interpret situations and events in the everyday world of teachers and learners.

Students interpret events in the everyday world of the classroom from the perspectives or frames of reference they have developed through their social and cultural experiences. When using drama for learning, students are given the opportunity to explore multiple points of view through their participation in the shared imagined worlds that are created alongside the everyday world of the classroom. This is one of the values of using drama for learning. Participants are able to explore a variety of perspectives and begin to understand the complexities of human social and cultural relationships. Through engagement in social activities of an imagined world, students can begin to interpret the everyday world from different frames that people in that world could employ.

When planning for using Mantle of the Expert activities, the teacher begins by deciding upon possible professional or “expert” frames of reference which are likely to appeal to children. If children’s interests and abilities are harnessed in a willingness to imagine that they are those professional experts operating in a fictional social world,
then students are likely to willingly enter into and engage in curriculum activities that in particular social worlds outside the classroom would also be performed by those experts. As the students begin to identify with the activities of the expert they also construct the frame from which they will view and interpret the situations and events of an imagined world.

With the Mantle of the Expert approach to education, students take on the role or responsibilities of a particular expert professional and participate in the imagined world of the expert from the expert’s point of view. But, identification with the expert point of view occurs over time and through activities planned by the teacher to engage students in the imagined social world of the expert professional. Edmiston stresses that in negotiations and activities teachers share power with students by positioning them as colleagues with the authority of actual fictional expertise so that over time they will take on the role and point of view, or frame, of the fictional expert (in press).

“Positioning determines whose power and whose authority dominates, is silenced, or gets shared in a group” (Edmiston, in press). Positioning students to take on the role of an expert and to view the imaginary world from an expert point of view is an example of how students are empowered in the classroom to function in imaginary roles as expert professionals. The way in which a teacher uses power and authority to structure and shape drama activities may determine if and how students decide to engage in drama activities.
Heathcote maintains that determining a dynamic of action is a place to begin the work of planning for Mantle of the Expert because it establishes "power to operate" (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 28). The presentation and initial activities should position the participants to assume the role of the expert professional with power to operate or function in that role. Once the dynamic of action and the expert role has been identified, the teacher can then move backward in the planning to determine the kinds of non-drama activities needed to present the imagined social world and enable the students to "feel their way into the problem" (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 28).

Establishing the Expert Role

Since this was a class primarily designed for early literacy intervention, I was free to engage my students in literacy instruction around any curricular theme or content area that would interest the students. I decided to position the children to adopt the frame of expert animal caretakers because I knew that all of the children had expressed an appreciation of animals, and shared stories about taking care of their pets. I posed this question to further guide my planning for our inquiry with drama: Who are expert animal caretakers and what do they need to know to do their jobs well?

With this question we were provided with a context for teaching and learning: the social world of animals and their caretakers. I believed this context would give direction to our questioning and our investigative work. It would determine our
reading and influence our choices for writing. We would interact as persons situated in this world, for as Edmiston has noted, "Drama in general, and the mantle of the expert approach in particular, situates learning in the professional relationships inherent in communities of expert practice" (Wilhelm and Edmiston, p. 17). The plan that emerged involved students in the construction and use of knowledge needed to be expert animal caretakers. And, they would do this work as participants from within the imagined social world of animal caretakers.

After consideration of the many different animal caretaker roles, I decided that the expert role of the veterinarian would provide a multi-dimensional point of view on the practice of caring for animals. The knowledge required for being a veterinarian includes all aspects of animal care with the addition of expertise in matters of medical importance. Through the inquiry with drama experience, the children would gain entry into the expert community of veterinarians. I eventually decided that students could be brought into a more specific expertise by positioning them to be framed as zoo veterinarians with a specific problem. As expert zoo vets, the children would need to construct knowledge of animal care that involved dealing with potentially dangerous animals. First, they would participate in the social world of veterinarians, then take on the more complex assignment of caring for a tiger with a toothache.

Heathcote views learning through Mantle of the Expert as knowledge that is experienced as a responsible human being. "Participants in mantle of the expert are framed as servicers committed to an enterprise" (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 32).
Through the design, they are called into action by the need of a client who requests their service and challenges them to accept the responsibility. With that responsibility comes the need for knowledge, and it is this need to perform as a responsible human being that motivates students to engage in the construction of knowledge, development of skills, and interactions inherent in a given community of expert practice. The context for learning is provided by the challenge to function as an expert in the service of another. In our case, the children were imagining that they were expert veterinarians who would eventually be asked to operate as zoo veterinarians in service to the local zoo.

Presentation

The topic was presented to the children over a two week period through the use of images, stories, and conversations around the needs of animals. Heathcote suggests a combination of teacher talk with images in the form of pictures, maps, diagrams, etc. "The combination of something to look at and the linguistic style that avoids any instructional note creates entry into the affective framework" (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 25). After viewing images from a story about an orphaned lamb who was looking for a mother, the students generated a list of questions that demonstrated their emotional engagement with the text. For example, they wanted to know why the orphaned lamb was so skinny. They asked about the fate of the lamb’s mother. They wanted to know why the other characters in the story refused to care for it. They
asked if the lamb was happy at the end of the story. During the shared reading of the story I asked the students to share some of the thoughts that might have been in the characters’ minds. The children seemed most able to relate to the lamb and its feelings. When asked to speak for the lamb, one student said, “I need a mother…Please be my mother.” This response suggested to me that the introduction to the inquiry had effectively raised the concern for animals who are dependent upon humans for care and survival.

After presenting the general topic of animal care by looking at the needs of orphaned animals, I utilized the immersion strategy described in the Beach and Myers social worlds curriculum model to bring students more directly into the social worlds of animals and veterinarians. We read stories about children who got new pets and imagined that we were the pets and the caretakers. We read stories about stray animals and how they were adopted by the people who fell in love with them. We spent several days looking at and wondering about pictures of veterinarians as they treated domestic, farm, and zoo animals. I sensed that the time that was spent immersing the children in images, stories, and dramatic play on the topic of animal care was needed in order to prepare the children to take on the mantle of the expert. Heathcote and Bolton confirmed these intuitions in their discussion of the importance of preparing the ground more thoroughly over a long period of time so that a greater quality of learning can take place. (p. 18).
Fiction

Heathcote advises that "...the word "If" or the implication of "If" must be introduced early because...some children may think that promises of actual work are being made" (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 25). There are key phrases to be used in the talk with students that helps to establish the fictional aspect of the classroom work as experts. Suppose that.... If we could... I bet if we tried hard we could... These and other similar ways of introducing the fictional situation and the possibility of assuming an expert role should be combined with "teacher talk" that Heathcote says is "slightly raising the curtain" of a metaphorical stage where the classroom drama can take place. The teacher is "giving a hint of the roles they will all play when the curtain goes up completely (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 27).

The curtain on the metaphorical stage of the drama world of veterinarians was lifted with the help of a picture book entitled, Market Square Dog by James Herriot (1989). My purpose in using the book was to engage the children in the use of oral language to describe, explain, and make generalizations about the world of veterinarians. Using the photocopied illustrations from the book, the children were asked to talk about what they saw in the pictures, to ask questions and imagine what might be happening in the story.

This contextualizing activity was planned to support our inquiry by bringing students further into the social world of veterinarians. They were required to interact with each other and with the illustrations to create explanations of actions portrayed in
the pictures. They had to draw upon their knowledge of animals and veterinarians to supply words that would be typical in describing those worlds (Beach and Myers, 2001). When the children seemed sufficiently engaged in the story and in the world of veterinarians, I read the text aloud, stopping at the part of the story when the injured dog requires medical treatment. Stopping at this point gave the children an opportunity to finish the story by representing the world of the veterinarians through drama. This point in the story provided me with the opportunity to introduce the “If” and to invite the students into the fictional drama world.

“Suppose there was an injured dog at our door right now...would you be willing to work on it to make it feel better?” I asked them. They responded immediately and enthusiastically with great sensitivity to the imaginary dog’s needs and were attentive to the dog’s feelings, especially its fears and need for reassurance. When the children felt they had done all they could for the dog, they decided it needed a rest. One of the children suggested that we should write about what we had done for the dog. We recorded and read through our list of actions that had been taken in response to the invitation to serve as veterinarians. The children seemed pleased with their work and with the “play.”

I noticed several things from the experience. I was amazed at how quickly the entire class responded to the invitation to act as if we were veterinarians. They easily transformed the room itself, and common objects in the room into props for the drama. They talked naturally and with purpose during the drama to make decisions
about necessary actions. They negotiated ways of performing their tasks, and
 collaborated with me and others to solve problems. The drama world provided the
 need for mathematical reasoning when the children decided to measure and construct a
cast that would fit the dog’s broken leg. This event demonstrated what Heathcote
describes as the dimension to learning that is created through Mantle of the Expert.

[D]imension...[i]s looking at a part of a subject in terms if the
whole. Any one subject or learning area is both interconnected with a
broad spectrum of knowledge and, more important, understood by the
learner to be so connected. (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 31)

The act of measuring and the knowledge required to perform this act was
integral to the drama. Rather than practicing measuring as an isolated skill, the
students discovered a real need for measuring and in spite of their relative lack of
knowledge about measuring devices or units of measurement, they recognized this
need and accessed this information through their actions. The students not only
operated on the dog, but upon the knowledge they needed in order to perform their
tasks as veterinarians.

This initial experience of representing the social world of veterinarians by using
drama had engaged the children without pause for more than an hour. In my
reflections upon the possible reasons for the duration of the activity as well as the
enthusiasm of their response, I drew two conclusions. First, the children had a real
interest in animals before we began using drama to investigate the world of animals.
Second, this interest was allowed to develop over time into a genuine feeling of caring
about the needs of animals. The time that we had spent immersing ourselves in
images, stories, and dramatic play on the topic of animal care was needed in order to prepare the children to take on the mantle of the expert. Our immersion activities, or what Heathcote would call the presentation activities, had been done on a daily basis over a period of two weeks. Some of the activities were as brief as 15 minutes, while others engaged the children for periods of 20-30 minutes. Over the course of these two weeks, the children had been given time to find their way into the worlds of animals and veterinarians.

Heathcote and Bolton confirmed my intuition of the importance of spending time in this way in order to prepare the ground more thoroughly over a long period of time so that a greater quality of learning can take place (p. 18). The feeling of caring about what they were doing had been allowed to accrue over time (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 24). The time spent in preparation was important because these initial experiences had made it possible for the children to imagine themselves as veterinarians and accept the responsibility of being expert animal caretakers.

I was particularly interested in the fact that the children had continued to work in the fictional world of veterinarians for a time period that was notably longer than our usual instruction time. There were no signs of fatigue on the part of the children. They remained focused and interested for the duration of our use of drama, then proceeded to gather themselves together with white boards and markers to make a record their activity! No one asked to go to the restroom or get a drink. The work
was sustained without interruption and no one withdrew from the activity to pursue other interests.

In addition to the fact that the students really cared about this problem (Edmiston, 1998) they had been entrusted with the power to function as experts (Heathcote and Bolton, 1995). They accepted the responsibility to operate and as Heathcote points out in her discussion of the dynamic of action, it was not even necessary to label the children as vets at this point (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 27). They were simply asked to suppose there was an injured dog at the door. They acted thoughtfully and compassionately as any good veterinarian would.

This experience represented for me a moment of enlightenment. It was a moment when something unexpected occurred and I was provided with insight about teaching and learning. As Hubbard and Power described, "...pieces of data that fit unexpectedly next to each other, leading to a flash of insight" (p. 120). Five and six year-olds were engaged in a learning experience that lasted for over an hour. Who would have thought that this was possible? Certainly, not I. One of the greatest challenges of the school year had been how to plan instruction that would be compatible with the ability of young children to concentrate on learning. I had struggled with timing my lessons so they were not too long, and utilizing a variety of learning activities to address the differences in the learning styles represented in my students. I was never completely satisfied with my efforts and could never predict
how students would respond to my efforts to plan what is termed, "developmentally appropriate instruction."

During the drama activities related to the imaginary world of the stray dog, I observed children who remained focused on participation and engaged in learning for a sustained period of time. I observed a class that wanted to reflect upon their work as vets and record their actions. I noted that students had been authentically introduced to new concepts such as the use of measuring tools to solve a problem, and they had allowed themselves to entertain a new identity as veterinarians by engaging in the practice of that expert community (Wenger, 1998).

A key feature of the experience was the children's interest in identifying and recording everything they had done as veterinarians. As Heathcote suggests, this reflective and self-evaluative aspect of learning is part of the Mantle of the Expert's approach (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 57). I was excited by the way in which the actions and interactions within the imagined world of the injured stray dog had led students to this step in their learning. They exercised their ownership of the learning process and decided as a community of learners, to record their learning. Their actions as veterinarians and the reason behind these actions, were summarized as follows:

- We covered the dog.
- We kept the dog calm.
- We measured the dog's leg.
- We made a cast.
- We gave the dog a cast.
- We fed the dog and gave it water.
• We took the dog's temperature.
• We helped the dog because we love him.

*Past History and Implied Future*

Our drama activities with the imagined stray dog helped to prepare us for future activities as expert veterinarians. It was an experience that helped to create a history of caretaking for the students, and one that would be recalled as they were being asked to agree to the more complex role of zoo veterinarians. The fictional request to serve as zoo vets came as I read a letter that described the need for veterinarians at the local zoo. The letter that was read described the problem. The regular zoo vets had gone to China to work with panda bears, but while they were there the SARS epidemic had required them to be quarantined and they were unable to return to the USA for several more weeks. In the meantime, some of the animals at the local zoo required medical treatment. The letter read as follows:

Dear Students:

We have a problem at the zoo. Our zoo vets have gone to China to take care of the Panda Bears. They will not be home for two weeks because of SARS. Some of our animals are sick and we need your help! Will you be our zoo vets? Please let us know soon.

Sincerely,
The Zoo Director

The children and I read the letter together. Indirectly, it established them as persons who knew about caring for animals by telling them about the problem at the zoo and asking them to consider helping. It closed by requesting that the children
communicate their decision to the zoo director as soon as possible. This indicated that there was a possible future involving them and their expertise. They would have to decide if they were willing to help.

While the children had imagined themselves as country veterinarians, this was a new development. I chose to engage them in non-drama activities that would reinforce and build upon their knowledge of zoo animals while bringing them further into this part of their role as experts. I provided a wide range of visual materials showing different zoo animals and invited the children to draw large pictures of their favorite animals that we could use to create a map of the zoo on one wall of the classroom. This highly engaging afternoon of activities helped to create an environment that supported the next part of the inquiry through drama.

R ritual

The frame of a ritual brings the students and teacher into relationship together as experts and signals that the drama has begun. The ritual is an initiating event that “...is likely to be but a fleeting few minutes of shared theatre” but it is important, not only because it is a dramatizing event, but because the function of the ritual is to draw everyone into the role (Heathcote and Bolton, p 53). Heathcote describes how this can be done through the teacher’s use of voice, vocabulary, physical stance, the way objects are handled, for example, all of which signal that the students are part of the drama world that is being created (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 53).
Our ritual was not as dramatic as Heathcote recommends, but was done with subtlety through the presentation of a contract that had been written by the zoo director and “sent” to the children for them to read together and sign as an indication of their willingness to work as zoo veterinarians. In presenting the contract I shared with the class that all the animals had gotten better except a tiger who had a miserable toothache. The contract read as follows:

We promise to do our best to care for the tiger and help it feel better. We will make a report when we are done and send it to the Zoo Director.

All but two of the children were committed to the project at this point, and signed their names on the contract. One expressed his fear of tigers, and another shared with us that her preference was to work with puppies. Both children’s responses raised the question for me of how they were perceiving our drama activities. Was it possible that they both thought we were really going to be working with tigers? Did anyone else who had signed the contract, believe that we would actually be caring for a tiger? If so, were they really willing to do the work of the zoo vets?

I realized that I had not effectively established the fictional nature of the work and that some children were understandably afraid of what might be coming next. The explanations that were given by the children for not signing the contract were brief and there was no indication that they were emotionally upset. Another possibility was that these children were simply feeling free to take on a different role in our drama
activities, or were feeling a need to look on from a distance for awhile before joining the rest of the class. I honored their decision to refrain from signing and decided to observe them closely when we actually began the more intensive work of our drama activities with the tiger.

*Progressing and Deepening the Work*

The creation of a drama world of zoo veterinarians progressed and deepened with a visit from Brian Edmiston. As he entered the classroom for the first time, the children were looking at the zoo books and talking with each other about the animal pictures. He introduced himself to small groups and began talking with them about their discoveries. He then invited all the children to gather at the table and moved the conversation to focus upon the animals at the zoo that were in need of care. He said that he had heard about the tiger with a toothache and they knew something about caring for animals.

Here was another moment that provided insight into the work with drama. Our classroom visitor had been with us for approximately 30 minutes. During this time, Brian had spent time with each student and asked them to talk about their favorite animals. The conversations had developed a rapport with each student that enabled the next phase of the drama to begin. I realized the importance of building a relationship of mutual trust with students before engaging them in this kind of learning experience.
Since there were two children who had not yet signed the contract indicating their agreement to work as zoo vets, this additional time to explore the topic with Brian was important. Gavin Bolton discusses the importance of a “gradual move toward a degree of ownership before the children do the “hard” work on the curriculum.” The gradual move occurs when the teacher is sensitive to observing the students for the kind, degree, and quality of their engagement with the study and with these observations in mind, makes decisions about strategies for teacher intervention (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 60).

In our case, the children needed more time to explore and respond to the idea of working with tigers. Brian’s directives provided incentives for the children to stay focused on the world of zoo animals and those who care for them. Since the particular service they had been asked to perform involved a tiger with a toothache, he asked them to locate pictures of tigers, and especially pictures of tigers with their mouths open so we could take a look at their teeth. As the children searched for these pictures the conversation continued and eventually the issue of danger came up. The boy who had refused to sign the contract talked about his fear and this led to an exploration of how tigers could be dangerous.

Brian led us deeper into the reality of working with dangerous animals by inviting the children to talk about how tigers could hurt or kill someone. He asked the children to imagine that a tiger had “got them” with its sharp claws and to place a hand on the part of their bodies where the tiger’s claws had “got them.” This was followed
by different ways of dramatizing the dangers of a tiger's claws. Brian asked the children to show how a tiger might use its claws. He talked with them about the enclosures that are created to protect people from tigers when they visit the zoo. Then Brian asked the students to imagine that he was a tiger behind an enclosure. He acted as an angry tiger inside the enclosure with claws reaching through the bars. Children who were standing in front of the imagined enclosure moved to escape his grasp. He asked the children to think about how they could help each other escape the danger. Some of the children pulled their friends away from the danger as the tiger claws reached out to them.

The time spent looking at images of tigers, focusing upon their teeth and claws by playing as tigers, made the work of the zoo vets significant. Instead of denying the real danger of this work, Brian directed the children to confront this danger and their fear of working with tigers. This confrontation with danger created dramatic tension and instead of scaring the children away, served to bring everyone in to the drama.

As I observed the children engaged in these activities, I was struck again by what seemed to be an unusual combination. Kindergarten children were thinking about, imagining, and representing real-life danger. My inclinations might have been to move the children away from realizing the danger of tiger claws and teeth. But I quickly realized that if children are to imagine themselves as expert zoo veterinarians, this confrontation with danger was a necessary part of the work. I concluded that this
bit of learning was indicative of the power of Mantle of the Expert to engage students in deeper dimensions of learning that might never be introduced or explored through other methods of teaching and learning. The children had engaged their intellectual, kinesthetic, and affective abilities as they investigated the dangers that are faced by zoo veterinarians as they perform their responsibilities.

This was the first of four stages in Heathcote’s Circle of Progression, which Bolton describes as a cyclic journey toward greater understanding, skill, and self-spectatorship” (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 60). With this initial work, the students were sufficiently oriented and motivated to continue the work of the drama and enter into more complex understandings, skills, and reflections upon their learning. The next phase of Heathcote’s cycle of progression occurred as the children were asked to work on specific tasks that would help them to learn about tigers and how people care for them.

Brian had helped the children realize that zoo vets are protected from tigers by the enclosures that contain them. The children were invited to work with a partner to create an enclosure for tigers and then to become the tigers inside the enclosures. They collected tables, chairs, book boxes and whatever they could find to transform the room into enclosures for tigers. Inside the enclosures, the children made beds, selected toys for the tigers, and prepared places where the tigers could eat food and drink water. These tasks helped the children to develop their understanding of how tigers live at the zoo. Their small group work was followed by a discussion of what
they had learned about tigers. They reported that they had learned tigers need a place to sleep, that they might like something to play with such as a ball, and they needed food and water.

In the third phase of the cycle, the children were invited to make representations of food and water, which they decided to do using construction paper. From observations of the children’s work it was clear they had a knowledge of healthy food, but did not understand a tiger’s dietary preferences. At first they made apples, lemons, and watermelon for the tiger because as they said, “these foods were healthy and they taste good.” It was finally necessary for us as teachers to provide information to the students that would help them understand that tigers are carnivores and would prefer to eat meat. The children responded by making representations of steak, and baby back ribs; foods that could be purchased at the grocery. Further intervention was needed to correct their misconceptions about the true nature of tigers and how they prefer to eat.

Mediating Tools

Brian engaged the students in drama activities that helped them to conceptualize the relationship of tiger as predator and goat as prey. Playing the roles of the tiger hunting and killing the goat helped the children to realize that tigers prefer to hunt and kill small animals for food. When the children returned to the task of making food, we saw representations of goats. Students’ prior knowledge of food
was validated and enlarged through the drama. The drama helped them to expand their view of a tiger’s diet without negating their knowledge of healthy foods.

The next day we found actual pictures of a tiger stalking its prey, and a picture of a tiger standing over a dead deer. One child commented, “Oh, that’s what Brian was showing us.” The concept had been well formed through the combined use of drama and photographic images.

In reflecting upon these drama activities, I recognized how learning is mediated through a variety of tools and sometimes, a combination is necessary. Creating the drama world of tigers with goats had been a means of communicating to the children how tigers hunt and eat other animals. Mere words had not been sufficient to make that point. The images in the form of real pictures of tigers hunting and killing other animals were associated by the children with the drama activities that had occurred the previous day. The comment, which referred to what Brian had showed them reveals the active engagement of the children in the processes of knowledge construction. The combination of the drama activities and images helped children to a conceptual understanding that could not be transmitted to them with words from a knowledgeable adult.

_Tigers and Zoo Vets_

The actual task of helping the tiger with a toothache had not yet been done.

Several children responded to Brian’s invitation to talk about the tiger with the
toothache. Using a picture book entitled, *The Tiger Has a Toothache: Helping Animals at the Zoo*, by Patricia Lauber (1999), the children found information about the procedures necessary for anesthetizing the tiger and performing their work as veterinarians. The children with Brian’s direction, represented the part of the story where blowpipes are used to shoot the tiger with a tranquilizing dart. The tigers fell asleep, allowing Brian and one of the students to operate on the tigers. In this part of the drama, an excellent text provided information necessary for engaging in the practices of zoo vets. The literature and the literacy practices of reading and talking about the text were used in the service of constructing a social world. Later, the children used literacy tools to represent this world by creating a text with illustrations as a record of their actions as zoo vets.

**Critique and Transformation**

The creation of the drama world of tigers entered the final phase of Heathcote’s circle of progression as students explored the National Geographic magazines containing the pictures of the tiger and its prey. While we were not actually in drama activities at this time, there was a connection to our experiences of the previous day with Brian. More importantly, the work that was done at this final stage was initiated by the students and directed our thinking and conversation in an unexpected way. The illustrations that had captivated them were of big cats, including tigers, that had been killed by poachers. At first the children did not understand what
they were seeing in these pictures. They began to inquire by asking questions and making observations. They noticed that one of the cat’s skins had been removed from the body. They wondered why the people had killed the cat. One child suggested that the cat was dangerous and had threatened to kill them. Another girl concluded that the cat had been killed for its fur. We identified the act of killing for this purpose as poaching and the people who do this as poachers. This new vocabulary was used by the children as they continued to talk and express their sadness and sense of injustice that the animals were killed for this reason.

I asked the students to make a “frozen picture” of what the tigers might look like when poachers came to kill them. They responded without hesitation and without need of further explanation as to what a frozen picture was. One tableau showed a baby tiger, a father tiger hovering near the baby, and another tiger that was the target of a poacher’s spear. As we tracked their thoughts I was struck by the empathy the children displayed. The baby’s thoughts were: “I am going to run away.” The father tiger spoke: “I have to save by baby.” The poacher’s words: “I can kill you.” The third tiger’s thoughts: “I am going to scratch you with my sharp claws.”

This representation revealed that they had been able to grasp one of the critical issues in the survival of tigers throughout the world, and express this dilemma with their bodies and their words. According to the social worlds curriculum of Beach and Myers, the children had begun the process of critique and started the journey toward a transformative view of how these animals should be treated.
I considered this moment an example of how the inquiry with drama had cycled the class into deeper understandings of our topic. It was not a curriculum area I had intended to study with them, but it happened in the context of our inquiry into the social world of tigers and those who care for them. Using Heathcote’s language from the circle of progression, the students by their interest and initiative “developed a variation on the theme” of our original drama (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 60). I believe their interest in the fate of tigers in the wild had come, at least in part, as a result of their explorations as experts taking responsibility for the tigers at the zoo, particularly, the tiger with a toothache. As Heathcote suggests, one of the features of Mantle of the Expert is the teacher’s goal to raise student awareness of how responsibility exercised by a particular expert is part of a value system (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 24). The students’ concern for animals was expanded by their experience as experts in the field of animal care.

A Community of Inquiry

This project explored how my use of Dorothy Heathcote’s Mantle of the Expert approach to education mediated the creation of a community of inquiry in my kindergarten classroom. I have shown how our learning experiences were designed using the Mantle of the Expert approach. I have identified occasions in the experience where student learning was enhanced by their participation in a community of expert practice. I have revealed how this approach to education supports processes of
inquiry from the point of view of a social worlds curriculum including the extension of learning into areas of critique and the transformation of world views.

I conclude my analysis by focusing on Mantle of the Expert as a design for learning for creating a "community of inquiry." I use Etienne Wenger's theory of learning as participation in a community of practice to examine the ways in which Mantle of the Expert affects the mediation of inquiry-based learning based on the practice-oriented model of Beach and Myers.

There are many points of intersection between Wenger's theory of learning as communities of practice and Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert approach to education. One of those points is in the emphasis upon education as a design for learning based on student identification with a particular community and its activities. This design for learning utilizes social interactions by participants to co-conduct meanings related to the performance of a shared, "socially meaningful" enterprise (Wenger, p. 272). Wenger's theory of learning which situates learning in a community of practice, is comparable to Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert which locates the curriculum work within an imagined social world of professional experts. As with Heathcote's use of imagination to engage students in other social worlds in order to experience the everyday world from different points of view, Wenger writes about the design for learning in communities of practice as involving imagination so that learners can explore who they are, who they are not, and who they could be (p. 272).
Finally, Wenger’s design for learning includes activities that align students with larger groups beyond the boundaries of the immediate learning community so that students may learn how they become effective in the world (p. 274). Heathcote’s approach to education utilizes the responsible human being as the center of knowledge. The information and skills that students learn are acquired through participation in the practices of the expert community and in the performance of the responsibilities inherent in the value system of the expert role. In Wenger’s design and in Heathcote’s approach, learning occurs in a meaningful context through participation in practices that have relevance and significance to the larger human community.

Another critical point of intersection between Wenger and Heathcote is in the negotiability of meaning. In Wenger’s design for learning, learners are engaged in the collective production and adoption of proposals for meaning (p. 203). With Mantle of the Expert, students gradually assume greater degrees of ownership of the expert enterprise with the teacher directing the activities of the drama to facilitate the deepening progression of student involvement in the operations of the expert community. Like Heathcote who engages students in the creation of an imagined context for learning, Wenger’s design also recognizes the value of imagination in the construction of meaning. For Wenger, stories and play are possible communicators of meaning (p. 204). According to Wenger, through negotiation and shared ownership of meaning, communities can coordinate and align themselves to participate in larger goals or purposes. Through the circle of progression in Heathcote’s approach,
students can extend and deepen their knowledge of skills and understandings to explore new possibilities, or develop variations on the original theme of learning (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 60).

As a design for learning, Wenger's community of practice and Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert are similar. Wenger describes learning as the formation of identities in community. Heathcote utilizes the identity of an expert community to engage the student in learning. Both view learning as socially based with concentration on groups rather than individuals. This is accomplished through modes of belonging that include: engagement with the community through participation in practices; imagination that extends identity beyond the present time and space; and alignment with larger groups and purposes that connect the learning to worlds beyond the community or classroom. A community of practice is a learning community because it is a living context for the acquisition and creation of knowledge in relationship with others (Wenger, p. 220). Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert creates communities of practice that engage students in the acquisition and creation of knowledge in relationship with others in order to fulfill the role and responsibilities of a professional expert.

Mantle of the Expert mediates inquiry-based education in the way that it creates a practice-oriented classroom. In a practice-oriented classroom learning is focused on activities and practices that aid students in the exploration of how social worlds are constructed and represented. Students and teachers participate as
collaborative inquirers, sharing in the decisions of classroom practices, engaging in activities of social worlds, and reflecting on beliefs and values underlying those worlds. Knowledge is constructed through participation in symbolic interactions, i.e., words and actions specific to the practice of the group, and literacy skills and practices are learned with others as tools in the service of learning about and representing multiple social worlds.

Mantle of the Expert helps to create this kind of classroom through its design for inquiry into the social worlds of experts and their practices. In Mantle of the Expert students and teacher collaborate in the construction of knowledge through participation in the activities of expert social worlds. Skills and knowledge are learned as a consequence of student membership in a group of experts working toward a common goal. Knowledge is constructed through the particular kinds of social and symbolic interactions of the community and literacy practices are perceived as tools to be used in the service of learning.

In our kindergarten classroom, Mantle of the Expert activities mediated the creation of a community of inquiry in the following ways:

1. Students agreed to be framed or identified as expert animal caretakers and participated in the work of imagining a social context for learning.

2. Students engaged as members of a community in practices to achieve collective goals requiring the acquisition of knowledge and skills particular to the social worlds of animals and veterinarians.
3. Students negotiated meanings within these worlds using the tools and resources of the classroom, in order to contribute to the achievement of their goals and performance of responsibilities as veterinarians. They collaborated with each other and with teachers to construct their understandings of the needs of animals and the practices utilized by veterinarians to provide for those needs.

4. Literacy practices were used as tools in the service of constructing knowledge and reflecting on the work of the community.

5. The students gradually took ownership of the inquiry and contributed to its development by initiating engagement in aspects of critique and transformation regarding the problem of endangered animals.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study of drama has taken me on a significant journey toward becoming a more effective teacher. I have engaged in a more thorough reading of theories that support the practice of using drama for education. I have applied the knowledge that others have gained through their experiences of using drama in education in order to design Mantle of the Expert activities for my kindergarten classroom. Through reflection on these experiences I have increased my understanding of how Mantle of the Expert can create a community of inquiry. And, I have come to view myself as a member of a particular community of practice engaged in the work of making classroom learning more authentic through the use of drama. The project has had a transformative effect upon my understanding of teaching and learning, and upon my sense of identity as a teacher.

One of the ways that I have been transformed is in my view of teacher research. As a result of this study, I see the importance of doing action research and now view my classroom as a place for learning about the art and craft of teaching. In addition, I now view myself as a teacher researcher. I have adopted a reflective posture because of my desire to be engaged in continuous learning about the creative
process of teaching. Rather than being defeated by failures or nagged by feelings of discomfort during difficult moments in the classroom, I will approach these moments with a curiosity that leads to questions and investigative action for change. This "professional disposition" will make me a better teacher in the future and improve the learning experience of my students. As I continue in my exploration of using drama for education, this reflective stance will be necessary in order for me to develop and employ new understandings and skills for using drama.

Another important transformation in my thinking about teaching and learning is that I now think of planning for teaching and learning as a design for learning. In designing for learning I am acknowledging that there is a dynamic nature to learning that requires active participation of students as members of a learning community. Their membership affords them power to share in the decisions that are made by the community to facilitate learning. Their identities as learners gives them rights and responsibilities for constructing knowledge and developing skills. This is best done through the actions and social interactions of persons working toward a common goal. As the teacher, I can design for this kind of learning to take place, but I cannot nor would I want to control the ways in which learning occurs. In other words, I see my role as teacher in new ways; as a designer of learning, and as a mediator of learning in the ways that I support, guide, and facilitate student learning while participating as a learner alongside my students.
Through this study I have come to see how using drama for education, in particular the Mantle of the Expert approach, assists in the work of designing for learning. In fact, I now view this approach as a particular design for learning. By engaging students in the creation of an imagined social world, Mantle of the Expert provides a context in which learning can occur, a particular community of experts. Knowledge and skills are acquired through the imagined relationship with this community and as students perform the responsibilities of the experts. The teacher who facilitates learning with Mantle of the Expert designs for learning through drama, by preparing the structural outlines of the drama as experts, but shares with students in the decisions that determine the particular actions and interactions that occur within the drama. There is a framework and a flexibility that gives the experience a life of its own. Mantle of the Expert provides teachers with a way of designing for contextualized learning with students as full participants in the actions and social interactions required to perform in their role as experts.

My appreciation of drama as a tool for learning has been increased by this study. Before the study, I had a sense of how drama could be used to engage and motivate student learning. I also had begun to see how using drama could involve participants in the exploration of issues pertaining to ethical decision making. By examining the principles of Mantle of the Expert using this approach to design for learning in my classroom, I see how learning across the curriculum can be served. This happens with Mantle of the Expert because of Heathcote’s commitment to
serving curriculum goals. It also happens because Mantle of the Expert facilitates inquiry that can lead students to critique and transform value systems and accompanying world views.

I have concluded that a key reason for using Mantle of the Expert as a design for learning is that it endows students with responsibility as experts which encourages responsibility for learning. Some of the most memorable occasions during our Mantle of the Expert activities were those when the children engaged in learning concepts that I would have previously considered too advanced or emotionally difficult for them. For example, I would not have imagined kindergarten students confronting the realities of danger and death as we did in our study of tigers, nor would I have predicted they would make connections on their own with issues surrounding animal extinction and the eventual critique of human responsibility in addressing this problem. These were moments when I felt that the learning had become especially deep or significant, and was directly attributable to the students' acceptance of responsibilities related to caring for tigers. The children had shown me what Heathcote meant when she wrote, “...[F]ramed as a human being responsible for an enterprise...[the student] has no choice but to aim beyond his...[or her] normal ability - and to break the confines of rigidly held concepts” (Heathcote and Bolton, p. 35). I have learned through using Mantle of the Expert that a teacher can break the confines of rigidly held concepts of what their students are capable of learning and doing.

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Planning and using Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert has been a positive experience that enabled me to better understand the power of this approach to education. I saw first-hand how students become engaged in the learning process by taking on the responsibilities of the expert. I watched as children worked together to share prior knowledge and construct new knowledge of a topic they cared about. I worked alongside my students as a learner, discovering with them new information in a meaningful context that contributed to a deeper understanding. I learned from them about how children learn; how they use their bodies as well as their minds; how they need to talk and listen to each other; how they need time to create and represent their ideas. I marveled at their ability to empathize and engage in a critique of the world. I celebrated the insights they shared and realized that sometimes their learning surpassed what would normally be expected of five and six year-olds.

Because of these experiences with drama, my understanding of authentic teaching and learning has progressed and deepened. But, I know that this was just a beginning and my journey of learning to use drama effectively continues. The next leg of my journey will be to broaden my knowledge and skills for planning and facilitating so that curriculum learning occurs through the use of drama. This will take practice, practice, practice followed by intentional reflection upon my practice. But I believe I am in good company with those who are already in the midst of this practice and reflection.
I have a strong commitment to this pedagogical pathway that I trust will take me to a more authentic way of being in the classroom with my students. I do not want to be a transmitter of dead knowledge as Heathcote calls it (1984). I would rather help my students create a learning experience around an authentic need that requires them to put their best selves forward in response to that need. I would rather know that I helped my students discover their own power to learn and act as responsible human beings in the world. Using Mantle of the Expert has been a way for me to pursue my professional goal of authentic teaching. I am grateful to Dorothy Heathcote and to all who belong to this community of practice for leading the way and inviting teachers like me to join them.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


