



Midland Actors Theatre and Manchester Metropolitan University present



# DOROTHY HEATHCOTE NOW

## INTERNATIONAL DRAMA CONFERENCE 2025

**6-9 NOVEMBER at Brooks Building, Manchester Metropolitan University M15 6GX**

One of the principles behind the *Dorothy Heathcote Now* conferences, is that we come together to engage in active research – and so each year, there is a topic or theme at the centre of the event. This year, we have chosen:

**“WHAT SORT OF SCHOOLS DO WE WANT? WHAT SORT OF SOCIETY DO WE WANT?”**

In 1983, Dorothy stated that, as educators, we should be asking what sort of schools we want – but also, what sort of society we want. Her words are incredibly timely today: they challenge us to consider questions of *purpose*; *curriculum*; *access*; and *stewardship*.

Join us, as we explore these questions together, through practical workshops, talks, performances, demonstration classes, online panels, and more!

**We are delighted that this year’s conference will be held at MMU – home of the Dorothy Heathcote Archive. There will be opportunities to view materials from the Archive**

## HOW IT WILL WORK

### THURSDAY 6 NOVEMBER: ONLINE DAY (10am–5pm)

On 6 November, there will be an online day, with an international line-up of presenters - brought to you live from the Dorothy Heathcote Archive in MMU!

### FRIDAY 7 NOVEMBER: CREATIVE PRACTICES DAY (9am–4.15pm)

Delegates will work for a day with leading practitioners, and also observe or participate in a drama session in a local school. This is a great opportunity to see drama work in practice.

### CONFERENCE WEEKEND: 8–9 NOVEMBER

There will be a two-day conference weekend, with practical drama workshops and panel discussions, and an international line-up of presenters.

Saturday 8 November: 9am – 7.30pm / Sunday 9 November: 9.30am – 4.00pm

## HOW TO BOOK

There are several booking options. You can book for all four days; or you can book separately for the online day, the 'Creative Practices' day, or the Conference Weekend.

For more details, go to: <https://heathcotenow2025.eventbrite.co.uk>

## THE SCHEDULE IN DETAIL

Draft prepared 25.9.25. Programme may be subject to change. All times are UK times

### THURSDAY 6 NOVEMBER: ONLINE DAY (10am – 5.00pm)

The online day will be broadcast live from the Dorothy Heathcote Archive in MMU. There is a line-up of international speakers. This is the schedule:

10am – 11.15am	<b>PERFORMING HERITAGE - ROLE WORK IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS:</b> Tony Jackson and David Allen
11.15pm – 12.15pm	<b>DRAMA AROUND THE WORLD:</b> Zeki Ozen and Onyekachukwu Iwuchukwu
12.30pm – 1.30pm	<b>USING MANTLE OF THE EXPERT IN LANGUAGE LEARNING:</b> Roberta Luchini, Brian Edmiston and Iona Towler Evans
2.30pm – 3.30pm	<b>TEACHING POLITICAL AWARENESS THROUGH DRAMA - THE BLAKELAW PROJECT:</b> Stig A. Eriksson
4pm – 5pm	<b>TEACHING SHAKESPEARE:</b> Cecily O'Neill and Rebecca Patterson, and students from MMU

## FRIDAY 7 NOVEMBER: CREATIVE PRACTICES DAY (9am – 4.15pm)

This is a great opportunity to learn about teaching through drama methods such as Mantle of the Expert, and see them used in practice in schools. Delegates will work for a day with leading practitioners, and also observe or take part in drama sessions in a local school. The day runs from 9.00am to 4.15pm. There are two options:

### OPTION 1. KS1 and KS2: MANTLE OF THE EXPERT

**Venue:** Christ the King RC Primary School, Culcheth Lane, Newton Heath, Manchester M40 1LU

**Trainers:** Tim Taylor & Richard Kieran

Tim is the author of *Beginner's Guide to Mantle of the Expert*. Richard is the Headteacher at Woodrow First School, which is a Mantle of the Expert Training School. We are delighted to be working with Christ the King Primary School, which has a 'Vow to Wow' curriculum; cross-curricular topics are planned using 'Mantle of the Expert,' to promote excitement and pleasure in learning.

### OPTION 2. KEY STAGE 3: DRAMA IN HISTORY TEACHING

**Venue:** Brooks Building, MMU, 53 Bonsall St, Hulme, Manchester M15 6GX (a.m.) & Trinity High School, Higher Cambridge St, Manchester M15 6HP (p.m.)

The day will be led by David Allen & Roberta Luchini, from the Mantle Network. The curriculum focus is the Industrial Revolution. The session in Trinity High School will focus on strategies such as teacher-in-role, and the use of drama conventions.

## CREATIVE PRACTICES DAY: SCHEDULE

8.30am – 9.00am	Registration
9am – 12 noon	<b>WORKSHOP GROUPS</b> (Delegates choose ONE workshop group for the whole day.)  <b>GROUP A (KS1 &amp; 2): MANTLE OF THE EXPERT</b> with Tim Taylor. <i>Venue: Christ the King RC Primary School, Manchester M40 1LU</i>  <b>GROUP B (KS3): DRAMA ACROSS THE CURRICULUM</b> with David Allen & Roberta Luchini <i>Venue: Brooks Building, MMU (a.m.) &amp; Trinity High School, Manchester (p.m.)</i>
12 noon – 1pm	Lunch
1pm – 3.00pm	<b>WORKSHOP GROUPS CONTINUED</b>
3.00pm – 3.15	Break
3.15 – 4.15pm	<b>REVIEW OF TEACHING SESSIONS</b>

## CONFERENCE WEEKEND: 8–9 NOVEMBER

There will be a two-day conference weekend, with practical drama workshops and panel discussions.

### DAY ONE: SATURDAY 8TH NOVEMBER

8.30am – 9.00am	Registration
9am – 10am	<b>PANEL DISCUSSION</b> BRIAN EDMISTON, CECILY O'NEILL, REBECCA PATTERSON, DAVID ALLEN, STIG A. ERIKSSON & JOHN RAINER
10.15am – 12.15pm	<b>EXPLORATORY WORKING GROUPS: SESSION ONE*</b> There will be three groups. Delegates choose ONE Working Group for the whole weekend). A: <b>"EXPLORING C-12"</b> - STIG A. ERIKSSON B. <b>"TEACHING AS STORYMAKING"</b> - TIM TAYLOR, RICHARD KIERAN & LISA HINTON C. <b>"TEACHING INSPIRED BY A SESSION OF DOROTHY HEATHCOTE'S TEACHING"</b> - BRIAN EDMISTON & IONA TOWLER EVANS
12.15 – 1.15pm	Lunch
1.15pm – 2.15pm	<b>PRESENTATIONS: ONE</b> <b>THE DOROTHY HEATHCOTE ARCHIVE</b> - REBECCA PATTERSON, JOHN RAINER, STIG A. ERIKSSON & DAVID ALLEN
2.15pm – 3.15pm	<b>PRESENTATIONS: TWO</b> A choice of three sessions: A: <b>"THE CURRICULUM OF LIFE": CREATIVE AGING &amp; MANTLE OF THE EXPERT</b> - BOB SELDERSLAGHS B. <b>THE "ECHO OF HUMANITY" PROJECT</b> - REBECCA PATTERSON, RAJA FARAH, MAGGIE HULSON & HARRY DIXON C. <b>UNMASKING BIAS: PROCESS DRAMA AND THE POLITICS OF PRIVILEGE</b> - NEEL SENGUPTA, SAUMYA JAKHMOLA, NAVEEN SHARMA, DHWANI VIJ & DEEPMALA TIWARI
3.15pm - 3.30pm	Break
3.30pm – 5.30pm	<b>PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS: ONE **</b> A choice of three sessions: A. <b>"PERFECT PARTNERS"</b> - CECILY O'NEILL B. <b>"FRAMING LIVE DRAMA AS FILM"</b> - THEO BRYER AND REBECCA WILSON: C. <b>"DOROTHY HEATHCOTE: GOOD EDUCATION IN AN AGE OF MEASUREMENT?"</b> - JOHN RAINER:
5.30pm	<b>RECEPTION</b>

**\* ABOUT THE EXPLORATORY WORKING GROUPS:** There will be three working groups. You will join a group, and stay with the same group throughout. Groups will meet together for two sessions over the two days. You will be sent an Options form to select which workshops you would like to attend.

**\*\* ABOUT THE PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS:** The workshops are designed to be self-contained. The first workshop session will take place on Saturday (3.30-5.30) and the second on Sunday (1.30-3.30). You will be sent an Options form to select which workshops you would like to attend.

## DAY TWO: SUNDAY 9TH NOVEMBER

9.00am – 9.30am	Coffee
9.30 – 11.30am	<b>EXPLORATORY WORKING GROUPS: SESSION TWO</b> Groups as for Day One. See above
11.30am – 12.30pm	<b>PRESENTATIONS: THREE</b> Choice of two sessions: <b>A. “THE MAKING OF THE DRAMA TEACHER”</b> - VAISHALI CHAKRAVARTY & VISHAKHA CHAKRAVARTY <b>B. “THEATRE IN MATHS”</b> - SILJE BIRGITTE FOLKEDAL & METTE BØE LYNGSTAD
12.30pm – 1.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm – 3.30pm	<b>PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS: TWO</b> <b>A. “CRIME SCENES: ‘CALL THE FIRST WITNESS!’”</b> – CECILY O’NEILL <b>B. THEATRE-IN-EDUCATION PRESENTATION</b> DAVID ALLEN, ROBERTA LUCHINI, AND STUDENTS FROM MMU <b>C. “THE ARCHIVE SPEAKS”</b> - REBECCA PATTERSON & ALISON RAMSAY
3.30pm – 4.00pm	<b>PLENARY</b>

## CONFERENCE WEEKEND: PROGRAMME IN DETAIL

### DAY ONE: SATURDAY 8TH NOVEMBER

#### 9AM–10AM: PANEL DISCUSSION

BRIAN EDMISTON, CECILY O’NEILL, REBECCA PATTERSON, DAVID ALLEN, STIG A. ERIKSSON & JOHN RAINER

#### 10.15pm – 12.15pm: EXPLORATORY WORKING GROUPS: SESSION ONE

There will be three working groups. You will choose a group to join, and stay with the same group throughout. Groups will meet together for two sessions over the two days. You will be sent an the Options form to select your choice of the working group you would like to attend.

##### WORKING GROUP A: “EXPLORING C-12” - STIG A. ERIKSSON

*C-12 is an imaginary place with a history, a future, and contemporary challenges. In this explorative working group, we will draw on strategies inspired by Dorothy Heathcote’s legacy, including teacher-in-role, text work and drama conventions. In two practical sessions, participants will explore subject matter related to the conference themes, to question, analyse, and create ideas for working towards a better society around us.*

##### WORKING GROUP B: “TEACHING AS STORYMAKING: CREATING ISLAND WORLDS FOR MEANINGFUL LEARNING” - TIM TAYLOR, RICHARD KIERAN & LISA HINTON

*This practical workshop introduces teaching as storymaking through the creation of an island context. Participants will explore how to bring curriculum learning alive in ways that give children genuine voice and agency, making learning meaningful, versatile, and connected to wider*

concerns of responsibility and care. The sessions will include opportunities to look at classroom practice from Woodrow First School, where an island context has been used across the curriculum, with time to examine planning materials and students' work. Teachers will leave with ideas they can adapt and use in their own settings.

**WORKING GROUP C: "TEACHING INSPIRED BY A SESSION OF DOROTHY HEATHCOTE'S TEACHING" - BRIAN EDMISTON & IONA TOWLER EVANS**

*Across two sessions, Brian and Iona will introduce and analyse their teaching using Mantle of the Expert in July 2025 over a day with students in Year 7 at a school in Stourbridge in the West Midlands. The class included students identified as having Education Health and Care needs. We were asked to focus on aspects of the English curriculum with cross curricular links to history, humanities, and PSHE. We were inspired by a Rolling Role project about a boiler explosion in a brewery in the Victorian era, which Iona observed Dorothy Heathcote teaching in 1994, with Year 6 students at a school in Birmingham. In our workshop we will share Heathcote's original materials, and compare them with the materials that we created and used. We will explore aspects of our humanizing teaching, focusing on how we used role conventions to engage initially reserved students, and protect them into inquiry into the implications of emotionally challenging events in a fictionalized story world.*

**1.15 – 2.15pm: PRESENTATIONS ONE: THE DOROTHY HEATHCOTE ARCHIVE  
- REBECCA PATTERSON, JOHN RAINER, STIG A. ERIKSSON & DAVID ALLEN**

**2.15 – 3.15pm: PRESENTATIONS TWO**

A choice of three sessions:

**A: "THE CURRICULUM OF LIFE" - CREATIVE AGING & MANTLE OF THE EXPERT  
- BOB SELDERSLAGHS**

*Bob introduced Mantle of the Expert as a creative ageing practice during an ongoing artist-in-residency in a residential care home for elderly people in Antwerp (Belgium). During weekly sessions with residents with and without (early stage) dementia, he collectively creates stories and explores imaginary worlds that stimulate the imagination, strengthen social bonds and promote emotional expression. During this session, he will share some of his experiences and reflections on the practice.*

**B. THE "ECHO OF HUMANITY" PROJECT**

**- REBECCA PATTERSON, RAJA FARAH, MAGGIE HULSON & HARRY DIXON**

*At the Dorothy Heathcote Now Conference last year, an invitation was extended to take part in a project aiming at fostering international teacher-to-teacher collaboration between Palestinian and British educators. What quickly emerged was a three-way project which came to be known as The Echo of Humanity. This presentation will depict the progress and obstacles encountered and offer reflections on the particular process we evolved, offering it as a model for discussion.*

**C. UNMASKING BIAS: PROCESS DRAMA AND THE POLITICS OF PRIVILEGE**

**- NEEL SENGUPTA, SAUMYA JAKHMOLA, NAVEEN SHARMA, DHWANI VIJ & DEEPMALA TIWARI**

*This workshop presents work from Shiv Nadar School in India, where Process Drama has been used with Grades 4–8 in classrooms to address caste, religion, Islamophobia, and everyday prejudice. Drama provides a safe yet provocative frame for young learners to step into perspectives beyond their own, surfacing questions of bias often considered "too complex" until later years. By drawing on classroom practice, the session will present how Process Drama can nurture empathy, critical reflection, and early awareness of discrimination in spaces where privilege tends to obscure it.*

### **3.30pm-5.30pm: PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS (1)**

*These workshops are designed to be self-contained. You will be sent an Options form to select which workshop you would like to attend.*

#### **WORKSHOP A: "PERFECT PARTNERS?" - CECILY O'NEILL**

*It has been established that marriage is the basis of civilisation, but can we make the right choice?*

#### **WORKSHOP B: "FRAMING LIVE DRAMA AS FILM" - THEO BRYER AND REBECCA WILSON**

*Theo and Rebecca have been exploring crossovers between drama and media production for over fifteen years in different contexts (most recently in Kathmandu). This workshop involves using drama and film to explore a Gothic text. Inspired by Heathcote's interest in the affordances of the still and moving image, we will examine what happens when live drama becomes recorded drama; how representations of bodies, narrative and locations can be shaped through shooting and editing on iPads; and what potential for "critical spectatorship" this process of meaning-making offers. No filming or editing experience necessary!*

#### **WORKSHOP C: "DOROTHY HEATHCOTE: GOOD EDUCATION IN AN AGE OF MEASUREMENT?" – JOHN RAINER**

*In Gert Biesta's seminal 2009 paper, "Good Education in an Age of Measurement," he critiques the trend towards evaluating schools and teachers in terms of their "effectiveness," posing the question, "effective for what, and for whom?", and interrogating assumptions about the purpose of education. From the perspective of 2025, DH's work seems to exist only on the margins of the current UK educational landscape, and her ideas do not seem to impact the mainstream of educational practice - but her work, too, raises questions about the way that educationalists might help forge the future, and the qualities that young people might need to navigate it. How far can her pedagogy be adapted to secondary schools operating in today's "age of measurement"? Can this be done whilst maintaining the integrity and value of her work? In this workshop we will explore these ideas through practice informed by Heathcote, and also in work drawn from the teaching of the late Canadian educator David Booth.*

## **CONFERENCE DAY TWO: SUNDAY 9TH NOVEMBER**

### **9.30 – 11.30: EXPLORATORY WORKING GROUPS continued**

Groups and spaces as on Day One. Please continue with the same group as before.

**A. "EXPLORING C-12" - STIG A. ERIKSSON**

**B. "TEACHING AS STORYMAKING: CREATING ISLAND WORLDS FOR MEANINGFUL LEARNING" - TIM TAYLOR, RICHARD KIERAN & LISA HINTON**

**C. "TEACHING INSPIRED BY A SESSION OF DOROTHY HEATHCOTE'S TEACHING" - BRIAN EDMISTON & IONA TOWLER EVANS**

### **11.30 – 12.30 - PRESENTATIONS THREE**

Choice of two sessions:

#### **A. “THE MAKING OF THE DRAMA TEACHER” - VAISHALI CHAKRAVARTY & VISHAKHA CHAKRAVARTY**

*Just like any artist, a drama teacher takes time to realize her true potential. But in this fast-paced world, there is very little room for her to blossom, and the hyper-delivery system is always ready with a penalty scanner. How, then, can she navigate her way through, claim her independent space, and retain the artistic quality and human intelligence in her work?*

#### **B. “THEATRE IN MATHS: EXPLORING TENSIONS IN INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK WITH PROCESS DRAMA” - SILJE BIRGITTE FOLKEDAL & METTE BØE LYGSTAD**

*Over several years, we have been a part of international Erasmus Plus project: Theatre in mathematic (TIM). One of the main challenges we have encountered is to balance drama and mathematics teaching goals. In this workshop, we will demonstrate excerpts from our process drama “The Outlaws,” and together explore how a closer connection to Dorothy Heathcote's teachings could strengthen the dramatic aspects.*

### **1.30 – 3.30: PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS 2**

*These workshops are designed to be self-contained. You will be sent an Options form to select which workshop you would like to attend.*

#### **WORKSHOP A: CRIME SCENES - 'CALL THE FIRST WITNESS!' - CECILY O'NEILL**

*Blood is compulsory!*

#### **WORKSHOP B: THEATRE-IN-EDUCATION PRESENTATION - DAVID ALLEN, ROBERTA LUCHINI, AND STUDENTS FROM MMU**

*The Mantle Network has been awarded a grant by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to research Dorothy Heathcote's work in history and heritage. In this workshop, we will present an interactive theatre-in-education project, which is inspired by a project which Dorothy devised for Clarke Hall, Wakefield. The session will incorporate materials from the DH Archive.*

#### **WORKSHOP C: “THE ARCHIVE SPEAKS - TOUCHING THE PAST, SHAPING THE FUTURE OF DRAMA AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN 2025” - REBECCA PATTERSON & ALISON RAMSAY**

*This workshop invites participants to explore objects from the Dorothy Heathcote Archive as affective provocations, where material and ideas come together to provoke conversations on purpose, curriculum, access, and stewardship in the context of teacher education for Drama.*

3.30pm – 4.00pm

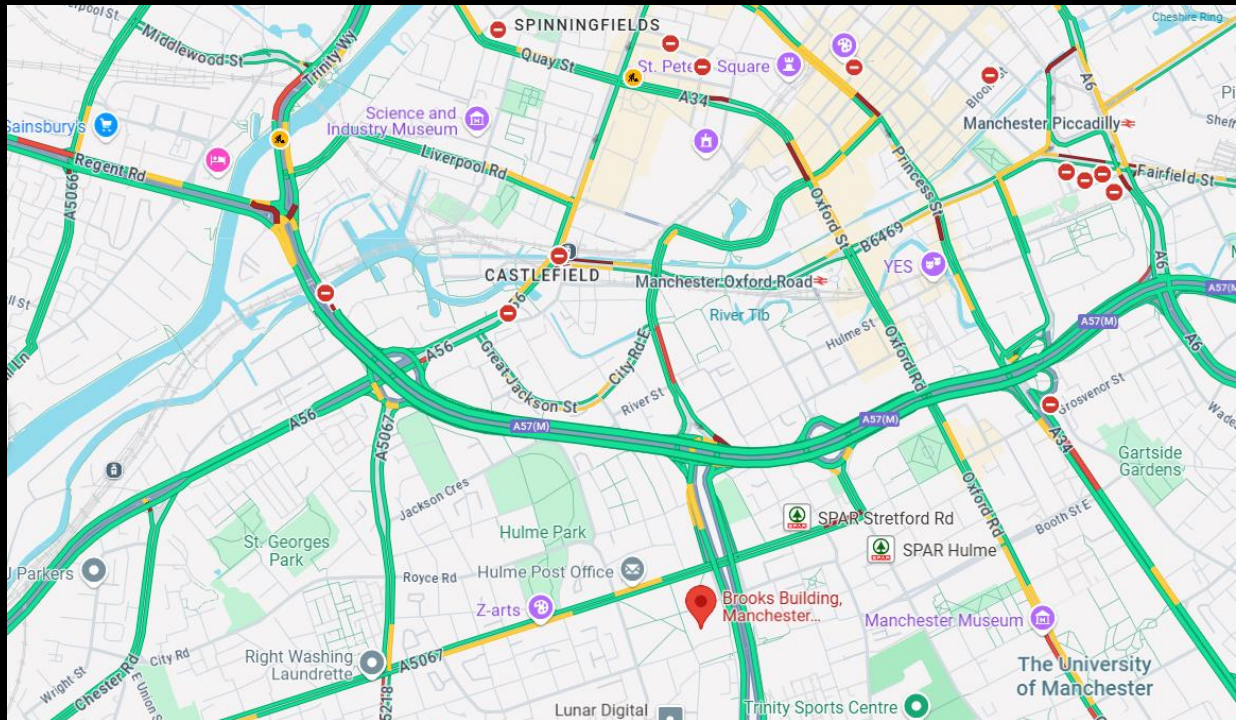
**PLENARY**



## ABOUT THE VENUE

Brooks Building, Manchester Metropolitan University M15 6GX

The closest railway station is Manchester Oxford Road, 0.9 miles away. Manchester Piccadilly is 1.5 miles away and Manchester Victoria is 2.5 miles away. Brooks is also 8 miles away from Manchester Airport. Trains run from the airport to Piccadilly Station.



### BUSES

Bus From Piccadilly Gardens, a 5 minute walk from Piccadilly Station. The number 86 bus (Bus Stop M) to Chorlton goes to the Birley site. Frequency, every 10 minutes. From September – June, the 141 runs exclusively to the Birley site (for Brooks Building) every 10 minutes during the day. Look out for the big building with the strange exterior – it's the Brooks Building.



## TAXIS

Taxis can be pre-booked through Radio Cars, who also have wheelchair accessible taxis. Their contact number is 0161 236 8033. There are taxi ranks outside each railway station and the nearest drop off point at Brooks is on Bonsall Street off Stretford Road. Sat Nav postcode: M15 6GX

## CAR PARKING

There is a surface level carpark directly outside the Brooks building with reserved areas for those with access needs. All disabled bays around Brooks are on one level smooth surface on the ground floor.

## LIFTS

All lifts are wheelchair accessible and the controls are at a usable height. There are four sets of lifts located in each of the Atrium, which means meeting rooms and spaces on higher floors are easy to reach. There is also audio assistance in each lift.

*PLEASE CONTACT US FOR A DETAILED ACCESS GUIDE TO THE VENUE*

## ACCOMMODATION

*Nearby hotels (£40-£120 per room per night) include*

- PREMIER INN PRINCESS STREET, 2 Brook St, Manchester M1 7BJ
- HOTEL IBIS MANCHESTER CENTRE, Charles St, Princess St, Manchester M1 7DG
- HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS MANCHESTER, 2-4 Oxford Rd, Manchester M1 5QA
- HYATT REGENCY MANCHESTER, 55 Booth St W, Manchester M15 6PQ
- MALDRON HOTEL, 60 Charles St, Manchester M1 7DF

*Nearby hostels (£40 - £50 per night) include*

- YHA MANCHESTER HOSTEL, Potato Wharf, Manchester M3 4NB



## MIDLAND ACTORS THEATRE

25 Merrishaw Road, Birmingham B31 3SL

Tel.: + 44 7946 006511 [david@mantlenetwork.com](mailto:david@mantlenetwork.com)

[www.mantlenetwork.com](http://www.mantlenetwork.com) / [www.midlandactorstheatre.com](http://www.midlandactorstheatre.com)