

Dorothy Heathcote
Contexts for Active learning - Four models to forge links between schooling and society – Presented at the NATD conference, 2002

Model 1 – Drama used to explore people

Model 2 – Mantle of the Expert

Model 3 – Rolling Role

Model 4 – Commission Model

I am a slow learner. I tend to get sudden moments of illumination, which shed a light across my practice and join things up in a way I haven't realised before. When that happens I'm annoyed that I didn't know that previously. Perhaps we're only allowed a limited number of "eurekas" to keep us humble I remember talking this over with Gavin. He seems to fly over the whole landscape of drama and learning while I tunnel along like a mole with sudden surfaces of enlightenment.

I had such a moment of realisation when I was considering what I had to say at the 'Gradgrind' conference in November last year which might be worth saying and worth the listening to. I thought at the time that I had invented a new paradigm for schooling but when I began to sort it for out for myself I had an even more revealing thought. Those two insights are the basis of this paper. For me, the second one is more illuminating than the new paradigm though that might be more important for active learning procedures in schools the future.

I realised that every single teaching strategy I've ever invented has been because I can't bear to be in a position where I have to "tell people off". If I reach that point I am breaking a deeply felt rule to do with power used to disadvantage. That seems rather high-minded and moralistic. What it means at bottom is that it isn't based on collaboration. To get collaboration from classes, who really owe you no attention you haven't won, needs subtle and honest strategies, which forge bonds rather than confrontation. So once I had seen my dependence on strategies I examined my "new" paradigm and realised it was only a natural development of everything else I've been doing for years.

I propose to examine four models of teacher/student activity using what I've always thought of as a drama approach, but in reality the base building block of all four models is that of agreeing to work through invented and agreed fiction. Fiction contains the word drama. It widens the possibilities for action and necessarily blurs the genre. This broader spectrum of action has earned much criticism because I didn't – indeed wasn't able - to explain my vision of fiction being more overarching than drama.

The **first model** will be very familiar. **Drama used to explore people**, their behaviour, their circumstances, their responses to events which affect them. The art form of theatre is, like play, a self-fulfilling activity it fulfils its own future by the actions of the makers So, at one level teachers and classes quite legitimately make theatre and use audiences.

But around this 'pure' form there have developed a network of other forms of exploring people and events invented by a variety of teachers to serve their own interests and beliefs. It's a "shape shifter" and can accommodate itself to a variety of forms but certain elements must be present if it is to be linked with drama work.

1. It works through social collaboration
2. It will always involve exploration in immediate 'now' time where participants engage with events in the first person; I do. That's the drama element.
3. It must involve participants considering one of the three levels of social politics. The psychology of individuals to drive the action, or the anthropological drives of the community, or the social politics of how power operates. These three form the lubrication and friction which makes the work have meaning for participants beyond the ordinary and mundane.
4. It will always require some modification of behaviour so that the fiction isn't mixed up with the usual way people behave. It needs some selectivity, however limited.
5. The event must have focus, usually through productive tension, which has to be injected deliberately. In the early stages this is usually provided by the teacher, like the first stitch in a tapestry around which all the other elaboration will naturally develop.

At this level the teacher has to do the play "wrights" job - as maker collaborating with the nature of the material. I prefer the concept of "wrighting" because it performs its intention in collaboration with the readiness of the material to receive the stimulation. All craftspeople instinctively temper their incursions to the nature of the materials they work on: But what of the teacher and the social and academic nature of the class? This is the heart of the problem and reason for such a wide range of strategies and negotiation skills being needed.

The soul of the artist protects the wood or stone, and the teachers' strategies must defend their class from feeling threatened, being stared at or exposed in negative ways. I always knew that this must be at all costs avoided and this is why I began to develop those strategies, which made some observers think that I spent most of a lesson in *not* getting started. In fact I knew that consensus and interest has to be won at distance from standing up behaving. Hence my drawings, or being in role, or deciding how a situation would be resolved but not the process and time of getting there. So my lessons even at this stage looked 'back to front', or static in so far as the children first moved in their heads but not off their bottoms immediately.

In hindsight I realise I was preparing the material to meet the productive tension. so that by the time they were intrigued nothing would fail them no matter how inexperienced they were. It was ages before I met and instantly recognised Bruner's particularisation of **iconic** (get the picture); **symbolic** (shape it in familiar ways of writing and talking it through) before you embark on the **expressive** (do it now). The imperative of taking people through those stages caused my strategic vocabulary to

grow. Hence my attention to "voices", uses of paper, all the conventions developed to protect, and primarily my work in subtle kinds of role.

There was, however, one element which seems to have come from nowhere but which I used in my very first teaching encounter. I knew to develop a group point of view not cast children into parts as actors are organised. Considering that I had just completed a three-year Theatre course this is still a mystery to me but it took me forward.

To Model 2: Mantle of the Expert

I perversely insist on using this name because I cannot find a more precise way to express the full meaning of it. It carries two layers of meaning, precious to be preserved. 'Expert means opportunity to work at knowledge and master the skills. 'Mantle' means I declare my calling and live up to what is expected of me in the community. It encompasses style attitude and dedication which takes time to build in fiction, as well as in the real world. As a teacher I want students to enjoy and find use in the curriculum but I believe it has to be embedded into caring about it and joining all the parts together. When formal schooling is left behind we draw on what we know about to "inform" our total existence.

Mantle of the Expert carries forward the elements of model one except that the common point of view is taken into task situations where a client in the head is involved, and it operates rather like the guilds of earlier times. A master oversees the work of apprentices, but everyone shares in the tasks which must be accomplished for the client. In my head I think of myself as a working "maister" responsible for providing, overseeing and maintaining the momentum of the work. Model one shifts the shape of the human explorations. This model shifts the shape of the episodes as the complexity of the enterprise and curriculum demands are brought into focus by the 'maister'. This model is designed to be built around all curriculum study but is lifted from the drudgery of task enforcement by the control and power to serve the client, which is handed circumspectly and generously to the "apprentices".

This is mainly endowed by the teacher's language which, in the 'maister' role periods, uses restricted code. Two kinds of servicing this work are available to the teacher. When 'Inside' the 'mantle' the *Maister* regulates behaviour, offers information in restricted code, and builds belief in the ongoing tasks of the enterprise. Outside the mantle the teacher operates as helper towards the success of the enterprise. The task then helps everyone to "think about" some aspect. The teacher never uses the voice of the expert instructor. The form of the communication will be as ' helpful colleague, what Chris Lawence has called "enlightened witness" which exactly embodies what I have in mind.

An example of the two voices when negotiating the same situation could be useful here. This situation arose when Broadwood Junior School children were running a shoe factory and unemployment was affecting many workers in the north-east where they lived.

The maister's 'voice': *"I don't like having to say this but you know people aren't ordering handmade shoes like they used to. We're going to have to think of other sorts of leather work... I wondered about Roman leather buckets for Vindolanda?..."*

The teacher's 'voice': *"You know when we did the shoe survey and saw how many shoes nowadays have man made soles and uppers. I wonder if we could think of other things our factory might make in leather so all the workers can be kept busy. We could tell the maister at the next meeting...."*

I introduced mantle of the expert work when I was trying to help teachers who didn't understand creating tension by being playwrights and to cut out the need of children having to act, or express feelings and behave "like other people". It seemed easier to start from doing tasks, and all enterprises can begin with very unthreatening activity. For example, using Bruner's three kinds of edging in and focussing. A name for the enterprise can be chosen, or a drawing of the place where everyone works, or a job which everyone would do together can be used so long as it doesn't demand too much expertise. I recently started a Brewery Stables of 1836 by all of us deciding on the name of the horse we drove when delivering barrels. When the names were written and placed round the hall we could then all clean out the dirty straw. From that one task all the complexity of a working brewery could be launched, because we knew where "our" horses were.

Mantle of the expert fulfils a very important function very easily. That of developing the watcher in the head - the self-spectator. It achieves it because our enterprise includes our client, and considering this makes everyone aware of why these things have to be done. The client in the head in Mantle of the expert is akin to the artist's position in working on is necessary but they examine the materials. They not only do what nature of the doing. In school it is the maister who invokes this for each individual as well as for the whole group as a community of workers. **Community is essential in Mantle of the expert.**

Mantle of the expert has strong links with play without children feeling "babyish". In play a world is made by the will of the players who control that world and live in it as long as they are intrigued by it. This happens in the enterprise also. Everyone is "grown up" carrying the responsibilities of adults and facing up to the results of their decisions. A feature of this which has to be faced, and which can have repercussions when colleagues see it first in action, is that it appears to be a muddle with the teacher apparently having lost authority to shape the lesson. This is because, as in play, every child enters the first tasks at their own level of socialisation, imagination, and information. The teacher can readily diagnose the skivers, the copiers, the watchers, the leaders during the early stages, especially the "actors" who start inventing crisis at the drop of a hat. The maister's voice has to regulate the latter. For example in the stable there was a run of lameness among the horses. *"If you're telling me you've neglected horse's feet to this state I can 't believe the boss is still going to employ you - later on when we have to get them between the shafts. You'd better have another look...."* - Hence my reputation 'Bully Heathcote'.

This apparent chaos invites the question as to what is a 'properly' organised lesson? Many years ago a head teacher said to me of a teacher who was on my advanced diploma course "I don't care what he does, so long as he teaches Coriolanus quietly". Obviously she knew what proper lessons look like, and there's still a lot of it about. In Mantle of the Expert, imposed external organisation has to wait a little until they develop belief in their responsibility to the common enterprise. The 1836 stable took fifteen minutes before a full group of ethnically mixed top juniors started worrying about shortage of hay, and it was never lost, for children quickly feel the power of their position.

In model one the stable tasks would form the background to working out people's lives in their work and "story". Model two has no story for it is a built life style working its way forward into more and more complex cultural and society circumstances and situations which mould the **community values, labours and world viewpoint**. This is why curriculum work has purpose and application (and there are no dummy runs) where students practise skills and learn about things within the contextual needs.

To return to my own development. The drama model taught me a very large range of strategies which I justified because they won children to work, protected them from feeling stared at, and my taking part allowed them to gang up and develop a common point of view in developing the event. When it was necessary for an individual to represent an "other" we negotiated it using protective devices like the conventions I developed. The mantle of the expert model employed all these but in addition became a developing saga which by using episodic shifts could be manipulated to serve any curriculum work. Both these models fulfil my need as a teacher to create positive social communities outside schools.

Model 3: I have called Rolling Role because the base work can roll from teacher to teacher and many classes can share in the common context. This seems particularly useful in high school where teachers are often subject-based and meet classes for relatively short periods of time on a weekly or two weekly basis. Teachers often feel isolated as they have a discrete area of curriculum responsibility. If there is a drama specialist they have to invent their curriculum and frequently are seen as teaching a 'soft' subject, however much they try to service other subject areas. So I invented rolling role to try to alleviate the isolation of subject teachers and help students carry the same context with them from lesson to lesson and see that subjects have links with each other. Sharing skills and information is paramount in the work for teachers and pupils alike.

Rolling Role can be used by one teacher working with all the timetabled classes s/he meets or by teams of teachers who want to feel they are in touch with the work of their team colleagues without disturbing their regular timetable too much. To do this the team must develop a common context which will provide a bank of work designed to meet the curriculum areas the team are individually responsible for. So every member of the team ensures that the bank will sustain what they need to draw out from it, to make contexts for their class work.

In rolling role participants explore different facets of a community. They are not members of the community but they have access over time to many aspects of how the community has been, is now, and they certainly wield power over how it may develop. So the team of teachers create a community in a place and with features they all agree will be mandatory for all of them when developing the affairs and concerns of the community. This model allows short as well as long lessons to be incorporated. Some times a very brief circumstance will be explored related with the subject area of the teacher. Work can be left incomplete so that another class takes it forward, or uses a product arising from one group and recycles it to serve another curriculum area.

A school in Birmingham organised a team from art, history and drama with English. They each had mandatory studies to teach that term. The history colleague was interested in some classes learning about Saxon culture, particularly the laws relating with social hierarchy. The teacher of art and technology was interested that term in some classes experimenting with pastiche painting and studying different period styles.

Technology ranged between three dimensional model making and computerised modelling. The drama teacher had a big drive towards helping children examine how people lived before consumerism dominated their lives, and to become involved in reading.

They devised the town of Leyford, existing since Saxon times, currently in receipt of a public gift. The town map they made showed the small Reeve Library housed in a cruck barn, a listed building. There was a (now disused) cinema in a central position and a Saxon Manor house and stables in private ownership at the edge of the map. The map presumes and informs that Leyford exists, has a history and that people still live there now. It has a future. They also devised specific artefacts and materials to serve their teaching goals. The history teacher made a 'damaged' manuscript which told of the memories of a citizen who in his youth had seen what we now call Haley's comet. His memories incorporated detailed information regarding Saxon life, yet appeared to be a remarkable tale of a day when huntsmen discovered two green children and brought them into the manor and reared them.

This story of the hunt formed the basis of fragments of a fresco discovered on a wall of a manor house during renovations. Because the fresco painted by the art teacher was all in pieces (plaster of paris protected by brown paper backing) it would enable her students to study the style of the painting and the content and paint in all the missing parts just as restorers of frescoes do today. The pastiche element. The Reeve cruck barn housing the library was defined by a series of architects' drawings so that the Saxon imprint carried throughout. The drama lessons would involve children in inventing shelving (a listed building) to house more books and to fill the shelves with "recent additions and acquisitions" and so invent story lines and build the classification system. These children were in the main reluctant readers who needed to feel important and take initiatives.

When the team have invented the context (in this case a town but it need not be such a large social structure) they must together decide upon a disturbance factor which will trigger changes for the modern citizens to deal with. This is akin to the playwright's point of tension and the changes relate with curriculum study.

Leyford citizens were given a large gift from a grateful member of the town who had become rich and currently had a prominently successful career. S/he was a pop star born in Leyford and since much travelled but with relatives still living in the area following their usual life style. The star wished to build and endow a new larger library on the site of the derelict cinema and to buy the Saxon manor house and stables in order to develop it as a school for blind children (their special charity interest) and to make the stables house a school for guide dogs.

These changes, of library, guide dogs and school for the blind, were selected to serve quite specific ends: The blind school would require book tapes. This would involve students precisising stories and reading them on tapes, which would then be reviewed by other classes.

The guide dogs provided animals to be cared for in unsentimental ways and would 'invite' the genuinely blind to visit and learn about the dogs and training. It provided animal interest for younger classes. The story tapes would be positively criticised by blind people who could also suggest other materials and tapes made with backing sounds or recorded in different locations.

In Rolling Role the drama element lies in building belief in the lives of the people and the events they are meeting in the current time. The mandatory evidence demands interrogation of various kinds depending upon the teachers' choice of engagements with the town's matters of concern. Teachers never use the drama word and certainly don't introduce it as a drama project.

Leyford town started when a letter headed by the Cruck barn and logo "The Old Reeve Library" indicated "that they had been contacted by an ex-resident of Leyford, living now mainly in America who had a successful career in leading a pop group. The person wished to show their gratitude to Leyford their birthplace by endowing a new library etc etc" So exploring the map and its implications and finding the various locations was the work of the class needing to read, and lead, in the first decisions. This group discussed, decided on the feasibility and wrote an advertisement for the local paper to call all interested citizens to hear of the proposed gift and thoroughly examine the proposals. All classes received this missive at their normal lesson times, consulted the Leyford map, placed so that it was always available and so the town was launched. The curriculum opportunities are taken from this common pot of possibilities, everyone of the teaching partnership is free to select work around the central context.

However all work produced by classes is publicly open and available to stimulate other work. The outcome is massive. Some will be rough notes or sketches inviting re-cycling. Some will request more additions such as illustrations for text, or critical study needing a report. The frescoes and ancient text were introduced by the

teachers with a vested interest in the opportunities they provided for specific curriculum teaching but they also were used by many classes for different learning experiences that are immediately obvious. It will be seen that an area available to all the groups and the team has to be set aside for displaying and keeping catalogued all the mass of materials which develop.

Sadly it has been my experience that this collection viewed by colleagues is often seen as either showing off or, as one headmaster said to me in scathing tones "It looks more like an infant school". He made no comment regarding the large number of children and a very few staff who regularly visited the site to see "how Leyford was getting on". What a web site opportunity Rolling Role provides.

So Rolling Role becomes a soap opera of sorts as many people add to the complex developments which arise from servicing the story of Leyford. We now have an archive of the community - a kind of Domesday collection. The past, the present and the future are available for attention. The teachers narrowly focus each lesson (as does soap opera) and milks each opportunity as much as it is deemed necessary for the curriculum work. The children are as gods developing the culture of the town and the lives of the people they create. It will be drawn to a kind of conclusion when the team of teachers consider it to have served its purpose. The archive need not be thrown away - it can be collected and kept as Leyford's Domesday, or help with teacher education!

You can see now the central thread which is consistent through all three models. It is social politics so easily introduced via systems where 'people' business is central. In the drama model I developed the strategies which bred common points of view and share impulse to resolve social events. In Mantle of the Expert, I created working communities with concern for others - clients in the mind. In Rolling Role I discovered the power of children to build a whole community though it need not necessarily be a town. It could be a commune, or Marks & Spencers' Management team, or a Cathedral or Health centre - any group with aspirations facing change.

In Rolling Role though the children do not actually do the work of an enterprise. Like gods they oversee and decide how best to work things out on a variety of levels and the many varied aspects requiring attention. All classes will become familiar with some elements more than others. Only when they visit the displayed incremental and ever changing work can the whole picture be explored. The emphasis is on a socially maturing community. You can see now how my main teaching drives have never changed. To present children with ever increasing webs of information and skill within a framework of social and cultural awareness. You can see also that what I thought was a new paradigm, my fourth model, is only a continuum of the first question I ever asked a class: "If you were captain of a ship what qualities would you look for in choosing a crew?" the question is ill formed. I could certainly never ask it thus now. But it carries me like an arrow to my present teaching stance and my new paradigm for running a school.

My fourth model I am calling The Commission model

Until I discover a better term for it shall serve. It can involve a whole school, or, as with Rolling Role, only a proportion of children and staff may be involved. Then it would work like a school within a school. The commission model cannot accommodate as Rolling Role can to school timetabling.

It will work like this. The work of the staff and students will be that of responders to commissions sent to them from the community. The commissions will make precise demands and will have a built-in time structure so that on the commission being accepted an allowance of time and resources will be decided.

The work and the results of the commissions will always be brought to a publication which can vary according to the nature of the commission. This builds in standards and quality because the publication will be submitted to the original commissioners. The class work will be related with three teaching values which will be built in from the very start with all the participants. These are **rigour, responsibility and realisation**. The latter is very significant because it embodies a factor often missed out of schooling. Realising now what we have learned, can understand, and put to use in our lives, that previously we had not recognised. Publishing careful organised results provides the necessary casting off point of realisation.

The commission model carries the social element present in other models right out into the community beyond the school interests and environs. So there will be need for teachers actively to search out commissions and use their imaginations about institutions who might like to become involved. There are many instances of sponsors becoming involved in school work such as the Gateshead Domesday Book with which NatWest bank collaborated. I get the impression that as schooling and partnership becomes more and more debated in the media there is varied opportunity and a wide range of business interest in collaborating - if only at the lowest level of publicity!

Not all commissions need to be sought from outside the school, especially in the early stages. Teachers can invent commissions which are curriculum based and can be tempered to suit any group and time span suitable to their needs. A simple commission may be a request for a clippy mat, or collage, to be used by a nursery class. This would have to be introduced in a realistic believable way to a group of children who need measuring, designing vocabulary skills as well as opportunity to share and collaborate. Such a commission would entail a collection of old worn out clothing. Then the designs have to be prepared based upon who will use it and what is available from the fabrics as to colour, weight and texture. There will be the need of a rug frame - easily made, but lots of these are around still in the North East - and blunt wooden pushing tools. Then the choosing of canvas, marking out the design and sorting out working teams to cut and classify the different fabrics. There will be reports of progress to prepare and send, photographs to show progress from start to finish, and finally the completion and presentation of the mat (for story times) or collage to be mounted for use.

You don't need a lot of imagination to see how this commission will yield curriculum work in number, measuring accurately, designing textures, designing, cutting with a minimum of waste the shaped garments that are likely to be contributed, talking about procedures, inventing stories about clippy mats and visiting places where they can be seen. This relatively limited commission format will be scaled up in complexity and definition of products which need not be tangible objects. Work demands which involve curriculum and time scales suitable for the commission to achieve the teacher's intentions. And remember, a commission is NOT A PROJECT!

Imagine then a building in which commissions dictate groupings of staff, children and timetables, where spaces are booked for specific kinds of work needs and materials drawn with discrimination from the general supply. Staff, parents and children must be involved, especially in the early stages, in deciding precisely what terms like 'commission' and the three R's mentioned previously shall mean in their school/community. Crash course in specific areas of knowledge will be essential (as they are in society at large) and these will be instigated when a commission requires it. Times can be also set aside for practice periods, such as when new information, or research or library skills or penmanship or whatever comes to the teacher's mind are needed, but always linked with an upcoming commission or an interest triggered by a completed one.

It is important that the formal structure of timetable, peer group classes, allocation of staff to specific groupings is not all discarded at once. One High school I know of is consulting staff to see who might be interested to each try a commission first with their own class, to be decided upon consultation with their parents who may be involved but who certainly will be informed at every stage. These commission will need to be related with the skills and expertise of the teacher, but all the teachers taking part will be prepared to move around different commissions helping as best they can.

The three processes, of accepting a commission, accomplishing all stages of the work it requires and bringing it to a published useable conclusion must in my view be integrated into a teaching philosophy which is agreed upon by everyone concerned. Usually the philosophy is embedded in a mission statement to use modern jargon. And I do not mean the type of pamphlet now being produced by schools which make promises which frequently are not fulfilled in process. The mission statement must be mandatory and always incorporated in the work of each commission. For me I choose that "All work undertaken shall be in the spirit of stewardship not exploitation". This statement encapsulates economy, service, respect, detachment of scrutiny and observation, care for quality and fitness for purpose. That would be my base line for all the work of all the people for all their commission days.

This way of working falls into what Fritzof Capra calls "the emergent design of human organisations". Designed organisations become rule bound and difficult to change because they tend to form the establishment". He offers a word of caution, useful when considering bringing changes to social organisations. "The two types of structure designed and emergent structures - are very different, and every organisation needs both kinds. Whereas designed structures cannot grow, emergent

structures are adaptable, develop and evolve. They are expressions of the community's collective creativity... the challenge for any organisation is to find a creative balance between designed and emergent structures".

He goes on to consider leadership which is of prime importance to teachers and teaching. "The organisation's mission is generally the result of a design process. The traditional idea of a leader is that of a person who is able to formulate it well. The other kind of leadership would be the facilitation of emergence. This kind of leadership is not limited to a single individual but can be distributed. It consists in continually facilitating the emergence of new structures and the best of them into the organisation's design."

He suggests that emergence is facilitated "by creating a learning culture, by encouraging continual questioning and by rewarding innovation by creating conditions rather than giving directions".

He could be commenting of OFSTED when he states that "organisations are still judged according to their design structures not according to their emergent structures" and, further that "one of the important implications of the new scientific understanding of life for the management of human organisations is that more attention should be paid to emergent structures and to the leadership that facilitates emergence". There's something in there that might be considered in planning teacher education.

A recent example of an emergent structure happened on Tyneside when a piece of derelict land was transformed when a head teacher out in her car "collecting up" children who should have been inside the school, saw the site as a possible play area where none existed. She consulted the unemployed people living around the school and together everybody started hauling out the detritus with which wind and fly by night dumpers had cluttered up the area. Then they tackled the dog dirt, the bits of glass and bags and finally consulted parents and the council at a school meeting, how the land could best be put to use. During the clearing period many youths without jobs began to "muck in" bringing their mates "for the heavy stuff".

This area is now a children's playground, and some low maintenance gardens with benches made with local gifts and contributions from gardeners plus a dog walking area and dog bins. It caused an interesting phenomena during a night of riotous protest about a youth killed when joyriding in a stolen car while being chased by the police. The youths stopped their vandalising when they reached the newly dedicated area, walked quietly through it, only resuming the calculated vandalism after they were clear of it!

There are many such examples about where someone sees a need and facilitates change based upon local ideas and energy. This makes me think a commissions model would be timely, provided all the participants are drawn in to collaborate. This means parents and children as well as teachers. As commissions reach out into community matters it will be necessary to involve many kinds of organisations designed or emergent.

This then incorporates what Capra calls 'feedback loops'. "The feedback phenomenon is important for all living systems. Because of feedback, living networks can regulate and organise themselves. A human community, for example can learn from its mistakes, because their effects will travel and come back along those feedback loops. So the community can correct itself, regulate itself and ultimately organise itself. Because of feedback, a community has its own intelligence, its own learning capacity". Further, he quotes Nildas Luhmann "who describes a human community as a network of conversations. The results of conversations give rise to further conversations which generate self amplifying loops. Thus an off-hand comment may be picked up and amplified by the network until it has a major consequence. The closure of the network within the boundaries of the community results "in a shared system of beliefs, explanations and values, which is continually sustained by further conversations".

This statement by Niklas Luhmann is supported by the Institute for Research on Learning in Palo Alto, California which came to the following conclusion. "The most powerful organisational learning and collective knowledge sharing grows through informal relationships and personal networks - via working *conversations in communities of practice*" (my italics).

This last comment is exactly borne out in the four models I am discussing. It is very obvious in mantle of the Expert and Rolling Role. And it becomes so in the conventional drama model when the teacher uses role whether by facilitating a guest role or working in/out of role herself. Also, each model I have suggested fulfils Capra's philosophy of emergent organisations and feedback loops. Drama permits organisations to be inaugurated and teacher in role is a powerful feedback loop when subtly and generously used with the children. I found it very useful to examine the words enterprise and enterprising. The Oxford word-finder lists thirty-nine definitions. I recommend it as a stimulus!

Now what about the staff and divisions of labour? So long as commissions remain "domestic", invented by staff from within the school to serve specific necessary purposes related with the curriculum it need not require "delicate' ventures involving people outside. Parents and all service staff will have been consulted anyway and usually are pleased to be involved as listeners, visiting roles - the sort of thing we are all familiar with. Certainly commissions work does not tolerate gawpers who pop in just to take a look. This applies in Mantle of the Expert and Rolling Role because the invented communities lose authenticity when gawpers arrive. No one can stop the world and get off. But I envisage commissions growing in complexity of knowledge, research and interaction, so someone has to take responsibility for facilitating community contacts and seeking out those who best can be usefully (and challengingly) involved. This means someone with status and authority, so here is a whole new job description for a head teacher. I envisage them working outside the school much of the time. Sometimes at the behest of busy staff to locate the kind of knowledge and advice (& resources!) a commission will require. But also in surveying and cataloguing the human and facility resources available and making unthreatening contacts, generally introducing the school to the community. And of

course now with websites and e-mail someone can have a lot of interesting encounters.

Staff must pool and use *all* their talents and be completely honest about what they can't do. Some teachers are excellent tutors and hopeless at giving lectures where people must be caught up by the speaker's style so that content is made of absorbing interest. Commission work is no soft option or 'go as you please model', but then teaching through drama systems never was in spite of often being thought to be so. Teachers have to learn to build up group belief in the commissions especially in early invented' ones. Later more complex commissions may be believable in the sense that they are real in relation to community matters. The dilemma here may lie in convincing a group that a current commission is really relevant to their lives as young people linking school work with their needs and interests. I have never found children to reject any Rolling Role community, and they will work to their limits to "get things right" once they care about the people whose lives they facilitate.

I have never possessed an area of knowledge I could call a subject so I have always operated in aspects of social politics and relied heavily upon the expertise of subject teachers or skilled workers in the community. Social politics, however, as any drama teacher knows makes positive entry to subject enquiry as it relates people to information. Thus gateways are made to a surprising range of interests and skills. But this gateway always incorporates the homely words our politicians, unfortunately so glibly say. Society, morals, work, family, concentration, courtesy, clear communication, imagination, standards, having initiative. These are the lubricants of society in forging productive social health.

A hot air balloon best illustrates for me a commission model:

The basket supports the human energy which produce the power to sustain and guide the enterprise. It contains and limits but clearly defines the parameters of the enterprise. The strings supporting the basket to the canopy are the skills and knowledge and conviction which drive the process towards its conclusion.- These will be many and various strands which are carried upwards and collected in the canopy driving the work forward to its destination. But then I'm fanciful!

There are literally thousands of commissions waiting to be taken up so that schools and community become more and more and interdependent. I have this dream that if that could ever be possible children would not have to spend thirteen years of their lives being denied protected responsibility and without power to influence how they spend their time in school. Neither would they be expected to suddenly emerge at eighteen like Pallas Athena out of Zeus's head, as mature responsible members of their community. Mantle of the Expert and Rolling Role work allow them to test their capacities as maturing human beings, and certainly to demonstrate their interests and abilities. A commissions school would make a seamless link between the two worlds of work and active participation in learning together.

So long as teachers come to school to teach pupils and pupils come "to be taught" the energies of both are deflected and neglected. Paradoxically if teachers can find a way of not *needing pupils*, to be taught, they will become doers and creators exploiting opportunities for their knowledge and skills to be needed and welcomed. Then Shaw's insulting statement which has always offended me (and I fear has become one of the myths absorbed by our culture) that "those who can, do, and those who can't, teach" will at last go to the obscurity it deserves.

The perfect model I keep before me of a commission engaging students and staff, and serving the world community is the one in the science department of the school which tracked and identified the first Sputnik in space before even N.A.S.A. knew. Let that encourage us.

'The story is known as "The Green Children" and is authenticated in two C 12 manuscripts (so it was a "gift" to the history teacher) chronicled by Ralph of Coggeshall and William of Newbridge. Folk Tales & Fables of the World Barbara Hayes and Robert Ingpen. Published Dragon's World Ltd. G.B. 1987 " Quoting from his book The Web of Life - a New Synthesis of Mind and Matter Harper Collins 1996 and an article 'Creativity in communities' Resurgence No 186 Jan-Feb 1998 "' The Oxford Word Finder Readers Digest Oxford Edited Sam Tulloch 1993