



Dramatic Inquiry: Real learning in Imagined Worlds

National Literacy Conference 1st October 2019

Viv Aitken

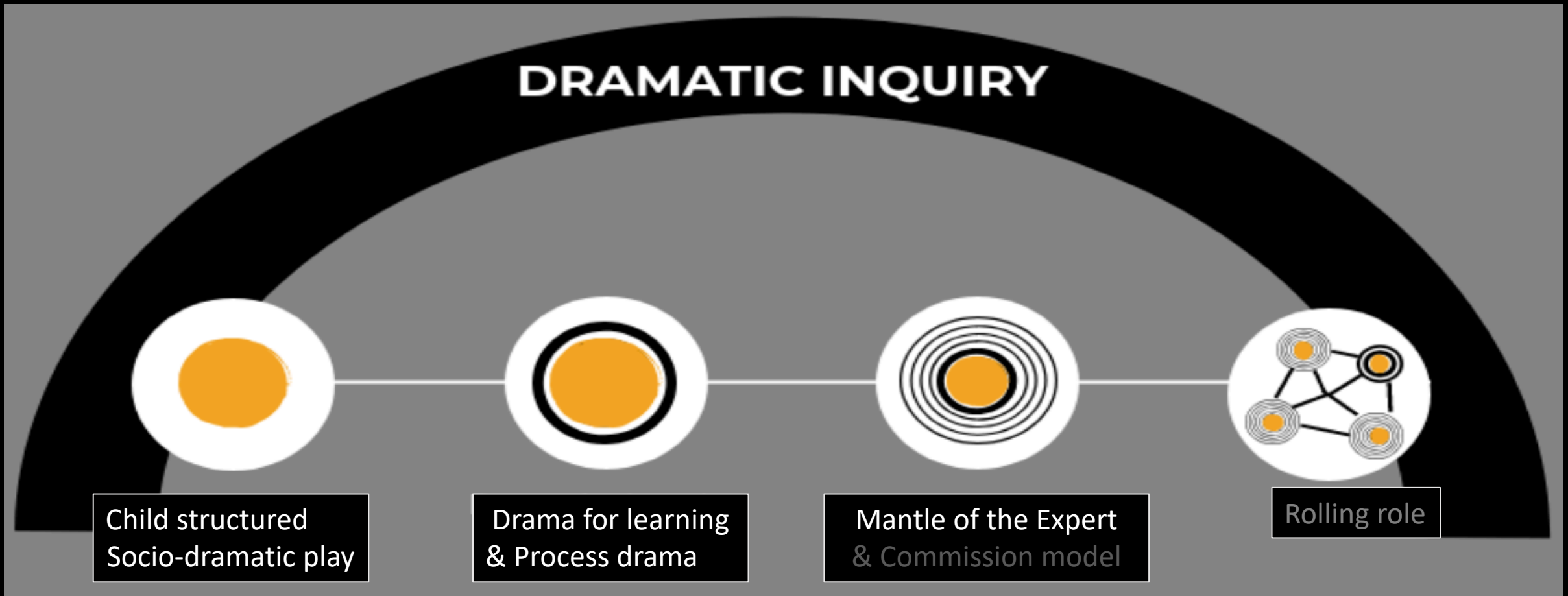
Imagination – Identifying with others

(Our) gift ... of just putting ourselves instantly into somebody else's shoes and having a sort of total picture of how it must feel to be feeling like that person right now. We have as yet not done very much about harnessing this to the education of our children but everybody uses this.

Imagine a whole teaching approach based on the ability to identify with others...
This is dramatic inquiry...



Dorothy Heathcote
1926-2011



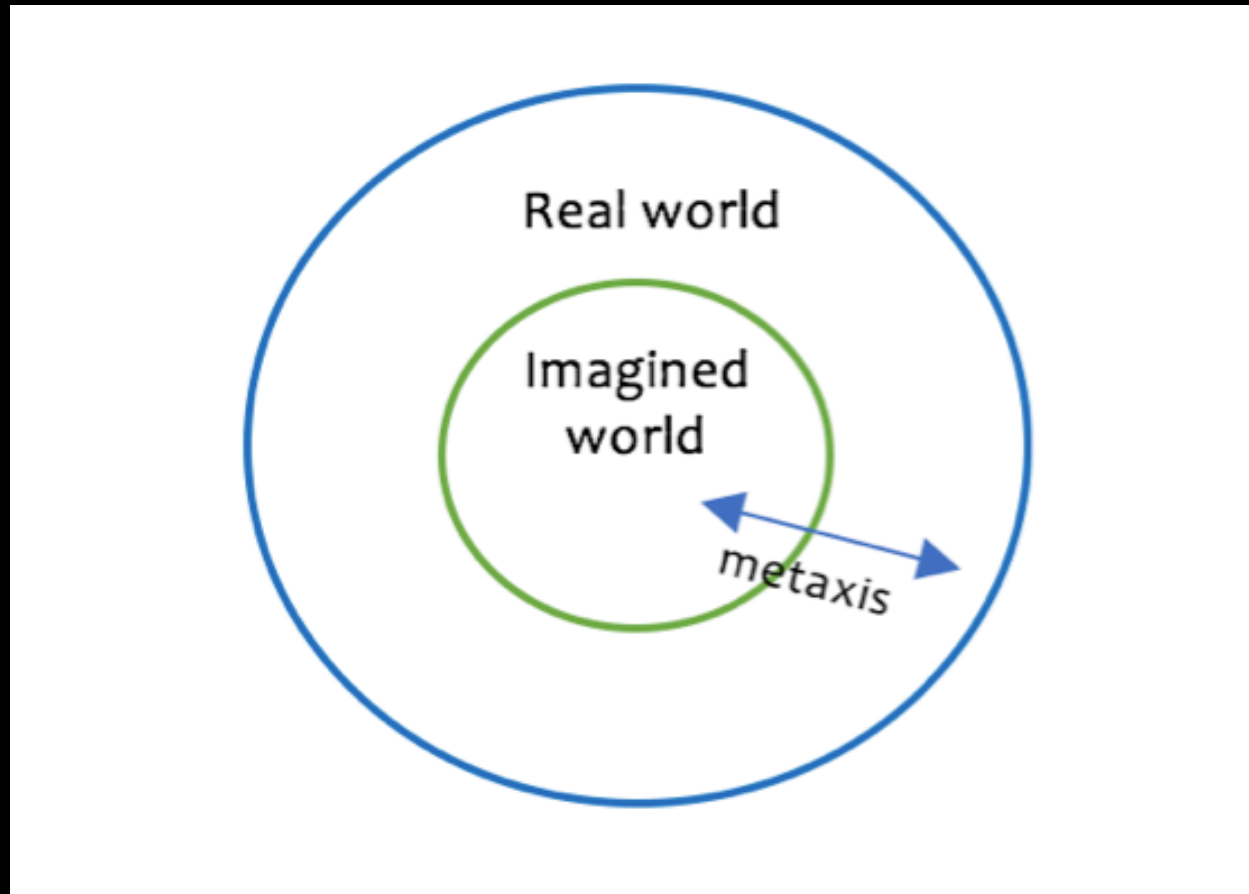
Dramatic inquiry is an umbrella term for a range of different approaches drawn from Heathcote's practice
First let's examine the term 'dramatic inquiry'.

Inquiry is familiar to most in NZ - it relates to forming questions, grappling with complexity, solving problems etc
The other word - 'dramatic' – is, for some, more problematic ...

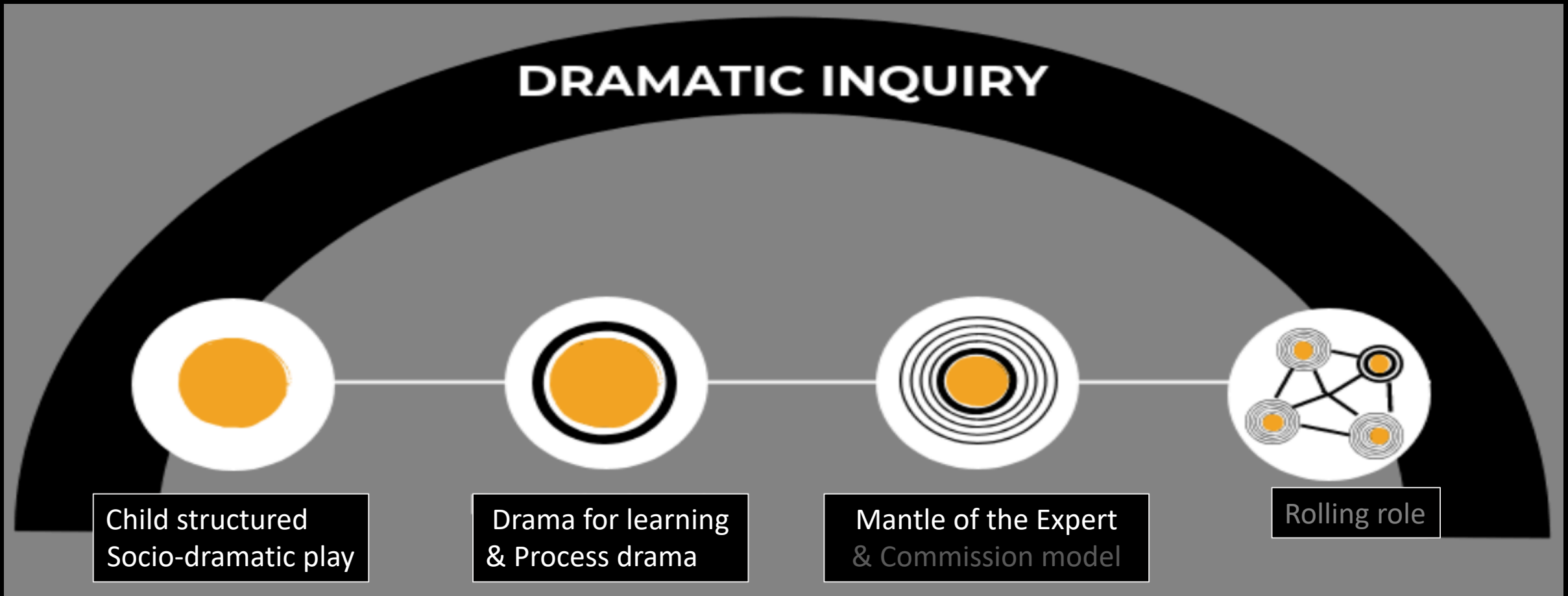


Results of a google image search for classroom drama show lots of comic / tragic masks, some people on stage, A person experiencing some kind of trauma and a classroom full of people in costumes. Even if we set aside what Jonas Barish calls our 'anti-theatrical prejudice' the word drama covers a huge range of activities. Drama in school ranges from productions to improvisation, reading and writing scripts to speeches, movement activities and games. NONE of these is the focus of dramatic inquiry.

Duality in classroom drama



Dramatic inquiry is all about the opening up of imagined worlds within the real world. Picture a small child sitting in a cardboard box in the kitchen of their home. The child says “Mummy I’m a firefighter... you be the cat”. This child is exhibiting metaxis – an awareness of both real and imagined worlds. This duality of real and imagined worlds provides a powerful – and safe – place to learn. This is the basis of dramatic inquiry: real learning in imagined worlds.



The dramatic inquiry framework used in NZ schools begins with dramatic play as described in the last slide. As the child moves through the school they also experience drama for learning, process drama, Mantle of the Expert (and sometimes the commission model and rolling role too). Each approach requires additional layers of structure, but with metaxis and play at the heart. For full descriptions and examples, click the link on the right https://drive.google.com/file/d/1leRV70QkbKihnlu27FM2-QQ7IZE_R5UT/view?usp=sharing

Benefits for literacy

*"It's real in all the ways that matter"
- Year 6 student*



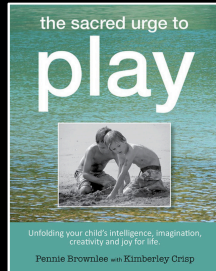
- Engagement
- Purpose
- Authenticity
- Meaningful contexts
- Multiple perspectives
- Explorations of new power & language registers

Dramatic inquiry is not so much a bridge to literacy as a 'portal' to imagined worlds in which literacy can be encountered in authentic, purposeful, authentic, meaningful ways and new perspectives and power relationships can be explored.

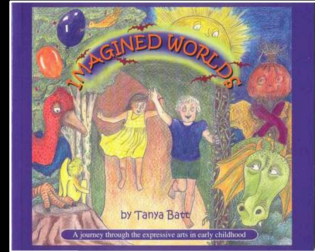
Recent New Zealand research

<p>TLRI - Connecting Curriculum Connecting Learning Waikato / Bay of Plenty 2010-12</p> <p>http://www.tlri.org.nz/sites/default/files/projects/9281_summaryreport.pdf</p>	<p>TLIF - Dramatic Inquiry and writing in a culturally responsive frame Northland 2016-7</p> <p>https://1drv.ms/p/s!ApyDz8naiP7igVJ9IOS603Co_Xi1</p>	<p>Drama NZ / NOE - Building teacher capability in drama Wellington & Hawkes Bay 2019</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Success of drama and vis art as integration tools</i> • <i>Repositioning encouraged engagement, initiative and confidence with tasks</i> • <i>Importance of tensions and challenges for sustained integration, increased engagement and raised quality of learning</i> • <i>Learning in Key Competencies, exploration of values</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35+ benefits for writing <i>Perspective taking, engagement, motivation, increased purpose, improved questioning</i> • 50+ other learning benefits <i>Real world connections, retention & recall, willingness to take risks, improved social skills</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teachers increased skills & appreciation of process drama strategies particularly writing in role. By end of project all teachers planned to use drama regularly in their literacy programmes</i> • <i>All reported benefits for students: engagement, participation, motivation and confidence, improved ideas, collaboration, ownership, creativity, imagination</i> • <i>Identified need for resources, professional support and time – and being prepared to give it a go!</i>

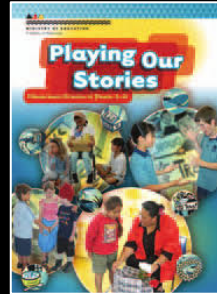
Resources



<https://www.childspace.co.nz/catalog/Curriculum-41/The-sacred-urge-to-play-145.html>



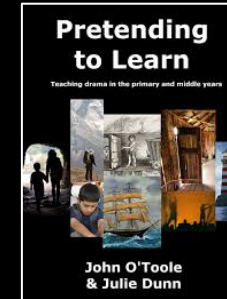
<http://imagined-worlds.net/>



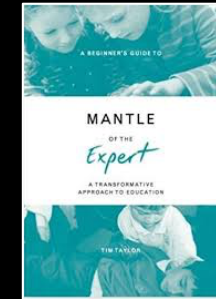
<https://www.worldcat.org/title/playing-our-stories-classroom-drama-in-years-1-6/oclc/156672791>



<https://www.amazon.com/Into-Story-Language-Action-Through/dp/0325006288>



<https://www.amazon.com/Pretending-to-Learn-Teaching-primary-middle-ebook/dp/B00TTFZ19W>



<https://www.mantleoftheexpert.com/buy-the-book/>



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