Chapter 1
Introduction

“One who has imagination without learning has wings but no feet”
(Joubert, 2003, p.1).

1.1 Researcher's personal journey

From a child who lived in an imaginary world, who dreamt of ideas beyond her
juvenescence world, who devised and created her own performances, to a young woman
who immersed herself in the performing and creative arts, to a secondary education drama
teacher, the imagination, and how it facilitates creativity in performance, has always fired
my curiosity. When I became a drama teacher, albeit one who came late to the teaching
profession, I thought that secondary school students would also feel this same imaginative
curiosity, and yes they did, but I learnt that in order to release their imaginings they needed
a pedagogical process that provided dramatic structure and freedom to explore their ideas.

My initial experiences of facilitating young secondary drama students in devising their own
plays were in a school that was struggling to maintain discipline among students with a
variety of different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The school staff worked
tirelessly and with great dedication to enable their students to experience the joy of
learning. Within this environment I took my first tentative steps to helping groups of young
students build their own drama plays. The students came with limited skills or knowledge
of how to build plays, but they did have an enormous desire to tell their own group’s
stories. The process of students devising their own plays in the drama class was
challenging; the students had no previous drama education or theatre discipline, nor did
they consciously understand why a drama class should have a structure and discipline, yet
subconsciously they understand that to achieve their ideas the group had to be working
towards a common dramatic purpose. The students worked spasmodically, they laughed,
they played, they fought each other, and sometimes they didn’t turn up to class. They had
no concept of rehearsals, and yet when they eventually performed their own original work for their friends and families they were ecstatic, and I was exhausted. Reflecting on this early experience, I questioned why this group devised work was such a powerful force in these young peoples’ lives; I felt that it had something to do with the links between imagining and creating in the drama aesthetic. From these tentative early experiences my drama education journey began.

As my years of secondary drama teaching continued I worked in collegial situations with other drama teachers and with students who were as passionate about drama education as I was. Through this emerged an observation that, even though there are many aspects of drama education, the one area that seemed to excite students most was the creation of their own plays; this is known in New South Wales (Australia) secondary education as playbuilding. Playbuilding, as a drama form, elicits a myriad of ideas within a group; these diverse responses tend to excite the students’ imaginations. Furthermore, it appears that the personal stories, history and culture of individual students consistently influence the drama style and narratives, merging with other group members’ personal experiences, resulting in a richly creative drama process and performance. I felt that this experiential and experimental learning reached beyond everyday teaching pedagogy.

Maxine Greene (1995) argues that it is the role of the teacher to release the imagination in students; she describes the teacher’s role as one “to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected” (p.28). Roslyn Arnold (1998) argues that truly inspirational teachers need to be empathically attuned to their own and their student’s thinking and feeling states, and that this enables the students to tap into their imaginations. Reflecting on the ideas of Maxine Greene and Roslyn Arnold before and during this research, I continually examined my own drama teaching praxis, asking such teaching questions as:

- What ingredients make up a drama teacher who can stimulate a learning environment where the affective, cognitive and physical domains are opened up to students?
- How can a drama teacher facilitate a pedagogical journey that is exciting, vibrant, perceptive and intuitive?
- How can a drama teacher stimulate imagining and creating in playbuilding?
These early teaching questions helped me to identify the key research questions outlined in section 1.6 of this chapter.

As these early teaching questions merged into my classroom praxis in the 1990s, the New South Wales junior Years 7-10 Drama Syllabus cohort was growing in student numbers (Board of Studies, School Certificate Drama Statistics, 2003b). The senior school drama syllabus changed from a school based drama course with internal group performance assessment, to an externally examined drama course where group performance was valued as a significant part. In 1991 this was a major landmark in New South Wales drama education. It signaled to drama teachers the acceptance that students learn in a multiplicity of ways in a school environment, and that imaginative experiences, enactment, and embodiment through group performance are valid ways of engaging students in drama learning. The senior drama syllabus states that, in group devised performance, students learn “to collaborate with a group to devise and perform in a piece of original theatre ... using a variety of playbuilding techniques and approaches” (Board of Studies, 1999b, p.25). Therefore, with the inclusion of playbuilding as a group learning process, the New South Wales Board of Studies, which are responsible for curriculum development and the assessment and examination of students in the state of New South Wales, acknowledged the importance of groups of students collaborating, devising and performing in a piece of original theatre as a valid means of assessing and examining their learning.

Researchers, such as Lucy Milne in her Masters thesis on Group devised performance (1998) have investigated the practical outcomes of this New South Wales Higher School Certificate Group Performance, in particular the rehearsal process, and what Milne calls “devising theatre by committee” (p.7). She concluded that playbuilding practices enable students to gain “knowledge of social, historical and political frameworks previously unknown to them” (p.162), and that a “group that works well together tends to produce more cohesive work of a higher standard than a group which is plagued by infighting and members who are reluctant to cooperate or contribute to the ‘team’” (p.178).

On my own journey into playbuilding I have developed my ability to facilitate secondary drama students to weave together their individual and group ideas about issues of
importance to them, so that their team work is pooled, shaped, tested and evaluated in the playbuilding form, and so that they find ways to work together in a collaborative and committed manner that fires the group’s inquisitiveness. This experience has been challenging and exciting for me, and there have been many groups of students who have devised their own plays that for an ephemeral moment come to life as a testament to their collective, personal and creative journeys. This introductory chapter reveals the primary influences on my drama education praxis, and why my imagination and curiosity have led me to investigate the drama education form of playbuilding. Through the ideas expressed in this thesis I am now in a position to share my drama pedagogical praxis with a wider audience.

1.2 Myself as a qualitative researcher

This research is presented primarily within a qualitative inquiry methodology, relying on the strategies of grounded theory in collecting and interpreting data. The research setting lasted for 15 months over two research sites; these were the students’ research site and the teachers’ research site. Students from my Year 9 (13/14 year olds) and Year 12 (17/18 year olds) drama classes are partners in the first research site, and to protect their identities, the participating students are referred to using pseudonyms. A pseudonym is also used for the school and this is ‘St. Sistine School’. The participating teachers are partners in the second research site, and they also have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

My student playbuilding research work was conducted in 2000 when I worked as a drama coordinator for a secondary independent girl’s school in Sydney, New South Wales. St. Sistine School was my own workplace; the research at St. Sistine’s School took place over a 10 month period. The two participating playbuilding classes were my drama classes, and I examined three of their playbuilding projects. As the word ‘my’ has so many connotations, not the least of which is possessiveness, I have chosen in the main to refer to the students as the ‘participating students’ and/or ‘junior and senior secondary students’, to provide a framework for describing their level of experience and their teaching and learning environment. Nevertheless, my previous knowledge of these two classes and of
their playbuilding capacities provided prior experiential knowing. Hence, with this in mind, I have investigated and explored the three playbuilding projects, and I have examined the similarities and differences in how these playbuilding projects were approached by each group.

During my teaching of and research into these three playbuilding projects I was consciously and subconsciously aware of introducing several substantive inputs that may have helped my students in their playbuilding projects. These included teaching within an empathic mode (Arnold, 1993, 1994, 1997), exploring the application of bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence (Gardner, 1990, 1993a & b), and understanding the importance of embodied learning (Boal, 1992). Furthermore, the students devised their playbuilding projects within the parameters of the rationale, aims, objectives, and outcomes of the New South Wales School Certificate and Senior Higher School Certificate Syllabus (Board of Studies 1985, 1999b), and the St. Sistine's Drama Department programs. The educational parameters were not changed to suit my research purpose.

The other research site followed my classroom research, covered a five month period, and involved telephone calls and personal interviews with four collegial drama teachers. This part of my research involved the exchange of ideas on the theory and practice of playbuilding with these drama teachers. Again, my own professional experiences impacted on this research site, as I had known and occasionally worked with all these teacher participants over a period of fifteen years.

Both sites provided different insights into the research subject of playbuilding. Each site had a different focus; one was student-centred at my workplace, and the second was teacher-centred and informed by other secondary school settings. Thus the two sites provided me with the ability to compare and contrast my own playbuilding teaching and learning strategies with the experiences of others. As a qualitative researcher, subjectivity was considered when teaching the participating students during the research period and when interviewing the teacher participants; subjectivity was also considered while analysing and interpreting the research data. Through being conscious of my simultaneous professional and personal endeavours I was able to gain an awareness of the intrinsic
subjectivity of my research, and of what I understood to be the meaning of the various participants’ data (Searle, 1992). Qualitative researchers, such as Glaser (1998) and Janesick (1998), state that to research in your own professional environment is a valid approach. Moreover, research undertaken in one’s own professional environment can continue to open up a professional collaborative encounter, and the validity of this encounter rests on self-awareness and informed judgments. The grounded theory process enabled me to investigate within my professional environment.

1.2.1 Grounded theory

My teaching experience of playbuilding is that it has a drama curriculum ‘life unto itself’, where teaching strategies are flexible and dynamic, and learning is developmental, exciting and creative. This teaching experience necessitated the selection of grounded theory as the most appropriate qualitative research method. Grounded theory is itself flexible and dynamic, allowing the participants’ voices to shine through the analysis. Grounded theory opened up the human nature of my research problem, which required an interpretive approach, and provided freedom for the data to speak for itself through the processes of coding, selecting, and sampling.

Grounded theory is the systematic generation of theory from data acquired by a rigorous research method. Grounded theory is not findings, but rather is an integrated set of conceptual hypotheses. … Grounded theory is multivariate. It happens sequentially, subsequently, simultaneously, serendipitously and scheduled. … A basic tenant (sic) of grounded theory, one that particularly grabs its devotees, is that ‘all is data’. This (is) a true research perspective on all incidents that come the researchers way (Glaser, 1998, pp.1-9).

Through grounded theory research, I have attempted to understand the meaning and nature of imagining and creating in playbuilding, and the importance of group kinaesthetics in the making and performing of a playbuilding project (Fairclough, 1995). Glaser (1998) states that “grounded theory is the discovery of what is there and emerges” (p.4). Further, Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.11) argue that “qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods” and, as
playbuilding is based on the human condition, qualitative methods particularly suited my subject matter.

Therefore, a qualitative research process relying on grounded theory was specifically chosen as it gave me the scope and freedom to access readily the playbuilding students without changing any of their curriculum learning. Grounded theory was an effective vehicle to demonstrate the interplay between the students as group learners and me as part of that group, as well as to examine the participating teachers’ praxis. Glaser (1998) argues that “grounded theory can be trusted temporally” (p.238). He discusses this as a temporal “nowism” (p.238), as at the end of the process when the thesis has been written and is to be read, “a colleague knows when reading a grounded theory study how its been done, how it was rigorously grounded in the data, how its grabbing imagery was arrived at” (p.240). This is partly because grounded theory has “imageric concepts” (p.242), and people can see what is being talked about conceptually. Playbuilding is actively built through imagery, and this imagery needs to shine through the words of this thesis.

1.3 Purpose of the research

As a drama teacher it has always been of crucial importance to me to explore and understand the pedagogy of teaching groups of playbuilders. This continuing exploration and understanding has, I believe, enabled the students I have taught to turn their passions and energies into imaginative and creative performances. In my teaching praxis the students’ imaginative experiences represent their amazing human and community potential. Therefore, it is my purpose in undertaking this research to examine the phenomena of imagining and creating in playbuilding groups, and how these connect to kinaesthetic teaching and learning. Kinaesthetic teaching seeks to create a space in which students would feel allowed to find and solve problems through the wisdom of their bodies, and in turn enables them to create playbuilding performances in a dynamic learning environment. In particular, the research looks for patterns and connections from individual bodily-kinaesthetics (Blom & Chaplin, 1982, 1988; Gardner, 1993b; Moore & Yamamoto, 1988a & b) to group kinaesthetic learning in the drama aesthetic. The implications arising from
all data sources have been analysed and synthesised, taking into account the dimensions and properties of each concept, the groupings of categories, the searching for patterns and/or anomalies and variants.

This type of qualitative research work can never result in absolute proof, but it illuminates probable knowledge where I share my empirical analysis with others, knowing that other people’s observations are no less tied to their perspective than mine. Nevertheless, this thesis analyses what I consider to be justified beliefs within the field of drama education.

Philip Taylor (1998) argues that the perspective of drama education research is slowly shifting to one where he would advocate the replacement of a rigorous research process with a process that trusts the participants’ voices, and that can generate a flexible and transformative approach (p.85); the process is one that I have modelled. Taylor further argues that “the power of the art form is that it unsettles and disturbs, it raises and confronts consciousness” (p.86). Taylor’s words rang a bell with me, and with my educational drama practice. My initial research allowed me to see where I had pushed teaching boundaries, providing opportunities for me to explore outside my range of teaching ideas.

Before this research project I worked in a secondary school Drama Department where a drama curriculum existed in playbuilding that addressed the requirements of the drama students’ learning. St. Sistine School’s drama teachers and students shared playbuilding discoveries through consistent evaluation and reflection of the curriculum, and new strategies for group devised teaching and learning were explored in the classroom. This research builds on this exploration and develops the concept that it is the group’s collective imagination that facilitates a powerful way of knowing and creating for both students and teachers alike. All of the above give purpose and focus to this study into playbuilding.
1.4 Place of the research in drama teaching and learning

The place of this study in drama teaching and learning is its contribution to raising the profile of playbuilding as a learning experience. The study also contributes to the exploration of how individual drama students' transform into a group of playbuilders through pedagogic learning processes such as group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric creating. This study explores the function of embodied learning in playbuilding and provides insights into the pedagogical importance of group kinaesthetic learning. The research also investigates teaching and learning strategies that engage and challenge secondary drama students to fulfil their playbuilding potential.

My research also fits into the wider field of drama education and theatre practitioners, by linking the ideas of drama educationalists, such as John O'Toole's (1976, 1992, 1995) theories on negotiating art and meaning through the elements of drama, Bruce Burton's (1991, 1996, 2001) work on the inter-relationship between drama and theatre in the classroom, Gavin Bolton (1979, 1984, 1992, 1998, 2000; Davis & Lawrence, 1986; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) on his continuing journey to debate and define the essence of educational dramatic activities, and Philip Taylor's (1994, 1996, 1998) reflections on drama research. The theories of theatre practitioners such as Bertolt Brecht (Jones, 1986; Koudela, 2002; Webber, 1994; Willett, 1964) and Peter Brook (1972, 1993; Jones, 1986) on ensemble acting have been reflected in my playbuilding research, and their ideas are complemented by Augusto Boal's (1979, 1992, 1995; Milling & Ley, 2001) pedagogy on the power of self and group devised theatre to give people a voice, both verbal and non-verbal, to engage in discussion of social and political change. Stanislavski's (1964; Benedetti, 1998; Jones, 1986; Milling & Ley, 2001) psycho-physical, and Meyerhold's (Braun, 1995; Milling & Ley, 2001; Muza 1996) kinaesthetic ensemble explorations are also considered in light of the key questions on playbuilding, as is Keith Johnstone's (1981, 1999), and Viola Spolin's (1983, 1985; Sills & Sills, 2001) work on the effectiveness of improvisation as a teaching tool.

By its very nature the research has delved into visual communication (Arnheim, 1969), body language, embodiment, and their connections to playbuilding characteristics. In this regard Blom and Chaplin's (1982, 1988), Moore and Yamamoto's (1988a & b) and Newlove's (1993) teaching methodologies that enhance body knowledge and the perception of movement all play a significant part in exploring the world of kinaesthetics.

I have also examined the work of anthropologists, psychologists and phenomenologists. The anthropologists' inputs include Schechner's (1985, 2002; Schechner & Appel, 1990) treatment of the relationship between anthropology and performance and Turner's (1982, 1988, 1995) work within the liminal and play. The philosophies of psychologists such as Donald Winnicott (Grolnick, Barkin, Muensterberger, 1978; Winnicott, Shepherd & Davis, 1986; D. Winnicott, 1971) on childhood empathy and play, and Lev Vygotsky's (Daniels,
1996, 2001; Kozulin, 1986) Zone of Proximal Development theories for teaching, learning and assessment, as well as Forsyth (1999) and Sprott’s (1958) theories on group dynamics, are examined. I have also investigated phenomenological contributions, such as Abram’s (1996) thought provoking ideas on memory, bodies, and the living world, and Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/1962; Barral, 1984; Macann, 1993; Matthews, 2002) concepts of what it means to have a living body and a consciousness, complemented by theatre phenomenologists such as Fortier (2002), Garner (1994) and States (1985). These theorists fit into the broader field of this study and therefore provide vital input to this thesis.

1.5 Significance of the research

This research makes a significant contribution to the field of drama education as it investigates the validity of playbuilding in drama education; it investigates the roles of embodiment, group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric creating, and connects individual kinaesthetic learning to group kinaesthetic learning. Furthermore, the research explores approaches to teaching drama in a group kinaesthetic mode.

The concept of investigating the role of a playbuilding group’s imagination, and hence its creation through group bodily awareness, is important as it appraises the structures of drama learning as well as analysing what students and teachers find inspiring and difficult about playbuilding. This research investigates the attitudes of the participating junior and senior secondary drama students to working collaboratively as an ensemble, and how group dynamics influence the ensemble playbuilding process. It investigates why group imaginative transformation occurs, and how this impacts on the classroom metaxical process. It further investigates how the metaxical process enables embodied learning to occur, and how it is supportive of students playing and improvising, finding and solving problems, and exploring the actor/audience relationship (see Chapter Two, 2.4.3 Metaxis in drama and theatre pedagogy for initial definition of metaxis). Furthermore, the research investigates the participating drama teachers’ views on the purpose and function of playbuilding and the importance of student/teacher co-facilitation and peer learning in playbuilding. It investigates kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies that stimulate
playing and improvising to enable group metaphorical imagining and creating to occur in the classroom. The research also investigates the principles of approaching drama teaching through an empathic mode (Arnold, 1998; Hughes & Johnson, 1998) which enables dynamic interaction between the cognitive, affective and physical domains.

The importance of this research is that it challenges secondary drama educators to think about and act upon new teaching strategies in playbuilding. The research is significant because it explores group learning rather than the individual student’s learning in playbuilding. It explores drama teaching and learning concepts that enable secondary students to identify themselves as group kinaesthetic learners. It further explores how students make and create their own group devised plays through the processes of group transformation and embodiment.

1.6 Key questions addressed by the research

The initial premise for this research emerged from a range of playbuilding experiences in my drama classroom which stimulated me to explore further questions. The research analysed in this thesis has therefore travelled in scope and breath, and has been transformed by the shape and progression of the key questions that have evolved via grounded theory data, analysis and synthesis. The key questions that have guided the research are:

- What are the links between imagining and creating in playbuilding?
  This question empowered me to discover and generate new categories linking imagining and creating and their properties, rather than being tied to my previous ideas about the links between imagining and creating in playbuilding. This led to the next question, as kinaesthetics became a focal point that emerged early in the grounded theory process.

- What impact do kinaesthetic teaching and learning practices have on imagining and creating in playbuilding groups?
This question provided an overview for the grounded theory process, and motivated further examination of the data on drama teaching and learning. In particular, the examination explored how conventional drama teaching and learning might be elaborated upon to teach in a kinaesthetic mode.

- **How do phenomena such as group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating contribute to playbuilding success?**  
  This question enabled me to conceptualise how a playbuilding group functions in its physical and imaginary classroom worlds. It provided me with an interrelated sense of cognition and imagery to capture underlying kinaesthetic patterns in the data; this allowed a core conceptual level to emerge.

- **How do phenomena such as group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and the use of group kinaesthetic drama properties enhance the teaching and learning practices of playbuilding and the playbuilders’ potential to become group kinaesthetic learners?**  
  When I was sorting through the last elements of the data, this question appeared to be at the core conceptual level; it had been informed by, and was an accumulation of, all the other questions. Substantive ideas and answers to the mysteries of playbuilding were being generated from this question, and it provided a rigorous way of examining the data. Yet the question called out to be further examined to do justice to the months of concept building, and this led to one last question.

- **What teaching practice would optimise imagining and creating in secondary school playbuilding groups?**  
  In the final sorting of all the concepts, memos and associated data, “everything fits somewhere” (Glaser, 1998, p.190) with this question. There was a density in the ideas in the question, and it brought out the multiple variations in the data, whilst allowing constant verification of the emergence of a **group kinaesthetic paradigm** in secondary school playbuilding.
The above bolded text and bolded questions emerged as the key phenomena of the research.

Roslyn Arnold (1998) argues that educators intuitively know when pedagogy is effective and it “occurs for reasons deeper than can be explained by checklists of teacher and pupil attributes or backgrounds” (p.114). Therefore, all the key questions are more than just a pedagogical checklist, they have efficacy in the wider context of this research, and enhance my belief in playbuilding as an inspirational learning and creative event in drama students’ lives.

The key questions outlined in this chapter can be visualised as a spiral within a playbuilding pedagogic environment, as indicated by Figure 1.1.

![Figure 1.1: Spiralling key questions](image-url)
The spiralling of the key questions in Figure 1.1 fits into the wider framework of the following chapters as it enables the reader to imagine how the form of playbuilding has separate entities, yet it is also one entity because of their interdependence.

Therefore, Joubert’s (2003) quote at the beginning of this chapter, which suggests that the imagination should be educated to allow it to soar, is one that resonates with my ideas on teaching and learning in secondary drama education playbuilding.

1.7 Flow of analyses in this thesis

The next chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature directly and indirectly related to my playbuilding research topic. The literature review stands alone, but extensive reference is made to various texts in each subsequent chapter. Figure 1.2 is provided to show the reader how the thesis is constructed, and how the analysis flows; it highlights the fact that the literature review is the next chapter of this work.

Figure 1.2: Flow of analyses in this thesis
Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature and focuses on the multidisciplinary nature of playbuilding and the evolution of drama and theatre cross-fertilisation, combined with the imaginative and creative junctures of such areas as critical pedagogic theory, phenomenology and movement analysis.

Chapter Three presents the qualitative research methodology. Although the grounded theory methodology and literature review commenced simultaneously, both evolved as time went by and informed each other as the research interpretations provided further direction. Chapters Four to Eight present an analysis and subsequent interpretations of the qualitative research program; they draw on the literature review as well as on the participants’ data. My conclusions from the research are then drawn together in Chapter Nine.
Chapter 2

Literature review

“My purpose is to tell of bodies which have been transformed into shapes of a different kind” (Ovid, 43 B.C./1955, p.29).

2.1 Introduction

This literature review has been designed to give the reader an understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of playbuilding. It points out salient ideas, facts and concepts, encouraging the reader to imagine that all the theorists, artists and/or educators mentioned collectively leave part of their own creative legacy in this chapter and in this thesis.

The literature review begins with theoretical analyses of the processes and value of playbuilding, playing and improvising in drama education, and proceeds to explore varied imaginative and creative junctures such as psycho-physical and metaphoric transformation. Then drama and theatre educators are examined to illuminate the eclectic links between imagining and creating in drama and theatre education. The final section explores kinaesthetics and the characteristics that may enhance the transformation process that occurs in playbuilding.

The literature review often highlights specific areas to give the reader a sense of clarity and structure, even though these areas often overlap. Figure 2.1 indicates the complex interlinking of core ideas in the literature review.
Figure 2.1: Linking of core ideas from the literature

Figure 2.1 attempts to create a simplified yet meaningful whole from the eclectic and complex concepts that shape and reveal the drama education form of playbuilding.

2.2 Playbuilding pedagogy

Playbuilding is a unique drama method involving working with groups of students to create their own plays. “Unlike writing a play or rehearsing a play that has been written by a playwright, playbuilding is a collaborative venture that involves the entire group in the creative process” (Tarlinton & Michaels, 1995, p.7). In this thesis playbuilding refers to the processes whereby groups of secondary school drama students collaborate in devising their own performance pieces. It is a drama teaching method that enables an ensemble of students to create a play from their own group’s imagination (Bray, 1991; Weigler, 2001). Through playbuilding, students can investigate, shape and symbolically represent ideas, feelings, attitudes and their consequences (Best, 2000, pp. 17-18; Board of Studies, 2003a, p.8).

Errol Bray, a prominent teacher of playbuilding in Australian Youth Theatre for several decades, describes playbuilding in his text, Playbuilding: A guide for group creation of
plays with young people, as a “richly creative process” (1991, introduction page), and provides the reader with many examples of his playbuilding projects. Wendy Michaels, an advocate and teacher of playbuilding, as demonstrated in her two texts, Building plays: Simple playbuilding techniques at work (Tarlington & Michaels, 1995) and Playbuilding Shakespeare (Michaels, 1996), suggests that “Playbuilding is a way of working in drama which has rich possibilities for learning” (p.vi), and in both her texts she provides many teaching strategies. Further afield, Hazel Barnes, responsible for a physical theatre playbuilding project in South Africa, takes us deeper into the process as she argues that playbuilding takes raw emotion and turns it into art (1999, p.168), and explains how she undertook a group devised playbuilding project with her students. Will Weigler (2001), an American practitioner of playbuilding, has written a practical approach to teaching playbuilding in his book Strategies for playbuilding, where he offers techniques to drama and theatre teachers to help them explore with their students the processes involved in creating group devised plays. He believes that when students perform their own work it gives them a powerful means to share their views with others in the community. In drama education journals, such teachers as Bayliss and Dodwell (2002), Clark (1998), Hatton (2001, 2002, 2003) and Prentki (2003) have written articles about the theory of group devised work. All these approaches give the drama teacher a variety of teaching and learning strategies to employ in the secondary drama classroom.

2.2.1 Theoretical analyses of playbuilding

Playbuilding is a term that is used extensively in the New South Wales drama education curriculum. Many drama practitioners around the world refer to playbuilding as “Group devised performance” (Milne, 1998, p.44) or just “Group drama” (Clark, 1998, p.227). Thus playbuilding, as a discrete drama form, flourishes under a variety of guises; it flourishes as it is an educational process that “allows for all views of the world” (Tarlington & Michaels, 1995, p.7) to be explored by drama students. Through the playbuilding process students discuss, develop and produce their own ideas within this theatrical framework.
This thesis does not explore the practice of “Process Drama” (O’Neill, 1995). Process Drama is a complex improvised dramatic event that is episodic in structure, has an extended time frame, and lacks a separate audience (pp.xiii-xx). Process Drama is taught by drama practitioners such as Cecily O’Neill (O’Neill & Lambert, 1982; O’Neill, 1995) and Dorothy Heathcote (Wagner, 1990). Much has been written about the work of these drama practitioners and their influences in drama education around the world, however, my thesis examines the processes of playbuilding and hence follows a different framework. In this thesis the term ‘process’ is used to describe how groups of students go about creating their playbuilding projects, followed by a performance to an in-class or public audience. In a playbuilding framework, processes and performances are equally valid, and can be equally valued depending on the given circumstances (Board of Studies 1999b, 2003a).

For groups of students undertaking a playbuilding project, ideas need “to be given flesh and blood and emotional reality: (and) it must go beyond imitation” (Brook, 1993, p.9). The essence of playbuilding is for the group to explore ways for their ideas to be re-invented, to be fresh and new, or perhaps challenging, and ultimately to give their ideas dramatic substance. The group creates its own dynamics (Forsyth, 1999; Foucault, 1983; Lewin, 1973; Sprott, 1958; Terry & Hogg, 2000) whilst undertaking this journey in the process and final performance of their playbuilding work, as playbuilding encourages a cooperative approach to exploring the world through enactment. Therefore, the collaborative nature of playbuilding enables students, in their groups, to engage in a creative process of sharing, developing and expressing ideas (Board of Studies, 2003a, p.8).

Drama teachers have the responsibility to assess their students’ playbuilding. The New South Wales Drama 7-10 Syllabus (Board of Studies, 2003a) and Senior Drama Syllabi (Board of Studies, 1999b) give teachers criteria to assess this process; these criteria reflect the internal secondary school assessment processes of this dramatic form. They incorporate such aspects as how the group has created performance skills appropriate to a style or form, or how the individuals in the group have sustained and developed role and character (1999b). The criteria, although important to defining standards in drama education, do not give voice to the complexity of the processes and final performance in the drama form of playbuilding.
In this thesis, the complex influence of critical pedagogic theory in drama education curriculum (Held, 1980; Horkheimer, 1972; Smith & Lovat, 1991) is pertinent. It is embedded as empirical analytic knowing, hermeneutical knowing, and self-reflective knowing within the curriculum planning of St. Sistine School's Drama Department, the site of the research. This means that, within the teaching strategies (Hamilton, 1992; Simons, 2003) that helped frame the participating students' playbuilding projects, there was not necessarily a right or wrong playbuilding knowledge, but a critical pedagogic theory knowledge that was open to interpretation as an active process in playbuilding.

Critical pedagogic theory concepts in this thesis have been influenced further by Habermas (1984; Outhwaite, 1996), whose work is applicable within the field of drama education. One of the areas investigated by Habermas examines the capacity of a person to reflect “on his or her activities” (Held, 1980, p. 254), and the “necessity of self-reflection for self-understanding” (p. 254). Habermas argues that knowledge should be examined in light of the problems that people encounter during their existence; he claims that the process of transforming knowledge is one of release, and release requires a person to engage in reflection and criticism (p.256). Habermas believes that for critical theory to provide emancipation, society needs to understand this moment of reflection and of self-understanding. I believe that this concept can engage with the language and social discourse of playbuilding, as it is through the context of group inquiry in playbuilding that a student may reach a “greater critical knowing about her/his actions and how they are informed and influenced” (Smith & Lovat, 1991, p.77).

There are important criticisms of critical pedagogic theory. David Smith and Terence Lovat (1991) discuss the competing theories of Rorty (1979, cited in Smith & Lovat, 1991, p.83), who argues against “any theory of knowledge which places limits on its conceptual underpinnings”, and Gore (1987, 1990, 1990a, cited in Smith & Lovat, 1991) who advances a postmodernist critique “by asserting that the proponents of critical theories are often locked in constructions of their own ‘regimes of truth’” (p.83), (Luke & Gore, 1992). Notwithstanding these criticisms, which have validity within a wider debate on critical theory, critical pedagogic theory concepts have enabled me to re-think and re-look in more detail at the process and influences within the form of playbuilding. David Smith and Terence Lovat (1991) argue that critical pedagogic theories have a fluid nature and are
“neither a singular nor static thing” (p.83), and this has been my experience. Therefore, I view critical pedagogic theory as an evolving theory that has helped me to examine the form of playbuilding and the emerging group kinaesthetic paradigm (Horkheimer, 1972).

I use the word ‘form’ as referenced in the New South Wales Stage 6 Syllabus – Drama – Higher School Certificate Course (Board of Studies, 1999b, p. 56) and the Drama Years 7-10 Syllabus (Board of Studies, 2003a, p.41). In these Syllabi ‘form’ is used to imply a set of principles by which drama and theatre are created; hence both Syllabi acknowledge playbuilding as a form in its own right. Playbuilding stands alongside such dramatic forms as Commedia dell’Arte and Street Theatre, but playbuilding is a mandated core area in both syllabi, whereas other dramatic forms can be chosen depending on the interests and skills of the secondary drama class.

The word ‘theatre’ also needs clarification within secondary drama education. Gavin Bolton, (2000) in his article It’s all theatre, describes theatre as a “place to visit”, a “unique kind of sharing between audience and performers”, and “content is ... part of its defining characteristic(s)” (p.27). He suggests that, in the future, drama practitioners should re-think their attitude to ‘theatre’ as all dramatic arts are rooted in theatre. Bruce Burton (1991) argues that there is a reciprocity in the drama and theatre educational continuum. Peter Brook (1993) suggests that theatre is a very vague term, too big to carry definable meaning as, in his opinion, it is not to do with buildings, actors, text and forms, but rather that the essence of “theatre is within a mystery called ‘the present moment’” and “‘The present moment is astonishing” (p.81). In playbuilding this ‘present moment is astonishing’ because of the imaginative and transformative processes at work, processes that are illuminated within the ephemeral moment of drama and theatre education.

Hence, in this thesis the word ‘theatre’ merges the ideas of Bolton, Burton and Brook, and enhances and complements the concepts from the two New South Wales Drama Syllabi (Board of Studies, 1999b, 2003a) that drama and theatre are inextricably linked in secondary education. Consequently, I believe the form of playbuilding is part of the connectivity of the drama and theatre education continuum. Ultimately, playbuilding is a pedagogic ensemble form with its unique teaching and learning structures; it facilitates different sizes and configurations of groups of students in creating their own plays (Burton,
2001; Clausen, 2000; Tourelle & McNamara, 1998). The drama learning occurs in the group’s process work and, when relevant, the final performance(s). Within the form of playbuilding:

Each student learns to collaborate with a group to devise and perform in a piece of original theatre. They learn how to work cooperatively in creating dramatic works, presenting their own opinions confidently and listening to the ideas of others. ... They learn to structure their work using dramatic elements and theatrical conventions (Board of Studies, 1999b, p.25).

Therefore, playbuilding allows groups of students to enter and experience imagined worlds collectively and individually. These imaginative worlds can often begin in the classroom with playing and improvising.

2.2.2 Playing and improvising

What are the links between playing and improvising in playbuilding? More importantly, what is it about these concepts that creates links between imagining and creating? It is important to explore the connections between ‘playing’ and ‘improvising’ in order to glimpse the connections between the affective, cognitive and physical domains of learning. As a drama educator, I know that drama students love to play; playing games with rules and consequences, playing with ideas, playing with spontaneous and structured improvisation, and playing with various theatre conventions and techniques.

Playing, and the freedom it brings to children’s imaginations, creativity and instincts, and the way playing helps them effectively grow forward, underpins the hypotheses in Donald Winnicott’s text Playing and Reality (1971). Winnicott’s work explores the development of children through emotional mirroring and creative nurturing. He argues that, unless meaning and understanding became part of the experience, the experience becomes sterile and may finally disappear, or, unless play and enjoyment are retained, fun becomes work. He says that playing is universal; that playing facilitates growth and health; that playing forms group communication through tangible and intangible actions; that feelings and material objects become exploratory factors which enable children to discover meaning in

D. Winnicott explores the area of transitional objects, such as a teddybear or the mother’s breast, that provide “a sense of cohesion” for the child as it experiments and experiences the world (Muensterberger, 1978, p.5). In this regard, playbuilders vest ideas in objects with human and non-human qualities to develop and transform their playbuilding projects. Therefore these drama objects may provide an avenue for playbuilders to stretch their imaginative playing powers (Abrams & Neubauer, 1978, p.133). D. Winnicott’s philosophies appear to have currency with the secondary drama education students in this study, and their playbuilding projects, as playing leads to exploring group relationships (Schechner, 2002, pp.79-109), and animate and inanimate objects may shift a playbuilding group’s transformational process.

Victor Turner (1983, cited in Schechner, 2002) discusses play as “a volatile, sometimes dangerously explosive essence” (p.80). He argues that human play is a multivocal concept due to its own historical density (Turner, 1982, p.33). This historical density is a reference to the frequency of use of the word play and its derivations, and how play is used and applied throughout history. The word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *plegan* (p.33), which conceptually relates to all kinds of body movement, and links to the cognizant and affective domains.

Play, whether created informally by children or in a more formal drama games structure, creates dialectical moments, the winners and the losers, the tagged and the free, the excitement and the disappointment, the rules and the sub-rules. The players are playing in a dual world; in some sense they are exploring the actual and fictional worlds within their games and activities. Richard Schechner (2002) argues that play may be described as “a mood, an activity, and an embodied behavior inseparable from the players” (p.82). John O’Toole (1992) expands this idea by arguing that “Play is a word which may be seen naturally to fit into both the world of education and the world of drama. Naturally, but somewhat uneasily, in both worlds” (p.21).
Playbuilding, like play, is ambiguous and can move in several directions (Schechner, 2002, p.79) at once in the classroom. The first experiences of playbuilding are often informed by the student’s bodily-kinaesthetic function and spatial functions connecting in organised play (Boal, 1992; Rudlin, 1994). In this environment the group can change the rules, create tensions, and use their collective energy to provoke ideas within their collective imaginings. The initial stages of playbuilding in this imaginary world need a freedom of approach, and recognition that anything is possible in the classroom situation; dramatic improvisation is at the core (Hodgson & Richards, 1966; Johnstone, 1981, 1999; Lowe, 2000; Pierse, 1993; Spolin, 1983, 1985; Sills & Sills, 2001).

Within New South Wales drama education, improvisation is a major teaching and learning tool which begins the playbuilding process as it allows a freedom of student expression and movement (Clausen, 2000; Tourelle & McNamara, 1998). The spontaneity inherent in any type of improvisation activity can minimise the number of students trying to imitate other people’s ideas and give the students a freedom to explore their own ideas. Spontaneity in improvisation can be inspiring as thoughts and actions not previously dreamt about come alive (Spolin, 1983). Improvisation creates a group curiosity, where the group’s ideas can be examined closely in a non-threatening environment. Improvisation is provocative and practical, and is used to release the potential of not just the individual but the group.

Improvisation teachers such as Keith Johnstone (1981, 1999) and Viola Spolin (1983, 1985; Sills & Sills, 2001) have used improvisation as a drama form within its own right, and one that can lead to the development of different drama forms. Whatever the dramatic purpose, these practitioners are using improvisation as an organic means of releasing imaginative intuition. Viola Spolin (1983) argues that through improvisation:

> The intuitive can only respond in immediacy – right now. It comes bearing its gifts in the moment of spontaneity, the moment when we are freed to relate and act, involving ourselves in the moving, changing world around us. (p.4).

All these ideas seem to suggest that if a playbuilding group can release that immediacy, the firing of their imaginations starts to take place. These improvisation characteristics may allow a playbuilding group to work together with enjoyment, solving problems through
taking risks in developing their material. This stream of consciousness will be produced both through action and reaction (Fortier, 1997; Blom & Chaplin, 1998). It is therefore from these first improvisation activities that a playbuilding group begins to release its imagination and take its first tentative steps towards creating. In my research, play and improvisation, where both the junior and senior secondary drama classes expressed ideas through verbal and non-verbal drama activities, appeared to be the initial building blocks of all the playbuilding projects studied. Playbuilding pedagogy is a vibrant practical pursuit. At the centre of this pedagogy is the embodied language of drama and theatre education (Wright, 1998), which enables a rich, spontaneous and complex event to occur.

2.3 Imaginative and creative fusion in playbuilding

Imagining is a dynamic process that belongs to the conscious and subconscious. Awakening the imagination belongs to the realm of emotions, imagery, memory, and is a state of mind and body (Greene, 1995, p.28). The imagination’s imaginings are curious and inquisitive and can be transformed. There are many and varied examples within drama and theatre education of how imagining and creating fuse together (Huxley & Witts, 2002). I have chosen to illustrate this fusion initially through the quite different theatrical approaches to imagination in the work of Konstantin Stanislavskii and Vsevolod Meyerhold, complemented by drama educators who examine the complexities of imaginative pedagogies. I will also explore the role of metaphorical embodiment within this fusion.
2.3.1 Samples of imaginative and creative fusion

The Russian-born turn of the century theatre practitioners Konstantin Stanislavski (1964, 1979, 1980; Benedetti, 1982, 1988; Milling & Ley, 2001; Roose-Evans, 1984) and Vsevolod Meyerhold (Braun, 1995; Law & Gordon, 1996; Milling & Ley, 2001; Muza, 1996; Roose-Evans, 1984), valued the imagination as an innate ability in their theatre ensembles, albeit one that needed to be released through different approaches to the cognitive, affective and physical domains of their actors. The ensemble theatres of Stanislavski and Meyerhold offer two different approaches to fusing imagining and creating; Stanislavski, with his psycho-physical approach, and Meyerhold with his kinaesthetic explorations are therefore worth examining.

Stanislavski’s work with the Moscow Art Theatre provided an intensive psychological and physical rehearsal for the actual production, as well as providing programs for student actor training. His ensemble theatre was based primarily on verbal and visual truths, with a character’s psychological objective being bound up with a physical objective (Milling & Ley, 2001, p.10). On the other hand, Meyerhold’s aspirations for ensemble training explored what could be said to be theatre as spectacle. In Meyerhold’s practices the function of the actor’s body forced the audience to look at the world primarily through a visual eye, with the verbal functioning as an adjunct. These mind-body explorations were only one aspect of Stanislavski’s and Meyerhold’s work, but the manner in which they incorporated the psycho-physical and kinaesthetic into their theatrical teaching allowed actors to engage in a group process where a fusion of body, mind and possibilities took place (Milling & Ley, 2001; Muza, 1996).

Stanislavski’s (1964, 1979, 1980; Benedetti, 1982, 1998) reputation is due to his creation of the ‘system’ which has crossed many cultural boundaries, and which continually reshapes itself. The intensive work undertaken by the Moscow Art Theatre actors whilst exploring Stanislavski acting techniques is well documented. The system’s variances are also well documented from distinguished Western actor training centres in such places as New York, London and Sydney. A significant aspect of Stanislavski’s teaching is the importance of awakening this notion of the psycho-physical; this is where the actor must train his or her
mind and body to respond, react and reflect within the uniqueness of each ensemble situation. The actor’s job is to awaken and know the feeling, to analyse the feeling, to search for memories, and to find this pattern in their conscious and unconscious states. Stanislavski suggests that ultimately the actor must rely on his or her imagination so that what comes to life in the theatre is a total physical and mental embodiment of the character. For Stanislavski the verisimilitude of engagement with the actors and the audience was the ultimate test of theatre (Milling & Ley, 2001).

Meyerhold (Braun, 1995; Milling & Ley, 2001; Muza, 1996; Roose-Evans, 1984), on the other hand, revived the primordial elements of theatre through improvisation and transformation (Roose-Evans, 1984, p.23). His teaching practices explored the biomechanical process of theatricality, and he was one of the earliest advocates of the visual and non-verbal aspects of theatre. His approach was to sharpen the senses of his ensemble by mixing opposites through an eclectic use of forms such as Commedia dell’Arte, Kathakali, Chinese Circus, and Kabuki Theatre. Meyerhold explored the emotional, muscular and intellectual capacities of his ensemble to discover new rhythms in the theatrical language of the 1920s and 1930s (Braun, 1995).

Stanislavski and Meyerhold exemplify the imaginative fusion of cognition to physical and physical to cognition, and it is because of this dialectical opposition between their theatrical techniques that their imaginative pursuits have a place in this section of the literature review, rather than in section 2.4.2. Theatre practitioners’ pedagogy. Stanislavski’s and Meyerhold’s approaches to their theatre work stimulated complexity in their theatrical imaginative and creative processes, as well as in the ensemble members who were part of their experimental theatres (Milling & Ley, 2001). The experiences of these practitioners have shaped my sense of the possibilities of ensemble kinaesthetic patterns in drama education.

New South Wales secondary drama students can explore the drama education practices of visual and non-verbal communication, and can create their own theatrical language through muscular and emotional classroom activities. Additionally, many senior secondary students explore drama activities within a psycho-physical framework as part of their Higher School Certificate work. Therefore, playbuilding groups bring with them previous drama and
theatre knowledge, skills and understanding to their group devised work. In the initial stages of playbuilding the students can share with one another their previous drama and theatre knowledge and observations, and hence their imaginings. Although they can create this information in a variety of ways, the individual observations and imaginings are tied to their perceptions of the world (Wills, 1990a & b). Each student’s belief in the topics or issues chosen for playbuilding informs another student’s perception. This ‘informing’ can provide a dramatic tension, as members of the group will have different perspectives (Forsyth, 1999; Sprott, 1958) depending whether they perceive through looking, seeing or doing. This tension arises from letting the imagination run freely, and hence the group eventually forms its own group perceptions. These in turn flow into the creating and, as such, there is a complexity in the imaginative and creative processes that power the students’ work.

In a playbuilding project, complexity comes from the range of students’ interests, levels and abilities, and in any given class there may be what some drama educators call “super-dramatists” (Dunn, 1996, p.21). Betty Jane Wagner (1995) clarifies this notion of the super-dramatist, arguing that in a drama class the teacher can find students intuitively leading the dramatic action. These super-dramatists are providing a framework upon which other students can build a new understanding (p.68). The drama teacher’s role is to create an environment where super-dramatists can be extended, whilst still providing a dynamic learning experience for students who do not have the same level of ability.

Playbuilding groups have the capacity to construct multiple realities within their conceptual networks as they explore the potential for transforming. Transformation is inherent in the drama process (Burton, 1991), as is the process of imagination which “utilises affective states and intuition in its functioning” (p.172). Maxine Greene (1995) says that “transformative pedagogies must relate both to existing conditions and to something we are trying to bring into being, something that goes beyond a present situation” (p.51); here she is analysing the power of the imagination. Similarly, Bruce Burton (1991) believes that “imagination is a potent element in learning because it permits the individual to transform experience and transcend the limits of what is already known” (p.172). Burton further notes that drama is essentially a creative experience, and “creativity is a universal and complex element of human behavior which is significant in a whole range of learning
experiences” (p.173). These ideas encompass the concept that imaginative and creative experiences generate and transform the drama process though “illuminating, extending and enhancing ... learning” (p.176). In playbuilding, drama students collaborate within this imaginative and creative experience.

### 2.3.2 Metaphoric transformation

A metaphor is another way of transforming the imaginative and creative energies in playbuilding, as metaphoric creating is inherent in drama learning (Courtney, 1989; Henry, 2000). A metaphor is an active mode through which to experience drama ideas symbolically. Moore and Yamamoto (1998b) describe metaphor as a way to transfer bodily meaning; they say that metaphor creates “a new context and configuration of meanings, thus becoming not merely a poetic device, but a whole new way of thinking about the world” (p.29). These two movement analysts, Moore and Yamamoto, go on to say that all students need to “understand not only what a metaphor is but how it affects our thinking” (p.29). Through this effect students can be encouraged to creatively explore information and knowledge and to “highlight certain features”, and to “suppress or hide certain features” (p.30) in their creating. Moore and Yamamoto assert that movement and metaphor in a contextual framework give rise to new modes of interpretation, as the metaphor allows us to see ideas and movement in a new light, hence “metaphors both amplify and diminish” the human experience (1988a, p.119). This notion of metaphoric movement through the body informs my exploration of the kinaesthetic in drama pedagogy.

Metaphoric creation is regularly debated in drama education. Gavin Bolton (1979, cited in Bruce Burton, 1991) says that the concept of drama learning is metaphoric. “Its meaning lies not in the actual context nor in the fictitious one, but in the dialectic set up between the two (worlds)” (p.73). Mallika Henry (2000) argues that metaphors belong to the world of aesthetic creation, as metaphoric thinking and creating is a principal factor in the experience of learning through drama. She explains this concept through a diagram in which “concentric orbs are not fixed, but radiate inwardly and outwardly, interpenetrating one another” (p.54). In her model metaphor plays a pivotal, osmotic role within drama.
praxis. Richard Courtney argues that “Imaginative thought has a metaphoric relation to action” (Courtney, 1989, p.185). He writes that, in drama education performing, “the relation of our inner world to the outer world is metaphoric and we achieve this through the medium of dramatic action” (p.185).

Metaphor is an important property in playbuilding which enables students to catch the essence of their group stories (Brook, 1993). Metaphoric embodiment in playbuilding gives it dramatic power, as metaphor exists through the embodiment of the physical, cognitive and affective domains of the students. Students can be encouraged actively to be responsible for their own metaphoric creating in the drama aesthetic, and this can occur when the students are engaged in opening their minds and feelings (Best, 1992, 1996). For instance, in drama, students may wish to transform themselves into an anthropomorphic idea; in this case they will endow their ideas with symbolic and metaphoric life. Metaphoric imaginative thought can provide rich possibilities for learning more about their work. A metaphor allows students to extend their knowing so that they have the opportunity to layer and broaden the inner and outer life of their fictional work. The metaphoric world of the idea can be expanded, not only within the minds and imaginations of the students but also through practical experiences in the drama classroom (Henry, 2000; Moore & Yamamoto, 1988a & b).

In drama, students can explore metaphoric creating so that they understand, use and interpret their own examples. Students may approach this through verbal imagery, and through the creation of visual metaphors with their bodies (Henry, 2000). Helping groups to select and emphasise imagery in words and phrases and to use their physicality entails experimentation and failure. This experimentation and failure allows a creative freedom for students to explore their own as well as other students’ imaginations (Davies, 2001; Moore & Yamamoto, 1988a & b; Newlove, 1993). Metaphor, imagining and creating can be fused together in drama education, allowing metaphoric osmosis to take place.

The examples analysed in imaginative and creative junctures in playbuilding indicate their centrality to this thesis. The notion of imaginative and creative junctures in playbuilding is complex, and is continually explored throughout this body of work. Peter Brook (1993) personifies the imagination as a “muscle that enjoys playing games” (p.27), and it is a game
in which “shared awareness” and “quick responsiveness” bring together individuals to form them into a “sensitive, vibrant team” (pp.107-8). Peter Brook’s emotionally charged words and phrases conjure up vivid mental pictures of the collaborative drama and theatre practices in playbuilding.

2.4 The pedagogy of drama and theatre educators and practitioners

The pedagogy of drama and theatre educators is evolving, dynamic, contentious and liberating (Errington, 1993; Burton, 1991), and various educators’ concepts working together in a secondary drama classroom create a vibrant multilayered persona. Drama and theatre educators’ pedagogy is dependent upon teachers and artists being brave enough to state their own experiences, to make their voices heard, and to take risks in the way they express their observations, experiences and ideas (Johnstone, 1981). All these people’s experiences contribute consciously and subconsciously to conversations about drama and theatre pedagogy connections in this thesis.

I have chosen to focus on several drama and theatre educators who have impacted on my grounded theory process by provoking thoughts and questions about the nature of playbuilding in secondary education. Furthermore, these drama and theatre educators’ discourses and practices have influenced the manner in which I have taught my participating students. The drama educators include John O’Toole (1976, 1992, 1995; Haseman & O’Toole, 1986) and his innovative ideas about the purpose and function of the elements of drama whilst teaching. Also Roslyn Arnold’s (1993, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2000) theories on educating for empathic intelligence (2000) have particular relevance in examining the teaching and learning that occur in the form of playbuilding, as do Philip Taylor’s (1994, 1996, 1998) distinctive ideas about the purpose and nature of drama praxis. Gavin Bolton’s (1979, 1984, 1998, 2000; Davis & Lawrence, 1986; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) pedagogy is analysed as his practices reflect his belief that the imagination is central to transformation. Bruce Burton (1991, 1996, 2001), and his concept that drama teaching can be enriched by the work of significant theatre practitioners of the twentieth century, also provide a rich source of analysis. The theatre educators include Bertolt Brecht
(Brooker, 1994; Jones, 1986; Koudela, 2002; Webber, 1994; Willett, 1964) and his exploration of a ‘new theatre aesthetic’ in the 1920s to 1950s, to Peter Brook’s (1972, 1993; Jones, 1986) examination of experimental techniques in an intercultural theatre ensemble, and Augusto Boal’s (1979, 1992, 1995; Milling & Ley, 2001) work on theatre as a bodied art form that has the power to engender change.

The above drama educators and theatre practitioners are known for their diverse contributions to the arts. They have all explored, practically and theoretically, groups of students and/or actors devising their own work under the guidance of a teacher/director. Inherent in all their work is the importance of the group.

### 2.4.1 Drama educators’ pedagogy

John O’Toole, (1976, 1992, 1995) does not use the term ‘playbuilding’ in his drama education theories, but he argues that students, as well as the teacher simultaneously undertake all the roles of playwright, directors, designers, and role players in their learning (1992, p.22). So although O’Toole does not delve specifically into imagining and creating in the playbuilding form, he does elucidate the idea that drama education belongs to everyone involved in making the dramatic event. He argues that all drama group members have to make choices together to facilitate the group’s creating. He says “This is why the group needs to be highly motivated before a drama in education can ever happen. This entails negotiating and accepting contracts, explicitly or implicitly” (p.39). This ‘negotiating and accepting’ belongs to students making and transforming their own art-form, and refers ‘explicitly and implicitly’ to the students’ conscious and subconscious understanding of the group’s collective capacity to imagine.

The group’s collective capacity to imagine can be stimulated through the elements of drama which incorporate the general and specific context, the group, and the dramatic context (dramatic context is what O’Toole describes as inside the drama) (p.6). O’Toole states wisely that there is “no universally valid definition of the elements of dramatic form” (p.5), but he does explain succinctly how a drama teacher can use these processes to elicit ideas,
challenge students’ thinking, and to enable negotiated dramatic meaning to take place. O’Toole defines the action inside the drama through exploring theatrical elements that communicate messages in the drama learning. He argues that through exploring the elements of situation and role, focus, tension, time and location, language and movement, mood and symbol, collectively or singularly, the drama educational processes can deepen. He goes on to state that in defining the territory of drama in this way, the teacher must remember that “no static model of a dynamic event like drama can ever be complete” (p.46). The flexibility of O’Toole’s model enables his ideas to be perceived as both visual and verbal communicators in secondary drama education. O’Toole’s drama processes have impacted upon my teaching. Dramawise (Haseman & O’Toole, 1986) has been a useful teaching tool for junior secondary students, and the concept that it was a developmental text (p.v) indicated that flexibility was a characteristic of the initial exploration into the ‘elements of drama’. The text The Process of Drama - Negotiating art and meaning (O’Toole, 1992) built on this understanding and has provided a variety of ways for me, as a drama teacher, to examine the function of playbuilding, both in the classroom and in this Literature Review. O’Toole’s concepts are a mode of communication in drama education, and have continually provoked questions about the links between imagining and creating within a drama group.

Roslyn Arnold’s theories on educating for empathic intelligence (2000) are a dynamic teaching model that explores human emotions in the drama classroom. Her theories explore the interpersonal engagements in a classroom that facilitate student-centred pedagogy. Roslyn Arnold argues that the development of empathy in a teacher “requires, and indeed helps us to develop a non-judgmental stance in our responses to human behaviour” (p.6). She asserts that “Empathy is an act of heartfelt, thoughtful imagination” (p.7) and through calling it an ‘act’ indicates that emotion involves affect as well as cognition. In a playbuilding classroom these theories have the potential to ‘play’ a central role in the learning that takes place. She considers that an “empathic drama teacher will stress the special nature of drama work which necessitates a high level of trust between participants” (1993) because of that very special, personal, and imaginative creating that occurs.
Philip Taylor (1998) suggests that "So much of what goes on in arts classrooms today works against imagination" (p.78), and cites educational bodies' obsession with assessment, proof and benchmarks; this is undoubtedly also how playbuilding students can be intimidated in the New South Wales drama classroom. The notion that curriculum sometimes works against the imagination was a hurdle that stimulated my ideas for a teaching methodology in which group devised assessment and outcomes worked hand in hand within the group kinaesthetic field. The students (and the teachers) could merge that consistent fear of assessment failure with a methodology that elicited fun, enjoyment and a meta-knowledge, albeit still in the world of assessment and standard referencing. I have called this methodology *Performing an Essay* and it is analysed in Chapter Eight. Philip Taylor (1994, 1996) argues for drama teachers to push the boundaries of previous praxis, and his ideas connect to *Performing an Essay* which provides a new framework for expressiveness in playbuilding assessment, and appears to push the boundaries of drama teaching conventions (Lovesy, 2002).

Philip Taylor (1996) exhorts drama teachers to embrace the fact that "drama permits individuals to release themselves through an imaginary construct" (p.273), while Gavin Bolton's drama concepts are "collective rather than individual and are related to social rather than personal values" (Burton, 1991, p.68). Bolton emphasises the social through his writings; he describes his joint work with Dorothy Heathcote in such teaching scenarios as "Crying When Someone Dies", "Cancer: Finding a Cure" (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995, pp.87-88), and within his societal approach the imaginative learning features are symbolic and communicative. Gavin Bolton (1984) is not an overt spokesperson for the function of embodiment in drama, but he does continually argue that the imagination is initiated by the affective state. He believes that the imaginative act in drama is created through emotion, and it is through this state that "something absent is brought into the present" (p.106). Thus collective group transformation is a fundamental teaching tool for Bolton, as he believes that drama cannot function without an act of transformation (Burton, 1991, p.73).

Bruce Burton (1991, 2001) discusses the act of the imagination as both cognitive and affective, and the process of creativity as constructing and restructuring perceptions of reality (1991, p.151). He links these ideas to experiencing, identifying, transforming and discovery in the drama classroom. Burton further points out that drama education promotes
relationships with theatre practitioners, relationships that can encourage drama students to examine the artistry of others. This in turn means that students are exploring the creativity of others and developing a wider self-expression through their cognitive, affective and physical selves.

Burton’s ideas have provided an additional tool for the analysis of my data, and his notion of crossing the boundaries between drama education practitioners and theatre practitioners has been significant in the exploration of what may stimulate imagining and creating in playbuilding. Burton concludes that many theatre innovators perceive themselves “as educators generating a process of learning” (p.176), and their contribution to drama education is pivotal in experiential learning.

2.4.2 Theatre practitioners’ pedagogy

O’Toole, Arnold, Taylor, Bolton and Burton have significantly influenced current drama education theories, and the following theatre practitioners have also been influential in twentieth century theatre. Bertolt Brecht (Brooker, 1994; Jones, 1986; Koudela, 2002; Webber, 1994; Willett, 1964), Peter Brook (1972, 1993; Jones, 1986) and Augusto Boal (1979, 1992, 1995; Milling & Ley, 2001) are considered outstanding theoretical practitioners of the performing arts. Although their work is not focused on drama education, their rehearsals and performance structures, and the learning that emanates from them, as well as their analysis of the actor/audience relationship, make them relevant in a drama classroom and hence in this thesis. In this study it has been important to explore theatre practices not as fixed or unchangeable, but as practices that can be elaborated upon or simplified to help drama students make meaning.

Brecht’s theatrical aesthetics focus on a theatre that “appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator’s reason” (Willett, 1964, p.23), and he considers that human behaviour on stage is shown as alterable as theatre should be an agent for political and social change (Burton, 1991, p.116). Through these philosophies Brecht “identifies creativity specifically as an act or product which can be consciously produced in certain circumstances. His intention is to
generate creativity in the theatre” (p.120). Brecht’s concepts of theatrical dialectics can be explored through the nature of ‘gestus’. For Brecht’s actors, gestus meant economical movements on stage that provoked visually symbolic and/or cognitively symbolic argumentation of ideas. “Gestus is dialectic because it is, simultaneously, a symbol and a physical action which confers the status of Gestische Sprache (gesture language)” (Koudela, 2002, p.117), and combines with Brecht’s overriding idea that the function of theatre is to make the audience think.

For Brecht, the audience become spectators; a spectator is a person who observes, thinks and reflects on the dramatic action, rather than one who has been encouraged to surrender to the cathartic purging of the emotions (Jones, 1986) as outlined by Aristotle in the Poetics (Aristotle, trans. 1961). To be a spectator of a Brechtian play was to be embodied with the capacity for action, to be forced to take decisions, and to act upon them. The spectators’ decisions and actions were triggered by the dialectical functions in his plays. Dialectics had the capacity to negate the spectators’ concepts of the world, which were taken for granted, and to provide a narrative that enabled viewers to examine their social and political place in the world (Brooker, 1994; Webber, 1994).

Brecht’s last message to the Berliner Ensemble at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm read:

So our playing needs to be quick, light, strong. This is not a question of hurry, but of speed, not simply of quick playing, but of quick thinking. We must keep the tempo of a run-through and infect it with quiet strength, with our own fun. In the dialogue the exchanges must not be offered reluctantly, as when offering somebody one’s last pair of boots, but must be tossed like so many balls. The audience has to see that here are a number of artists working together as a collective (ensemble) in order to convey stories, ideas, virtuoso feats to the spectator by a common effort (Willett, 1964, p.283).

Brecht’s director’s notes resonate with the type of skills, knowledge and understanding that playbuilders discover and explore in their work. The relationship between groups of secondary drama students collaborating to devise their own plays, and the transformation process that takes place within the actor/audience (spectator) relationship, is also paramount in drama education. Therefore Brecht’s theatrical philosophy resonates deeply within the playbuilding milieu, as his theatrical works are a fusion of reality and the imagination, which attempt to provide learning through transformation.
Peter Brook acknowledges Bertolt Brecht as a “key figure of our time”, and suggests that all modern day theatre “starts or returns to (Brecht’s) statements or achievement” (Brook, 1972, p.80). In Peter Brook’s rehearsal of “The Tempest” (Brook, 1993, p.105) he explored the actor/audience/spectator transformation process. At the beginning of the rehearsals Brook created workshop situations where his intercultural actors’ collective bodies, thoughts and feelings had to stay in tune with one another. Brook argued that these workshops were enormously creative, and that there was an understanding of the true process of constructing theatre. Two-thirds of the way through the rehearsals the ensemble performed The Tempest in a “tiny cramped basement surrounded by about a hundred schoolchildren” (p.114). They improvised within their surroundings using only objects they found in the room, such as the children’s shoes and school bags. The aim of this exercise was for the ensemble to become storytellers, and “to find the most immediate ways of capturing (the children’s) imagination and never letting it go” (p.115). Through this risk-taking process the ensemble re-worked their processes and found a freedom in this new space that elicited further key workshops. These workshop procedures have similarities to playbuilding pedagogy, in that Peter Brook’s process was one in which “trial and error, search, elaboration, rejection and chance” (p.118) created a new playing field for his ensemble, just as these same types of process create new learning environments for playbuilders.

Brook believes that an actor has extraordinary potential to imagine and create through his or her body. He says that “intuitive understanding through the body is stimulated and developed in many different ways” (p.108), and the task of challenging his ensemble members is through allowing an imaginative response between actors and the audience to take place. Therefore there must be sensitivity to other bodies within the ensemble. Peter Brook is a theatre practitioner whose group devised ensemble work has stirred interest among a variety of secondary drama educators.

In some drama and theatre areas in Australia a shift in thinking about Peter Brook’s work has occurred. Directors like Wesley Enoch question why Peter Brook was so “fixated by stories and cultures other than his own” (Enoch & Mailman, 1999, p.16) that he had to appropriate meaning from the narrative of other peoples’ cultures. Enoch believes that
theatre exists to document the clash of traditional and contemporary survival techniques, rather than to fragment it as Brook does. Pertinent as these remarks may be in an examination of contemporary intercultural theatre practices, Peter Brook’s concept of an intercultural theatre ensemble, combined with the notion of an eclectic mix of narrative and tradition, have stimulated drama activities in the New South Wales secondary school drama curriculum. This is evidenced by the inclusion of Brook as a topic set for study in the senior secondary Higher School Certificate course.

Augusto Boal is another theatre practitioner who has been included as an HSC drama topic. Boal is an innovative theatre practitioner who has argued that Aristotelian Theatre was repressive and was a perfect means of social coercion (Wright, 1996). He claims that Aristotelian theatre made spectators become inert onlookers; social and political divisions were created between the actors and spectators in the passive viewing of a performance.

In Augusto Boal’s polemic *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979) he proposes a new form of theatre that breaks down the barriers between the ruling classes and the masses. Boal believes that his theatrical ideology can act as a theatre for social and political change. Many of Boal’s theatrical conventions and techniques are based on the body, and have been used extensively by drama teachers in New South Wales.

David Wright (1998) suggests that in a secondary school environment, Boal “provides students with opportunities to consider the way in which their learning has informed their bodies” (p.255). Boal’s ideology that the most important element of theatre is that the human body is integral to the key questions in my research. Boal (1992) is concerned with physical movement, distances and relationships. He argues that “theatrical language is the most essential human language” (p.xxx) as a human being can observe him/herself in action, and within his/her work, can transform the dramatic action. This leads to an awakening of social consciousness through the body. The body and its context are fundamental to Boal’s ideology of *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979), and the power of theatre to speak with its own voice “to achieve a good debate” (1992, p.230). The bodies of the ensemble members both in “stage business and actor’s playing styles together endow each moment with dynamic images which carry meaning” (p.235); meaning created through embodiment within a particular context and content.
Augusto Boal (1992) uses a myriad of games and activities to allow ideas to be released; these are based on groups of people working together connecting their bodies and minds to create dramatic action and meaning. Boal claims that his ensemble exercise "designate(s) all physical, muscular movement (respiratory, motor, vocal) which helps the doer to a better knowledge or recognition of his or her body, its muscles, its nerves, its relationship to other bodies", and that the exercises are a "physical reflection" of the actor or non-actor (p.60). Boal's games "deal with the expressivity of the body as emitter and receiver of messages" (p.60); they are an overlapping dialogue of the human condition. Basically his activities underlie his principal idea that "the human being is a unity, an indivisible whole" (p.61). He suggests that within this principle "A bodily movement is a thought and a thought expresses itself in a corporeal form" (p.61). These games cross the human senses from "feeling what we see", to "touching", to "listening", to "seeing what we look at" (pp. viii-xvii); they reconnect the memory of the senses so that the actor and non-actors learn about the world they live in. His games and activities are fun, are rigorous, and have strong structural principles based on physicality, as he believes that a flexible actor or non-actor taught through games and activities is one who can engender change.

In order to understand the poetics of the oppressed it is important to keep in mind Boal’s basic philosophy and belief in humanity’s ability to change through theatre. He creates this theatrical philosophy by not allowing the audience to be passive spectators, making them active members of the drama event, thereby helping to transform and change the dramatic action; Boal calls this type of audience ‘spec-actors’ (p.xxx). Therefore, the accepted praxis of a seated audience being the receivers of theatre is exchanged for active participation. Boal believes that the physicality of participation forces the whole ensemble to question their beliefs, the authenticity of information they have received, and the validity of a particular social, cultural or political viewpoint (Boal, 1992).

Boal creates an active embodiment of his work through dynamisation of the drama event; this permits the spec-actor to take control of political and social problems and to probe and inquire, whilst trying to invent new ways to confront oppression. Dynamisation, combined with Image Theatre, is one of his devices to allow spec-actors to express their oppressions in a non-verbal manner. Image Theatre is an ensemble’s collective visual perspective on an
issue that is being dramatically created. Image Theatre is dynamised through physical
transition from one moment of enacted theatrical oppression to another; these transitions
provide a way for the ‘spec-actors’ to question, discuss and analyse the problem. The
techniques of Dynamisation, Image Theatre, and spec-actor were used by the participating
junior and senior secondary students in a hybrid manner during the process of their
playbuilding projects, and therefore are important in interpreting part of the data. Finally,
Boal (1992) suggests continually that “The Theatre of the Oppressed is located precisely on
the frontier between fiction and reality – and this border must be crossed” (p.246); it is
crossed through the process of metaxis.

2.4.3 Metaxis in drama and theatre pedagogy

Drama and theatre educators and practitioners use the term ‘metaxis’ to describe the
interplay between the actual and the fictitious, in the drama classroom (Boal, 1979, 1995;
Burton, 1991; Linds, 1998; O’Toole, 1992). Metaxis appears to have an elusive quality, as
the notion of ‘interplay’ can vary in degrees with the quality and/or depth of the students’,
teachers’ (Simons, 2003), and drama group’s given circumstances. Metaxis is a term that is
intangible, yet definable, as it exists as an integral part of the drama education process, and
hence playbuilding.

John O’Toole (1992) explains clearly and succinctly this metaxical process within drama
education:

... what we know to be real, and what we bring to the drama in terms of our
cultural background, experience, and attitudes – is termed the real context,
while the make-believe world of the drama which we have agreed to believe
in together is termed the fictional context. While the drama is happening,
we are operating in both of these contexts, and it will be shown that they are
operating on each other. That is part of what is romantically called the
‘magic’ of theatre; however, I shall unromantically term it ‘metaxis’,
because it is a very substantial and definable component of the experience
itself, which needs to be understood if we are to comprehend the dramatic
aesthetic and the dramatic meaning” (p.13).

Within my thesis, the question of how metaxis reciprocates between both the ‘real and the
fictional’ worlds, or in other words the duality between the ‘actual and fictitious’, is
This duality is examined not only through the students’ playbuilding, but also through the exchange between teacher and students in the drama experience.

John O’Toole argues that metaxis helps drama teachers and students alike to comprehend drama aesthetics and dramatic meaning. It is therefore like the “subtexts” (p.75) of the drama class, where words, images, ideas, knowledge, physicality, feelings, conscious and unconscious imaginings occur simultaneously. This capacity of drama teachers and students to hold two worlds simultaneously in their minds and bodies in the drama classroom implies that metaxis is occurring all the time; it underplays the work being carried out by everyone in the class.

Other drama educators, such as Bruce Burton (1991), explain the importance of metaxis by proposing that the “drama process requires a special act of the imagination, effectively defined by Augusto Boal as metaxis” (p.7). Burton argues that “for the drama process to occur, and create the interplay of metaxis which can lead to insight, certain essential elements of experience must be present. These elements are: imagination, creativity, identification, transformation and discovery” (p.8).

Both John O’Toole and Bruce Burton refer to Augusto Boal in their concepts of how metaxis is generated. They argue that Boal’s work within Theatre of the Oppressed actively explores the function of a theatre audience, whereby the audience becomes more than passive receivers of the information. The members of the audience are invited into a betwixt and between metaxical world of the theatre event, where they not only see and hear and think about the action but also can participate in the action (Boal, 1979). (The audience member and/or the audience is/are known as the spec-actor(s) – Refer section 2.4.2 Theatre practitioners’ pedagogy).

Boal argues that in the theatre of the oppressed, the spec-actor that invades the scene produces metaxis as s/he is totally the character and s/he is totally him/herself (A. Boal, via Professor Doug Paterson, University of Nebraska, personal communication, March 23, 2001). In this email Boal is referring to his work on Forum Theatre. Fundamentally, Forum Theatre presents a social, political or cultural problem to audience members. When the dramatic scene has been played out the audience are invited to try to find solutions to
the problem. They do this by discussion and debate amongst all present and by some audience members stepping onto the stage floor and becoming the protagonists of the scene. By becoming protagonists the audience members are simultaneously in the two worlds of the actual and the fictional, and have a capacity to use their individual metaxical situation, or the collective metaxical situation of the audience, to help solve the given problem. Therefore Boal uses the term metaxis to analyse verbally and visually the creation of a double reality in his theatre processes and performances (Boal, 1995). Ultimately, the word ‘spec-actor’ has metaxis embedded in its meaning, and has close connections to the liminal experience in ritual.

Metaxis is connected to the liminal (Turner, 1982), in that the liminal can be visualised as a space that makes way for new ideas yet still connects to the old ideas. A liminal period of time refers to when “the actual work of rites of passage takes place” (Schechner, 2002, p.57), and hence a liminal transformation occurs when people enter this period of time. Victor Turner, a prominent theatre anthropologist, was attracted to the concept of the liminal and its connection with performance. Turner (1982, 1988, 1995) writes about the liminal, describing liminality as that particular kind of being in-between worlds so familiar to actors and artists and shamans. He explains that the word ‘entertain’ is derived from ‘entretenir’ to ‘‘hold apart’, that is, to create liminal or liminoid space in which performances may take place” (Turner, 1982, p.41). The concept of liminal is therefore embedded in metaxis and the rituals of a drama classroom. Turner’s analysis of how each culture and each person within it uses the entire sensory repertoire to convey ideas parallels in some ways how students demonstrate their dramatic ideas. A drama group’s playbuilding has a particular kind of being in-between the actual and fictitious worlds, a “metaxis which feeds into the drama” (O’Toole, 1992, p.220) so that the body, mind, and environment can be connected willingly within the imaginative moment; this could be described as metaxical embodiment.

In playbuilding the dual affect of the actual and the fictional can provide a tension in the space between the two worlds that occur in the classroom (p.166). An example of this is when a playbuilding group is discussing, debating and improvising ideas to begin the playbuilding process. At this time students are continually working in their actual world, but tapping into the fictional world; their ideas sometimes work and sometimes they don’t.
Sometimes ideas that seemed significant in group discussion break down in the fictional improvisation, and ideas that seemed insignificant in the group discussion may come to life in the fictional improvisation; this is metaxical embodiment at work (Linds, 1998). It incorporates the tension of the two colliding worlds, and produces experiences that give the playbuilders a passage into embodiment.

Warren Linds (1998) connects metaxis to embodiment, arguing that:

The two worlds of metaxis in ourselves are autonomous. Metaxis occurs in the artist’s body and is embodied. Self and mind are woven through the entire human body and through the web of the relationships in which that self takes shape (p.74).

Therefore it is “through the process of metaxis, (that) drama becomes the interplay between the imagined and the actual, the tangible and the ephemeral” (p.75). Metaxis is like an invisible film over the key questions in this thesis as it informs the ideas, and fills the spaces between new and old ideas. This written conversation about drama and theatre educators’ pedagogy illuminates the eclectic links between imagining and creating in ensemble playbuilding.

2.5 Learning theories that connect to kinaesthetic playbuilding

Throughout this thesis the term ‘kinaesthetics’ is used to describe generically how individuals in a group use all or part of their bodies to find and solve problems and fashion ideas for their playbuilding projects. When the term ‘bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence’ is used it refers to Howard Gardner’s definition, as discussed in the following section, and acknowledges Howard Gardner’s work on Multiple Intelligences (1993a & b, 1994, 1999; Hyland, 2000, p.7).
2.5.1 Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence

Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory (1993a & b, 1994, 1999) has challenged the traditional education and cognitive science belief that intelligence is a uniform cognitive capacity that people are born with. His concept is that traditional educational ideas of cognitive skills have ignored the full reservoir of human intelligences (Gardner, 1993b, pp.5-12; Hyland, 2000; Koch, 1996), and within his MI argument he examines bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence.

Gardner’s work on bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence attempts to explore the cognitive, physical, and affective states where kinaesthetic thinking and doing directly relate to the cognitive operations and functions of motion, balance, shape and problem solving (Wright, 1998). This concept explores the artistic impulse within muscle memory, and the capacity for the individual to express an idea through attuned sensory receptors of the body (Gardner1993a, chap. 8, 1993b pp.18-19).

Gardner has defined bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence as one that can be exemplified by dancers, artists and surgeons, and one that students can draw on within a combination of different intelligences, albeit favoring one over another at different times in their learning. Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence is not singular but multiple, comprising of linguistic, musical, mathematical, spatial, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences, but with a dominance in the kinaesthetic field (Gardner, 1993a & b).

Howard Gardner (1993b) argues that individuals have different minds from one another, and that “education ought to be so sculptured that it remains responsive to these differences” (p.71). He contends that learners will translate the information back into their dominant intelligence domain(s), and that without this translation “what is learned tends to remain at a relatively superficial level”(p.33). Within this theory Gardner discusses how the brain has developed to be responsive to different kinds of content. For instance, there is language content, musical content, artistic content, and importantly there is synthesis through the intelligences, which he calls a “contextualization of intelligences” where the “intellectual
capacities are inextricably bound with the contexts in which we live” (p.xv). He theorises that the seven distinct intelligences can be nurtured and channelled in specific ways and that intelligence is shaped by the time, place and culture in which the definition evolved. Within his work he argues that individuals within each type of society are “motivated to engage their competencies in various domains of knowledge” (p.232), and that each person has a different intellectual and creative composition.

The concept of artistic intelligence and the capacity to express aesthetically within the imaginative world is supported by a wide range of scholars such as Roslyn Arnold (1998, 2000), Gerald Grow (1990a & b), Jennifer Simons (1998), and Betty Jane Wagner (1998b), who are diverse educators exploring Gardner’s MI theory to help inform their teaching praxis. Other drama educators, such as Juliana Saxton and Carole Miller (2001), argue that in their experience “MI theory has been embraced by drama teachers and is certainly the most innovative and influential theory to have been taken into generalist practice in the last 25 years” (p.113). Teachers’ intuitive knowledge of their students allows them to adopt teaching methodologies that tap into the potential and capabilities of a diverse range of students. Saxton and Miller acknowledge that within Gardner’s theory there is no particular reference to drama education, but they believe that Gardner “has produced a theory that helps to validate our practice and the place of drama in a variety of educational contexts” (p.114).

There are contrary viewpoints to Gardner’s theory, and although my intention here is to explore these, I concur with David Wright’s (1998) suggestion that “the evidence offered by Gardner for a bodily-intelligence emphasises the importance of accommodating such intelligence in teaching and learning systems” (p.259).

David Best, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Wales, reviewing a conference on Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences, warns that “if teachers were to restrict their concept of intelligence to Gardner’s definitions, they would be in danger of ignoring or distorting other at least equally important kinds of intelligence” (cited in O’Sullivan, 2001, p.256). Best argues that Gardner’s claim that the arts communicate information about feelings is confused as “the arts communicate and express feeling themselves. Gardner’s theory fails to understand the dynamic character of the learning involved in the arts.”
Other drama educators such as Bill Roper and David Davis (2000) argue that Gardner has a Kantian perspective of cognitive science which "sets mind and its cognates, cognition, representation, subjectivity and consciousness, as the prime force" (p.223). They believe that Gardner’s focus is on "mind-driven accounts of arts education" (p.225), and that Vygotsky’s framework has a far greater claim to drama and theatre education as it fosters knowledge and development.

Gardner’s theory promotes regular discussion. At a Conference on Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences. A Constructive Alternative at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, in February 2001, Professor Áine Hyland, Vice President of University College Cork, repudiated suggestions that MI is just a way of classifying children. Rather, as she saw it, it is a "recognition of the many ways that children learn and the need for teachers to set challenges for children to grow in their many intelligences. It is not a question of 'are you intelligent', but 'in what ways'" (O'Sullivan, 2001, p.255). Hyland claims that educators find MI theory useful as it validates what a teacher already knows, and that it helps teachers to extend their practice (p.255). I would argue that in the secondary drama classroom many drama teachers already know that a preferred method of student learning is through bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, enhanced by other intelligences, as the drama classroom is an active environment, both physically and mentally.

Howard Gardner’s work on bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence accords with the fundamental assumption of Kantian cognitive philosophy, and elucidates the Kantian idea that our feelings and sentiments play an indispensable role in human reason and inclinations (Kant, 1785 & 1964, pp.68-69; Wolff, 1967). Gardner also proposes that creative individuals use their cognitive processes in a more efficient, flexible and often quite risky way (Gardner, 1993b, p.171; Koch, 1996). These ideas lend themselves to drama learning, and educators such as Hyland (2000) believe that Gardner’s work is underpinned by the pedagogic implications of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development.

Lev Vygotsky (1994; Daniels, 1996, 2001; Kozulin, 1986; van der Veer & Valsiner, 1994) argues that students do not develop in isolation, rather that their learning takes place in interaction with their environment; he named this type of learning the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In this thesis, the theories of Vygotsky’s ZPD have been useful in
scrutinising the outcomes of the educational playbuilding processes and performances, and they appear to work with rather than against Gardner’s pedagogic ideas. ZPD can be discussed “in terms of assessment and instruction” (Daniels, 2001, p.59), and it is a discussion that is not about a singular student, but about a student in relationship to others in the context of the learning environment. ZPD has facilitated an exploration in which the possibilities of merging assessing, scaffolding and kinaesthetics can be linked to drama collaborative learning, and this is analysed in Chapter Seven.

Vygotsky’s theories have challenged educational thinking (Daniels, 1996, 2001; Kozulin, 1986), just like Gardner’s MI theories. Vygotsky’s ZDP theories are based on the premise that in teaching and learning, change should occur through effective scaffolding. This involves simplifying the student’s role so that the project (Daniels, 2001, p.107) does not just transmit knowledge but provides a greater intensity and richness of learning more likely to enhance knowledge. Hence, scaffolding does not occur in isolation, but in a collaborative place that facilitates development. Vygotsky (1978, cited in Daniels, 1996) discusses this as “the distance between a child’s ‘actual development level as determined by independent problem solving’, and the higher level of ‘potential development as determined through problem solving’ under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Daniels, 1996, p.4).

I believe that effective scaffolding assesses the way that students make progress, whilst providing them with a variety of ways to do this. Therefore, to explore playbuilding through ZPD, the characteristics of planning, monitoring, checking, reflecting, and evaluating must be evident (Daniels, 2001, p.100). This in turn may create group ownership of the work that is enhanced by pertinent drama structures to provide the group with extensions, whilst at the same time acknowledging that each student is an independent and interdependent learner. This type of scaffolding pedagogy equips the individual and the group to become cognizant, affective and physical learners (Daniels, 1996, 2001).

John-Steiner and Mahn (1996, cited in Daniels, 2001, p.56) debate that “the concept of ZPD was created by Vygotsky as a metaphor to assist in explaining the way in which social and participatory learning takes place”. It is a way of examining pedagogic psychological change and “lies at the heart of Vygotsky’s social account of learning” (p.59). Therefore I
contend that Vygotsky’s theories complement and enhance Howard Gardner’s theories on MI.

Howard Gardner (1993b; Hyland, 2000), like Vygotsky, is not content just with the transmission of knowledge, but with the development, communication and creation of meaning through lenses of intelligences, and through attempting to devise “new kinds of assessment instruments” (Gardner, p.xiv) that provide formative learning experiences, as demonstrated in Chapter Eight.

David Wright’s (1998) critique of Gardner argues that:

The body is central to all performance (bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence) and self-knowledge and an understanding of others (the personal intelligences) are intelligences that are tested continually in the relationships constructed through drama. While some of these intelligences are more significant than others the range of the intelligences used suggests that drama offers both broad and flexible opportunities for a wide range of learning experiences (p.260).

To summarise, Gardner believes that intelligences originate as an actual relationship for the student as a learner. He acknowledges the learning of the body and learning through the body, albeit enhanced and surrounded by other intelligences.

2.5.2 Tacit body senses

In playbuilding the body and all its senses are constantly engaged (Barnes, 1999; Bray, 1991; Michaels, 1996; Tarlington & Michaels, 1995; Weigler, 1999). The faculties of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste can provide a practical and intuitive wisdom to the drama group. Sight, hearing and touch are the primary bodily senses that are used, but smell and taste can also play an integral part, either literally when food and/or drinks are part of the classroom experience or figuratively when the group can almost smell and taste their work.
David Abram (1996), an ecologist and philosopher, explores ‘body senses’ through what he defines as a fusion of the senses. He argues that this fusion is often a non-verbal experience where senses are “blended with one another” until one stands back and separates these senses (p.60). He connects these ideas with his perception that language is learnt through the body (p.75), and therefore the human body is a sensuous language.

Abram discusses the imagination as a primary connection between the bodily senses and the natural world. He perceives that the imagination continually adjusts to a shifting world, as the senses can be “genuinely startled or surprised” by all the experiences (p.49). Abram also argues that from a phenomenologist’s perspective, the imagination is a primary quality of the senses as “imagination is not a separate mental faculty” (p.58). Abram is exploring what has happened to humans’ non-verbal intuitive selves in the face of a global emphasis on verbal language, writing, and a loss of connection with the natural world.

In drama and theatre education spoken and written language can at times appear to dominate the curriculum, but drama and theatre education is “rooted in the physical and the sensual, as much as it is in words and ideas” (Fortier, 2002, p.4). This theatrical phenomenological idea can be a provocative one, especially in Western drama and theatre education where the body, its physicality and sensuality can be thought of as a place that has many associated taboos (Wright, 1998). However, I believe it is beholden upon drama and theatre educators to explore the body, its senses, and all its languages, to bring into focus the importance of embodied sensations in education. Mark Fortier (2002) examines phenomenology and theatre, proposing that “the sensory effects of theatre are central to phenomenological concerns. Furthermore, lived bodiliness can be seen in the ways that theatre sometimes works through sensory channels for extreme effects” (p.39). This ‘lived bodiliness’ is further explored in Chapter Six where a detailed analysis of two senior secondary playbuilding projects is presented.

Phenomenology per se is “not concerned with the world as it exists in itself but with how the world appears (as phenomena) to the humans who encounter it” (Fortier, 2002, p.38). This aspect of phenomenology elaborates upon the drama education aesthetic and explores the way drama students encounter their playbuilding projects. Phenomenology, then, has a place in this discussion, particularly Merleau-Ponty’s themes of being embodied in the
world and of the world as perceived from the point of view of the body (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p.239). The motility of this idea is that bodies, and hence the bodies in the playbuilding groups of this study, cannot be examined just in their own right, but need to be placed in the context of their drama world.

Merleau-Ponty argues that central to his idea is that the body has to be understood in relationship to its project, and the surrounding environment allows the body to see ahead to the possibilities, and this belongs to the possibilities of action in the world. He critiques sensation as the advent of being conscious instead of presuming its possibility (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, pp.281-282). He argues that in exploring perception in human beings, we learn how to be something other than what we are (chap. 3). Hence this almost subliminal idea of ‘possibilities’ provokes the thought that playbuilders may subconsciously use their project to allow their bodies, and associated sensations, to predict ahead into the journey of imagining and creating (Garner, 1994; Macann, 1993; Matthews, 2002; States, 1985).

Mary Rose Barral’s (1984) analysis of the arguments of Merleau-Ponty, in her study of the body within interpersonal relations, suggests that we must learn to communicate with others’ consciousness in a common world (p.221). It is through this communication of consciousness that the body is capable of giving meaning to the world, precisely because it is a human body (p.48). Body movement theorist Gail Weiss (1999) states that Merleau-Ponty points out the danger of viewing the body as a singular entity as the body is never isolated in its activity and engagement with the world (p.1). Weiss (p.2) suggests that Merleau-Ponty does justice to the kinaesthetic aspects of bodily experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p.107), and advocates that there are a multiplicity of body images that are constructed both within and outside of specific bodies. This idea links strongly to a drama and theatre education environment through the work of Boal (1992), Franks (1996), Garner (1994), Morris (1998), Newlove (1993), van den Berg (1996), Wright (1998) and Yakim and Broadman (1990).

Theatre phenomenologists such as Fortier (2002), Garner (1994) and States (1985) argue that theatre has a special relationship with a bodily lived experience. Similarly, drama and theatre education students encounter an immediate environment with their own and other
bodies as their human senses resonate and reply to their lived bodily experiences in the classroom. Within this resonance there needs to be empathy, awareness, a mirroring (Arnold, 1998, p.127), which reflect all the possibilities in the playbuilding project.

Therefore, a phenomenological position on the senses, body and awareness views them as seeds that have a reciprocity with imagining and creating in playbuilding, as “the body is that mysterious and multifaceted phenomenon that seems always to accompany one’s awareness” (Abram, 1996, p.37). This awareness is directly connected to kinaesthetic bodily senses and responds to the human imagination.

2.5.3 Kinaesthetic modality

The kinaesthetic modality is the imagination’s capacity to work with the body’s rhythms and abilities (Boal, 1992; Davies, 2001; Franks, 1996; Garner, 1994; Newlove, 1993; States, 1985; Wright, 1998). The rhythm of imagination, and its extraordinary potential to be transformed, belongs to the nature of interacting. For example, a playbuilding group may decide that they want to create a group devised play where each student takes on a complex character. They begin by improvising and transforming themselves physically and emotionally into the lives of their characters. They don’t know a great deal about the characters; they are at the beginning of the process. They try to endow their characters with a real life, and they begin this process through physicalisation. Performing arts teachers such as Blom and Chaplin (1982, 1988), Moore and Yamamoto (1988a & b) and Yakim and Broadman (1990) argue that through a simultaneous body and mind approach, as just discussed, students intuitively and instinctively learn to use their kinaesthetic competencies.

Yakim and Broadman’s (1990) acting techniques focus on the individual student, whist recognising that the individual generally creates within an ensemble. Their acting techniques explore a blend of the physical and emotional whereby the actor must be attuned to his or her senses when approaching a role. This approach to characterisation is through physicalisation. Moore and Yamamoto (1998b) experiment with teaching movement and movement observation; they argue that the inherent meaning in the title of their text Beyond
Words is an “exciting, open, and largely uncharted territory” (p.39). They expound the ‘interdisciplinary applicability’ of their work that they believe will continue to be applied in human endeavour (p.11). This interdisciplinary applicability relates to body movement, observation and perception, and connects to the idea of building more complex skills and knowledge in movement and non-verbal communication; hence its applicability in a study of playbuilding.

Blom and Chaplin (1998) argue that the body experiences through the senses, and the fact that the senses are non-verbal means that the knowledge the body carries can “only be learned and known through experience” (p.16). They argue that this experience builds on tacit knowledge “which becomes embedded in the body’s response system” (p.16). They consider that the recurring patterns within dance improvisation are important as they provide the body with knowledge that enables an enriching of the individual and group to occur, and this idea can be extended into drama and theatre improvisation.

Blom and Chaplin (1982, 1988) and Moore and Yamamoto (1988a & b) advocate the importance of accessible movement improvisation teaching for students. Ultimately they argue that, through a simultaneous body and mind approach, students intuitively and instinctively learn to use their kinaesthetic competencies. They attempt to analyse and explain the nature of this non-verbal expressive art, and their work in movement communication, as the bedrock for human relationships.

The concepts of Blom and Chaplin, Moore and Yamamoto, and Yakim and Broadman can therefore be viewed both individually and simultaneously, within the sphere of kinaesthetic modality. These practitioners explore a broad range of esoteric ideas and the more concrete world of developing the physical life of an interactive character and/or role.

Fundamentally, the body is a creative instrument within drama and theatre praxis (Boal, 1992; Franks, 1996; Morris, 1998; Newlove, 1993; Tait, 1994; van den Berg, 1996; Wright, 1998; Yakim & Broadman, 1990). This literature review has provided thought that in this embodied environment “true creativity fills the space” (Brook, 1993, p.23). In drama and theatre education there is an argument that much has to be done to allow the body, the kinaesthetic, to flourish in the classroom, so that a transformative intensity occurs between
the individual and the group. David Wright (1998) proposes that “the body has been insufficiently acknowledged in drama education”, and that “it is through a recognition of the body and the importance of feelings that arise within the body” (p.260) that drama education can extend its pedagogical boundaries.

From analysis of some of the influences behind the body, both in professional performance and in drama and theatre education, and by considering some of the learning inherent in these ideas, a pattern emerges which starts to connect the kinaesthetic to imagining and creating in a playbuilding environment.

2.6 Concluding thoughts

While undertaking this literature review I engaged in a variety of processes of reading, discussing, analysing and synthesising. Each literary discovery augmented ways to discover new literature and hence new thoughts within my data. Moreover, the theoretical texts and their ideas allowed me to generate “accumulated knowledge” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.47) and appeared pertinent to my investigation, as their interdisciplinary ideas continuously crossed into my study, provoking thought, comparison and investigation. Therefore, I believe that the technical literature analysed in this chapter is most relevant. The qualitative nature of grounded theory provided me with the “freedom to be open about anything pertaining to the data” (Glaser, 1998, p.224) so that my personal signature could be stamped onto the research.

In conjunction with the data there was interplay with the literature, which stimulated conceptual questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin argue that literature can be an invaluable tool because:

As professionals, most of us are familiar with the literature in the field. Literature can be used as an analytic tool if we are careful to think about it in theoretical terms. Used in this way, the literature can provide a rich source of events to stimulate thinking about properties and for asking conceptual questions” (p.47).
The considerations and constraints in the journey of the literature review were an attempt to understand the drama form of playbuilding, which is not made just in the mind or on the page. Playbuilding is truly a practical pursuit made from the energy, personalities, skills and knowledge of students in their drama classroom.

In the opening quote, Ovid’s (43 B.C./1955, p.29) purpose was to talk of transforming bodies, and this has also been my intention in the literature review. I have analysed the way in which these many eclectic theorists have transformed their praxis, as well as my own thinking regarding the drama educational form of playbuilding. I respect Ovid’s imaginative and creative powers, and his ideas on transformation have provided me with inspiration to help reveal the connections and differences between the many ideas explored in this chapter, and the different ways of knowing that intersect (Held, 1980; Horkheimer, 1972; Outhwaite, 1996; Smith & Lovat, 1991). Therefore this review has travelled in scope and breadth, and has been transformed by the shape and progression of the key questions.
Chapter 3
Qualitative research methods

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes” Marcel Proust (1871/1972; Barry, 1997, no page number cited).

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I address the initial growth, queries, constraints and considerations of my research and my journey through the qualitative research methods which rely on grounded theory procedures (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Flow of analyses in this thesis
Marcel Proust's (1871/1972; Barry, 1997) statement on discovery at the beginning of this chapter evokes an appropriate image of the continuous and momentous experience of my investigation. I have undertaken this investigation using a wide range of sources, theories, diverse literature and professional experiences. Therefore, theoretical investigation, individual and group accounts, collegial debate, and personal classroom observation, have all been part of the journey; this chapter describes the journey along my research path. This epistemological process is similar to a playbuilding process; ideas spring to life which are elucidated through a process of my imagining, creating and expressing. The process had to be flexible, and the research activities surrounding it open and malleable.

The first section of this chapter examines the reasons for using grounded theory in my qualitative research, followed by detailed discussion of the research sites for the teachers and students, as well as the manner in which I went about gaining ethical permission from all participants (see Appendix 1). I also analyse the cultural, social and educational world of the participating students, with a focus on how junior and senior secondary students’ drama education evolved at St. Sistine School. The collection of data is then examined, giving the reader a clear picture of the methodological framework that surrounds the collection of this data. This section concludes with a review of the limitations and constraints of my research.

The second section of this chapter describes how I approached the grounded theory design, and how I went about analysing the data. That section explains the cycle of grounded theory, its strategies for collecting data, analysing it, coding it, writing analytical memos, sorting the memos, and coding the relationships as they emerged (Strauss & Corbin, 1997, 1998; Glaser, 1992, 1996, 1998). The qualitative research design, by its very nature, creates imagery to identify and consider the meanings of such concepts as imagining and creating. Theoretical saturation occurred when no new concepts emerged, and from this, the grounded theory gained shape. Along the way the core concepts were presented, challenged and discussed at many colloquial gatherings (see Appendix 2.1). The final reflections explore my journey as a researcher, describing my travels as a ‘teacher’s metaphoric playbuilding journey’.

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3.2 Grounded theory research design

A grounded theory research approach was the most appropriate way to investigate the complexities of secondary school playbuilding. Through the flexibility of grounded theory I was able to discover and then share my interpretations with drama colleagues about the transformational nature of group devised work. Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that:

Flexibility and openness are linked with having learned to sustain a fair amount of ambiguity. It is not that the researchers do not want to pin down things analytically, but the urge to avoid uncertainty and to get quick closure on one’s research is tempered with the realization that phenomena are complex and their meanings are not easily fathomed or just taken for granted. This is quite like the processes they study (pp.5-6).

Qualitative research has characteristics that allowed interplay between me as the drama educator/researcher and the playbuilding research material. Through this method I could validly draw on my own experiences when analysing the data, because my experiences were the foundations for examining and exploring, comparing and contrasting. Philip Taylor (1998) argues that drama teachers should create “conceptual advance(s) in research design” that enhance the “qualitative spirit which powers our field state” (pp.86-87). It was therefore timely for me to explore, through grounded theory processes, the unique dynamics of secondary school playbuilding groups weaving together their own plays through artistic teamwork.

My qualitative research studies two secondary school drama classes who undertook three playbuilding projects, and four practising teachers’ views on playbuilding. This section describes the collection of the data, and the grounded theory methodologies used to interpret it.

Of course there were different degrees of complexity from a cognizant perspective. I wished to determine the quality of the secondary students’ learning from the responses given via classroom teaching, junior journals and senior logbooks, classroom discussion, classroom practical activities, rehearsals, final performances, videotapes, and collegial debate and evaluation. I wished to give voice to the work of students and colleagues regarding the collaborative nature of dramatic imagining and creating; this had to be
integral to my continuing synthesis of the data, and hence to discovering the links between imagining and creating in playbuilding. In this regard, my sixteen years experience as a drama and theatre educator influenced by my social and cultural experiences and previous years as a professional performance artist and director allowed an experienced interplay between all the sources of material and the data gathered. Sharon Bailin (1998) states that “background knowledge in the particular area is a precondition for critical thinking to take place” (p.147). She argues that to investigate drama education, background knowledge and knowledge of the relevant concepts and principles are fundamental to the “quality of the thinking” (p.147) and hence the fostering of dramatic inquiry should encourage debate and discussion within the drama fraternity.

The grounded theory methods that I used belong to Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) and Glaser’s (1998) techniques and procedures for developing a theory grounded in data. This qualitative research approach is a discovery of ideas through an analytical mode in which the data is fractured, conceptualised, and integrated to form theory. This approach allows a flexible method of examining my data through systems that embrace the multidisciplinary aspect of drama education, and hence playbuilding, as their grounded theory design supports the concept of valuing the individual participants’ voices, and hence the group playbuilding voices that emerged.

My study began in 1999 (Glesne, 1999) when I decided to investigate the links between imagining and creating in playbuilding. In 2000 I was granted ethics permission (see Appendix 1.1) to undertake this research with my students, and this enabled me to begin collecting the playbuilding data. During 2001, the coding, conceptualising and identification of relationships in the data were occurring; by the end of 2002 the theoretical saturation point had been reached and the paradigm had emerged. Simultaneously, I was reading and analysing pertinent literature to enhance my understanding of the multifaceted nature of playbuilding. The end process took place in 2003 when I wrote up my interpretations. Figure 3.2 shows the broad context and timing of my qualitative research program.
3.3 Research sites

The school where the majority of this research was undertaken, and the one where I taught, is St. Sistine School (pseudonym) in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia; it is a Catholic, all girls secondary school. I decided to use my own workplace, St. Sistine School, as the physical base for investigation as I had spent many years teaching at this school and had designed a drama education curriculum that endeavoured to enrich the lives of the students who undertook the subject. Hence I decided to use my everyday classroom drama programs for the research project rather than create a specific project from, say, the school’s extracurricular drama ensemble, so that the application of the research interpretations are sustainable in everyday drama teaching. The contextual situation of these drama programs meant that the students’ playbuilding knowledge, skills and understanding, belonged to and was in response to a scaffolding curriculum, and I wanted to explore what happened in their playbuilding within this drama curriculum design.
The School Principal was very supportive of the Drama Department’s educational curriculum, and I initially approached her and the Head of Secondary School with fluid ideas about the mutual benefits of my research. Both were supportive of my endeavours, and this proved to be the initial impetus to consolidate my research ideas. As with Joanne O’Mara’s (1999) research site, where she perceived the importance of a friendly principal who would be empathic to the educational research (p.57), I too understood and was heartened by my Principal’s and Head of Secondary School’s moral and educational support for my endeavours. These events all took place prior to informing the rest of the school community, including the junior and senior secondary drama student participants and their parents/guardians.

Over a period of 10 months the St. Sistine research site provided me with opportunities to take a holistic, comparative view of the junior and senior secondary school playbuilding projects, and to begin to build a theory. This school research site incorporated:

- physical site - St. Sistine School
- participant site - student participants (pseudonyms are used for all student participants)
- observations of playbuilding projects at St. Sistine School.

Therefore, the first research site was primarily concerned with the collaborative and artistic drama experiences of a group of 18 senior (17/18 years) and 19 junior (13/14 year) girls in three playbuilding projects over a 10 month period. The categorising of the three playbuilding projects demonstrates the learning focus for the student participants. Firstly, *Performing an Essay* represents senior participating students who perform a group essay. Secondly, *Group Devised Performance* is identified by senior participating students who have the liberty to build and explore actively any aspect of playbuilding they wish, as long as they adhere to the Higher School Certificate criteria for examination. Thirdly, the junior participating students’ *Experimental Playbuilding* is characterised by their experimenting with playbuilding conventions and techniques that were new and innovative to them, such as non-verbal narratives.

The student participant playbuilding projects are now outlined; I have identified each playbuilding group based on the themes of their work:
- **Performing an Essay** – two senior secondary groups of students:
  - *Feminism versus Femininity* – six students
  - *The Female Protagonists* – six students

- **Group Devised Performance** – three senior secondary groups of students:
  - *The Three Eves* – three students
  - *The Wives* – five students
  - *The Triangle* – five students

- **Experimental Playbuilding** – five junior secondary groups of students:
  - *Television versus Reality* – four students
  - *Dominant Masks* – four students
  - *Sameness versus Difference* – three students
  - *The Scream* – four students
  - *Corruption versus Honesty* – four students

The teacher research (site) took place over a period of five months and provided me with opportunities to take a comparative view to the students, and to enrich my grounded theory design. It incorporated:

- participant site - four teacher participant personal interviews – (pseudonyms are used for all teacher participants)
- telephone discussions.

The teacher research site was primarily concerned with the professional experiences in teaching secondary school playbuilding of four drama teachers who were chosen because of their diverse backgrounds. The teacher participant research site followed the completion of the participating students' playbuilding projects at St. Sistine School. Initial telephone calls were made to the teachers explaining the research work I was undertaking, and seeking their agreement to participate in the project. Subsequent telephone conversations discussed their concepts of playbuilding in relationship to their current teaching projects. I then arranged face-to-face meetings with each of the teachers and outlined the types of questions
I wished to ask, so that they could give some thought to their responses before meeting with me (see Appendix 3.1).

Each interview situation was different; with the first interviewee, Paul, we spent many telephone conversations discussing his current playbuilding projects, and comparing and contrasting teaching and learning strategies; we then entered into the more formal audiotaping of his responses to the given questions. The second interviewee structure had a group format, as I felt that this would provide an extra dynamic to the interview process, and it corresponded to my ideas of exploring group dynamics in playbuilding. Again, the audiotaped interview with Alice and Lucy was conducted after lengthy telephone discussions about the two teachers' current playbuilding projects. Finally, the last teacher, Sam, became too busy to have a meeting within the time frame I had set. Instead, during his holidays, he responded to the questions on an audiotape which he sent to me. We then had a number of further telephone conversations to discuss and clarify his responses.

Both research sites, teachers and students, highlighted what was being studied and under what circumstances, and for what duration and with whom. Both groups' pedagogic circumstances became clear during this research process, and both sites allowed me "to capture a richer interpretation of the participants' perspectives" on playbuilding (Janesick, 1998, p.39).

3.4 School culture

St. Sistine's School promoted an educational view that the curriculum and the religious, social and cultural life of the School all had the potential to contribute to the development and growth of the individual student. The Christian dimension of the curriculum had a continual focus on issues of the Catholic gospel such as "love, hope, justice, compassion, reverence, joy and reconciliation" (St. Sistine's School's Mission Statement, 2000). Furthermore, the school's philosophy was that it must provide opportunities to develop the whole human person within a national and international community. The Principal and the school executive believed in the importance of drama education to allow students to develop their own personal and community voices, and as a means of enhancing the
Christian philosophy; this Catholic pedagogic orientation was a part of the school ethos and culture.

“Culture ... provides the tools for organizing and understanding our worlds in communicable ways” (Bruner, 1996, p.3). Culture means people; it means people’s patterns, ideas, feelings and ideologies. Jerome Bruner (1986, 1996) poses the question “What does it take to create a nurturing school culture that empowers the young effectively to use the resources and opportunities of the broader culture?” (1996, p.xiv). He analyses how the quest for meaning and student empowerment is surrounded by a culture’s symbolic systems. St. Sistine’s School’s educational culture evolved from its religious, economic, historical and pedagogical patterns, and the way in which the school utilised these cultural resources helped to articulate and transmit its mission statement of social justice and learning for life to its teenage students. The School’s distinct culture therefore influenced the methodological analysis, as it was consciously and subconsciously inherent in the participating students’ playbuilding projects.

Marcel Danesi (1994) argues that “the teenager of today has a recognizable persona and a cultural context which maintains and nurtures it” (p.126). He argues that the high school provides an important environment in which teenagers create and sustain their “peer-generated codes” (p.126); these peer-generated codes have efficacy in the drama classroom. During a group discussion with the senior secondary students, they discussed the joys of drama learning in allowing them space to express themselves, but felt frustrated that many other non-drama students “just can’t understand what happens in drama”. The participants felt that the activity of drama helped them to make sense of the world, rather than just sitting and learning passively as with many other subjects. The view that “You can’t read other peoples’ essays, but in drama you can see others people’s work and appreciate it” was an overriding view on the importance of peer learning in the classroom (senior secondary student, audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, May 2000).

Culture is transmitted to us both individually and as groups in our society. St. Sistine School promoted performing and creative arts across the school; in addition, it boasted a fine academic and sporting tradition, and there were many extra-curricula activities for participating junior and senior secondary students. Drama was a micro-culture in the
school, making up part of the whole school day experience. My drama teaching, with its emphasis on collaboration, fostered a community culture in the classroom; by this I mean that students could build a sense of belonging as they discovered the intricacies of each playbuilding project, infusing them with their own individual and group ideas. The drama classroom evolved its own culture, with its own idiosyncrasies, that shaped the way the students viewed their worlds and their perspective of themselves. The culture of playbuilding can be understood in many ways; its hybrid nature can mean that the devising and structuring of drama does not adhere to specific conventions and techniques, and this set of observations allowed contrary ways of looking at the emerging issues.

Martin Esslin (1987) argues that nothing ever happens accidentally in drama, and that there is a complexity of meanings generated to allow for cohesion as well as acknowledging the myriad of social, skill and life experiences that come into the classroom. In the participating students’ drama classroom there were codes of learning behaviour; the circle, the warm-up, the improvisation activities, the moment to loll around and chat, the moment to surge energy into creating. The drama classroom dealt with symbolic creativity and, as a teacher, I would try to look with fresh eyes at the artistic unravelling. Sometimes this meant looking through teenagers’ eyes at the symbols and codes of their worlds, and at other times trying to find ways to extend and expand the cultural, social and artistic activities (Rowan & Brennan, 1998; Willis, 1990a & b; Wood, 1997).

### 3.4.1 Catholic school ethos

The students’ common Catholic religion was part of the culture that tied their worlds together. There was no doubt that a variety of Catholic religious beliefs and practices existed within my junior and senior secondary classes due to age, maturity, parental and personal belief systems. Crawford and Rossiter (1998), in their text Missionaries to a Teenage Culture - Religious Education in a Time of Rapid Change, state that “The emphasis on certainty and uniformity in Catholic beliefs has given way to a more widespread acceptance of the uncertainties and the variety” (p.8). They question how religious culture can develop “in tune with local contexts, needs and interests” (p.18). The
school also recognised the importance of Christianity in a holistic learning environment, and paid respect to the girls’ different ways of worship.

Story and narrative are part of the Catholic school tradition; the place of story in Religious Education is well documented in Crawford and Rossitier’s work (1988), which expresses the importance of storytelling “to explore human characters, emotions and values that suits the student’s maturity” (p.127). The concept of story figured prominently in St. Sistine’s religious environment, as evidenced by the school’s narrative and/or metaphoric liturgies. The students in both the junior and senior secondary drama classes had participated in and even produced many of these religious events. Hence the notion of story could be seen as central to a St. Sistine student’s experience in the religious education classroom, and its flow-on effect could have enhanced the drama students’ storytelling imaginations in the drama classroom.

3.5 Drama curriculum within the school

Drama, Music and Visual Arts are compulsory subjects for ‘middle school’ secondary students (12 year olds) at St. Sistine School; these performing and creative arts courses are then offered as an elective to junior (13 to 16 years old) and senior (17 to 18 years old) secondary school students.

During the research phase the drama curriculum was strong and vibrant within St. Sistine’s School ethos. The Drama Department was comprised of five staff members with varying degrees of expertise in areas such as theatre design, scriptwriting, creative movement, acting for camera. The Drama Department had solid, open channels of communication, and was seen within the school community as proactive in pedagogical endeavours, as evidenced by the growing numbers of students who took drama education as a school elective. The Drama Department maintained eight drama classes catering for middle school students and four classes for senior secondary students. On average, there were 18 to 24 students in each class. The Drama Department organised its curriculum into course and class programs. The organisation of the curriculum is relevant to this study as it details
the links between theory and practices, and exemplifies how the participating junior and senior secondary school students’ learning was organised (Simons, 2003).

### 3.5.1 Drama course and class programs

There was a drama ‘course and class program’ for each junior and senior participating class. The ‘course program’ had an overview of the aims and objectives for that particular cohort. Each course program was developed and implemented in accordance with the School’s Mission Statement and educational policies. Policies such as Assessment and Reporting, Gifted and Talented, Gender and Equity, Multicultural, Pastoral Care, Performing and Creative Arts, Religious Education, and the Drama Department’s Public Performance Policy with its emphasis on producing students original group devised work, were all linked together, and informed the practice of implementing the New South Wales Board of Studies School Certificate Syllabus (Board of Studies, 1985) and Senior Drama Syllabus (Board of Studies, 1999b).

It is important to articulate the learning that the Drama Department promoted, as these concepts are subsumed into each playbuilding project’s teaching and learning strategies that have been used as part of the research of this thesis.

Within these umbrella course programs, the Drama Department promoted:

- experiences which empower students to broaden the means by which they contribute to their society
- unique opportunities for self-expression and growth through problem-solving and decision-making activities
- a cooperative mode of learning over a competitive mode
- the collaborative nature of drama and theatre
- affirmation of a broad range of talents, abilities, and capacities for self expression
- development of views and concepts beyond and outside a student’s usual range of experiences
- experiences which empower students to care for the environment
- experiences in which students are exposed and sensitised to issues of peace and justice at the personal, community and global level
- drama and theatre as a community activity, a profession and an industry.
(St. Sistine School Drama Department’s course program for the junior and senior secondary students, 2000).

From the course programs the Drama Department created ‘class programs’ based on learning projects. The class programs of the participants in this study were organised so that they could scaffold one upon another. The junior secondary students (13/14 years old) were given a discrete playbuilding project; when they entered their next year of drama education (14/15 years old) another playbuilding project was taught but the skills and knowledge outcomes were set at a more advanced level. In the senior secondary course the 17 year olds undertook a playbuilding project that incorporated conventions and techniques from Stanislavski (Benedetti, 1982). In their next year, which was their final year of study, the students were able to use this knowledge if they so wished when they created their HSC Group Devised Performance.

3.6 Becoming a drama researcher

During my year and a half combining the roles of a drama researcher, drama teacher and drama coordinator, roles that needed to complement one another, I needed to engage in a less complex framework that would allow moments for me to enjoy and be challenged by the process. Jerome Bruner (1996) has argued that teaching practice, within any domain, “can be represented in ways that make it accessible through less complex elaborated processes” (p.xii). This pedagogical concept was one that I adhered to in my drama teaching practice, and it was useful in my research to help unravel what was at times a daunting process due the massive amount of data. So, during this time, I studied many performing arts research approaches, such as those of Janesick (1998), Lee (1997), Milne (1998), O’Mara (1999), Taylor (1996, 1998), and Wright (1998). Inspiration from these researchers guided my journey in the early and middle stages of the research when I examined in detail other drama and dance educators’ research theories.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998a & b) argue that there are no distinct methods in qualitative research, and that researchers can use such areas as “semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998a, p.5), as well as the approaches and methods of varied philosophical thought. At the beginning of my work this open research mode
suited my approach, as I did not want to shut off any exploratory ideas before I was ready to. My initial idea was to explore the phenomena of imagining and creating in playbuilding, and therefore I started with a pedagogical praxis exploring general research concepts, rather than a tightly framed pre-conceived concept.

Initially, the aims of the project that I submitted to the Human Ethics Review Committee (HERC) (University of Western Sydney, Nepean, 1999) were to:

- analyse the phenomena of the dramatic conventions and techniques of group devised drama, commonly known as playbuilding
- discover what links there are between imagination and creativity in the drama aesthetic
- analyse the nature of an individual, and their group’s creative capacities, social/cultural construct, imaginative functions, struggles, risks and accomplishment in the drama group devised work.

During this initial stage my curiosity was engaged and I enjoyed discoveries and enlightenment, but I acknowledged a tension about the applicability of this research on the drama classroom floor. These ideas were tempered by Glaser’s (1998) notion that a true research perspective is that “all is data” (p.8). This perspective allowed for a wider approach in my thinking and I was therefore able to examine my thoughts as more data to generate concepts. Also during this time I was constantly reminded of what Janesick (1998) had concluded in her paper on The Dance of Qualitative Research Design: Metaphor, Methodolatry, and Meaning “As Goethe has told us ‘The hardest thing to see is what is in front of your eyes’” (p.52). Sometimes I was so involved that I lost sight, but ultimately my journey as researcher proved to be insightful as I sought to gain contrasting and comparable information on playbuilding.

### 3.7 Gaining permission and formal consent

While I was continuing to speak to the School Principal and the Head of Secondary School about the ideas for my project, and with their knowledge, I simultaneously presented an application to obtain an ethics protocol for research projects involving human participants through the University of Western Sydney Human Ethics Review Committee. On receipt
of formal approval, I officially wrote to my Principal and approached the junior and senior secondary drama classes to discuss their participation in the project. Although the students were excited and supportive, I reiterated verbally and in the written consent form that this was a voluntary project (see Appendices 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, and 1.7).

I handed out the consent forms, which had been approved by the Ethics Committee, to each participating drama student, and sent one to each parent/guardian. The students, parents and guardians were asked to read, sign and return them. I received written acceptance from all the junior secondary students and parents, and all but one of the senior secondary students whose parent did not sign the form. The student, and her parent’s right not to participate were respected, and in accordance with the Human Ethics Review Committee all data pertaining to her was immediately deleted from the study.

I asked a number of teachers to be part of this research, and during the latter part of 2000 I decided to approach four secondary drama teachers because of their diverse backgrounds and their current diverse playbuilding practices. I sent each of these an invitation letter (see Appendix 1.8). Given my teaching workload during the first 18 months of the study, as well as a necessity to analyse and reflect on the emerging outcomes from the student data, I delayed interviewing the four teachers until I took leave from my teaching job. This allowed me time to reflect on the questions that I wished to explore with them.

### 3.7.1 Student participants

Even though the student participants were from an all-girls’ secondary Catholic school, a feminist position is not adopted in the research design, though it informs the analysis because the student participants were all female (Cixous & Clément, 1986; Guberman, 1996; Moi, 1986; Tait, 1994). Leder and Sampson (1989, cited in Lee, 1997, p.71) argue that “gender is an important determinate of the behaviour and attitudes of students in the classroom”. Lee’s (1997) report, The Experiences of Adolescent Girls in One All Female Drama Classroom: A Case Study, gives focus to her female students’ “own voices” (p.79) in a collaborative learning environment, and in my study the collaborative imagining and
creating ‘voices’ have certainly been shaped by the gender of the participants. As a result, this perspective informs my analysis and synthesis of the participating students’ playbuilding projects.

Moreover, during the initial stages of the research, the senior secondary students had been studying an HSC topic entitled *Australian Women’s Theatre*, which gave rise to the students examining gender issues in theatre. The study of *Australian Women’s Theatre* by the senior secondary students provided an opportunity for them to perform with their female voices and to absorb the rhythm, subject matter and dramatic styles of two Australian female theatre practitioners. The students created dramatic scenarios for the respective plays, and explored the female playwrights’ social and political points of view as well as their own dramatic points of view on this topic; this project is analysed in Chapter Eight, and has been categorised as *Performing an Essay*.

Engagement in the drama process requires all participating secondary students, both junior and senior, to enter some type of physical or verbal dialogue, whatever their gender, but my participants’ artistic decisions were inextricably connected with their female role. Peta Tait (1994) argues that on inspection, women “through the production of their own theatre texts, ... initiate an exploratory and politically far-sighted process of inventing and searching for imaginative and provocative styles of presentation” (p.2). She further argues that there is a “multiplicity of existent social realities” (p.23) for female theatre practitioners. Both these concepts have relevance in this thesis.

The social realities that influenced my study included:

- an all-girls secondary school environment
- a learning environment that exemplified female voices
- a multicultural school with cultural diversity in both classes (students were, in the main, second and third generation Australians from European, British and Irish backgrounds)
- a Catholic educational milieu with a strong focus on social justice
- junior secondary drama participants who had publicly performed for the local children’s hospital as part of their curriculum class program
• senior secondary drama participants who had studied as a Drama HSC topic Augusto Boal’s *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979) and *Games for Actors and Non Actors* (1992) prior to the beginning of this research

• junior and senior classes which were of mixed ability with a number of identified gifted and talented drama students in the senior class.

St. Sistine’s school believed that gifted and talented students should be recognised and challenged (Board of Studies, 1993, pp.4-5), and employed a ‘Gifted and Talented Coordinator’ who had classified a number of senior secondary participating students in the mixed ability class as either gifted or talented students (Forster, 1992; Hunsaker & Callahan, 1995; Lovesy, 1998; McLeod & Cropley, 1989). The school defined a gifted student as one with the potential to exhibit superior academic or artistic performance across a range of areas of endeavour, and a talented student as one with the potential to exhibit superior performance in one area of endeavour (NSW Department of Education, 1992, p.3). There were two senior students participating in my research who were gifted in Drama, Music and English Language, and two students who were talented in Drama. These four students attended the school’s extracurricular Drama Ensemble as well as external drama classes such as the open acting courses run for teenagers by Australia’s National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) and/or the Australian Theatre for Young People. All this provided enrichment and extension activities for a small number of senior secondary drama participants under guidance from various drama workshop leaders.

The senior gifted and talented students displayed characteristics of what McLeod and Cropley (1989) have described as the main characteristics of creative people; these include such characteristics as flexibility, sensitivity, empathy and independence. I also suggest that curiosity was a significant quality of the gifted and talented participants; these senior secondary students were particularly curious about the world around them and about how to transform ideas through theatrical metaphors and symbols. Notwithstanding this mix, in the classroom situation I was always aware of privileging the under-achieving learner, and regarded all the junior and senior secondary students as having a reservoir of gifts and talents that could be strengthened. I also knew that all the participating students saw drama as a particularly enjoyable experience in their school day (Arnold, 1998, pp.128-130),

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regardless of the current trends to standards based assessment and empirical assessment. In
the participating students' drama classroom the philosophy was ‘assessment for learning’
and ‘assessment of learning’, concepts which are elaborated in Chapter Seven (The
Assessment Reform Group, 2001, 2002; Wiggins, 1998). I had taught the majority of the
participating students for two to six years, and I therefore had substantial knowledge of
them as drama learners. The girls were friendly, lively, understood the boundaries they
could push as learners and teenagers within the classroom parameters, and many had the
same passion for the performing arts as I did. This meant that the classroom atmosphere
was purposeful, enjoyable and at times tense, when they were in the final rehearsals for a
public audience or an internal assessment. Overall, there was a bonding between the
students and me within the parameters of teacher student relationships. Both junior and
senior secondary groups were enthusiastic participants in the drama classroom activities;
they were a delight to teach.

3.7.2 Teacher participants

The teacher participants provided substantial input into generating ground theory as they
provided a constant comparative analysis to each other and to the junior and senior
participating students. During collection of the participating junior and senior playbuilding
data it became apparent to me that an in-depth teacher/student playbuilding comparison was
required to provide an intensive perspective to the data. I decided that personal interviews
via telephone, and face-to-face contact over a number of months, would provide me with
the diversity and depth of understanding that was required to interpret the phenomena of
imagining and creating in playbuilding. The depth of the teachers’ data was complemented
by the fact that each of the participating teachers was actively teaching playbuilding during
the months they were participating in this research.

The four teacher participants in my study were educational colleagues; they held diverse
pedagogical views regarding approaches to playbuilding, and they came from distinct
backgrounds and perspectives on teaching drama and theatre. There were:
• one male drama and script-writing teacher
• one female drama teacher
• one female drama and English teacher
• one male drama and dance teacher.
The participating teachers are referred to in this thesis using pseudonyms to protect identities.

The participating teachers had all achieved professional standing within their chosen artistic field before, and during their teaching careers. This meant that to one degree or another, they all maintained an interest and professional standing within their respective fields of dance, script writing, and theatre performance, either within the mainstream or the community arts world. The four teachers taught in four different New South Wales secondary school systems:
• New South Wales State Government Co-educational School
• Independent Catholic Girls School
• Independent Anglican Girls School
• Church of England Grammar Co-educational School.

The participating teachers had between eight and 20 years of teaching experience. Their varied teaching milieus and years of teaching were important to this research as they provided a different perspective on drama education, and on the growth of playbuilding within the New South Wales secondary schools curriculum. This school-based diversity provided the data with variants on how playbuilding was taught, assessed, evaluated and valued by the respective school communities. It enabled me to gather different insights into the criteria for interpreting the phenomena of playbuilding. Thus, the teacher participants, although colleagues, came with their own perspective and standpoints on playbuilding, having had different encounters and experiences with this drama form.

The participating teachers had each developed unique ways to teach and interact with playbuilding groups, and are what I would describe as inspirational drama and theatre teachers with a strength in group devised work. I considered that in their teaching work they had stepped beyond the traditional conventions of playbuilding by:
• continually upgrading their drama and theatre education skills, knowledge and understanding, through diverse professional workshops and training
• using their professional expertise to experiment with the form of playbuilding to develop a unique approach
• pushing their personal boundaries of creative teaching to enhance their students’ drama and theatre achievements.

The similarities and differences between the playbuilding strategies of these four teachers inform the whole study, and these are analysed in detail in Chapter Four.

3.8 Data collection details

My research data was collected over a 15 month period from March 2000 to May 2001. The first set of data was collected from the participating students from March to December 2000. There were 37 secondary students, including 18 senior students and 19 junior students. There were 10 drama student groups involved in three separate playbuilding projects. Each playbuilding project was taught by me over a 4 x 50 minute period each week, but each project was of a different duration as shown in the overview of data towards the end of this section. Nevertheless, all playbuilding projects had an associated drama class program that outlined the objectives and outcomes, teaching and learning strategies, assessment procedures, resources, and evaluation process. These drama class programs were relevant to the data, along with my teacher’s workbook. The workbook had a dual function of recording my day-to-day teaching strategies combined with recording my reflections on the drama class’s work (Simons, 2003); it spanned the period March 2000 to December 2000. The teacher’s workbook was written only spasmodically but, nonetheless provided some verification of my empirical observations (see Appendix 8.1).

During the teaching of the three playbuilding projects the junior secondary students kept a journal and the senior secondary students a logbook; with their permission, I photocopied sections from these workbooks. In the New South Wales Junior Drama Syllabus (1985) the junior secondary journal is a workbook to help students “acquire a vocabulary with which to analyse dramatic activities and theatrical performance” (p. 9), as well as making a
written record of their thoughts about projects being undertaken. My junior secondary students’ journals were, in the main, structured evaluations of their playbuilding projects. The senior secondary students kept a logbook, as described in the New South Wales HSC Drama Syllabus, as a record of their “involvement in, and reflections on, the development of the performance” (1999b, p.31). Since no part of the participating students’ drama education was changed to suit the research, I have kept the separate workbook titles to be true to the students’ concepts of the way they reflected on and analysed their playbuilding. In addition to the above written discourse, a number of the senior secondary students gave me permission to photocopy their internal school-based written essays examination on the topic area of Australian Women’s Theatre.

Both the junior and senior secondary students participated in classroom audiotaping of their group discussions on playbuilding. In addition, two senior secondary student playbuilding groups, with five students in each, gave permission for one 50 minute classroom workshop to be audiotaped. All three playbuilding projects were videotaped during performance, and this has provided a rich source of visual data for my research. Furthermore, all junior and senior secondary students answered a closed questionnaire on playbuilding, which I subsequently analysed (see Appendices 4.1 and 4.2).

The second collection of data was from the participating teachers, and covered the period January to May 2001; it was undertaken within the five months following the collection of the student participants’ data. During this time these teachers were undertaking playbuilding projects of their own, and a number of other telephone calls were made to discuss their projects’ teaching and learning strategies which helped me to frame the questions to ask them later in the research. I then arranged meetings with each of the teachers, simultaneously sending them my formal questions (see Appendix 3.1); these questions were only a guide, but in the interview situation they provided a focus when I needed to return to the sequence of my playbuilding concepts.

The following list summarises the data gathered during the research:
Senior secondary students' contributions:

- extracts from logbooks that relate to:
  - Performing an Essay
  - Group Devised Performance
- Group Devised Performance evaluations for senior (Year 12) students
- internal written examination essays on an HSC topic area
- audiotapes:
  - two senior (Year 12) class workshops
  - one senior (Year 12) class interview
- videotapes of the two playbuilding performances:
  - two Performing an Essay groups
  - three Group Devised Performance groups
- closed questionnaire for senior (Year 12 students).

Junior secondary students' contributions:

- extracts from journal entries that related to their work on Experimental Playbuilding
- audiotape on playbuilding and script learning
- videotape of the Experimental Playbuilding performances:
  - five separate groups' playbuilding scenes
- closed questionnaires for junior (Year 9) students.

My teacher's workbook and playbuilding programs contribution.

Teacher participants' contributions:

- telephone conversations regarding the teachers' current playbuilding projects
- audiotaped interviews that involved open-ended questions regarding the teachers' professional playbuilding teaching and learning strategies.

Figures 3.3 to 3.9 provide an overview of the data collected; they are presented in date order (see Appendices 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 for examples of this data):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performing an Essay</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Data details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drama Department class program for teaching the HSC topic area of Australian Women’s Theatre</td>
<td>2 March to 22 April 2000 (5 weeks - the Easter holidays have not been counted)</td>
<td>4 x 50 minute lessons a week and extensive rehearsals 18, 19, 20 and 21 April 2000, 18 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logbooks</td>
<td>2 March to 22 April 2000</td>
<td>Extracts from senior students logbooks, 15 senior logbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal written examination essays</td>
<td>6 June 2000</td>
<td>Essays written in 2000 St. Sistine School’s HSC examination block, 6 senior essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminism versus Femininity</td>
<td>22 April 2000 7.30 p.m. Public performance - an internal HSC assessment task</td>
<td>Videotape length - 15 minutes and 20 seconds, 6 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Female Protagonist</td>
<td>22 April 2000 - ditto</td>
<td>Videotape length - 14 minutes and 18 seconds, 5 senior students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.3: Collection of Performing an Essay data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Devised Performance</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Data details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drama Department class program for teaching the HSC Group Devised Performance</td>
<td>24 April to 25 August 2000 (14 weeks - 2 weeks of holidays and 2 weeks of exams have not been counted)</td>
<td>4 x 50 minute lessons a week and extensive rehearsals 24, 25, 26 and 27 July 2000, 18 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logbooks</td>
<td>2 March to 25 August 2000</td>
<td>Extracts from senior student logbooks, 15 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class workshop of The Wives</td>
<td>1 May 2000</td>
<td>Audiotape of one 50 minute lesson, 5 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class workshop of The Triangle</td>
<td>2 May 2000</td>
<td>Audiotape of one 50 minute lesson, 5 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Devised Performance evaluation of process</td>
<td>22 May 2000</td>
<td>Written reflection on the middle process of playbuilding, 7 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Three Eves</td>
<td>28 July 2000 7.30 p.m. Public performance - an internal HSC assessment task</td>
<td>Videotape length - 10 minutes and 30 seconds, 3 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Triangle</td>
<td>ditto</td>
<td>Videotape length - 12 minutes and 30 seconds, 5 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wives</td>
<td>ditto</td>
<td>Videotape length - 12 minutes and 45 seconds, 5 senior students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.4: Collection of Group Devised Performance data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class discussion</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Data details</th>
<th>Secondary students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debating imagination</td>
<td>5 September 2000</td>
<td>Audiotape of one 50 minute lesson</td>
<td>16 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and creativity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.5: Collection of senior audiotape data on imagination and creativity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closed questionnaire</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Data details</th>
<th>Secondary students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response to questions</td>
<td>8 September 2000</td>
<td>Written response</td>
<td>13 senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about playbuilding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to questions</td>
<td>8 September 2000</td>
<td>Written response</td>
<td>17 junior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about playbuilding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.6: Collection of closed questionnaire data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental Playbuilding</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Data details</th>
<th>Secondary students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drama Department class</td>
<td>23 October to 6 December 2000</td>
<td>4 x 50 minute lessons a week</td>
<td>19 junior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>program for teaching</td>
<td>(6 ½ weeks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>playbuilding to Year 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>23 October to 6 December 2000</td>
<td>Extracts from journals</td>
<td>19 junior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom discussion</td>
<td>7 November 2000</td>
<td>Andiotape of one 50 minute lesson</td>
<td>17 junior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on script work and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>playbuilding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dominant Masks</em></td>
<td>6 December 2000 Class time final</td>
<td>Videotape length 5 minutes</td>
<td>4 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Sameness versus</td>
<td>ditto</td>
<td>Videotape length - 2 minutes and 30</td>
<td>3 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td></td>
<td>seconds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Television versus Reality</em></td>
<td>ditto</td>
<td>Videotape length - 3 minutes and 20</td>
<td>4 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Scream</em></td>
<td>ditto</td>
<td>seconds</td>
<td>4 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Corruption versus</td>
<td>ditto</td>
<td>Videotape length 3 minutes and 30</td>
<td>4 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td></td>
<td>seconds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This group did not perform as 2 students were missing</td>
<td>4 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.7: Collection of Experimental Playbuilding data

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher workbook</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My teacher's workbook</td>
<td>2 March to 8 December 2000</td>
<td>Limited reflections on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Programming for playbuilding projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Teaching and learning strategies for playbuilding projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Assessment for playbuilding projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.8: Collection of teacher workbook data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating teachers</th>
<th>Interview method</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>2 and 29 February 2001</td>
<td>Conversations about his playbuilding projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>30 March 2001</td>
<td>Response to my questions about playbuilding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>audiotaped</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>2 February, 23 March 12 and</td>
<td>Discussion about his playbuilding projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 April 2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Audiotape</td>
<td>10 May 2001</td>
<td>Response to my questions on playbuilding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>15 May and 25 May 2001</td>
<td>Discussion regarding his audiotaped response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>6, 7, 15, 20 and 21 March 2001</td>
<td>Conversations about her playbuilding projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Group interview</td>
<td>18 April 2001</td>
<td>Response to my questions on playbuilding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>audiotaped</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>8 and 2 March 2001</td>
<td>Conversations about her playbuilding projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Group interview</td>
<td>18 April 2001</td>
<td>Response to my questions about playbuilding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>audiotaped</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.9: Collection of participating teachers’ data
The data collected gave me access to a range of learning experiences in playbuilding projects and it offered me the scope to produce a diverse record of a variety of playbuilding activities. This three-pronged approach to the research, involving junior secondary students, senior secondary students, and teachers, provided me with opportunities to test, verify, and look for differences in the gathered material.

### 3.8.1 Data collection storage procedures

The ethics rules regarding the storage procedures for the students' and teachers’ data required the establishment of individual files identifying each participant using pseudonyms so as to respect their anonymity; pseudonyms were also used for the school and its location. During the videotaping of the three playbuilding projects students were aware that the videotape had a dual function, one for their curriculum outcomes and the other for my research project. The junior and senior secondary students viewed all of the videotape material and commented on it both as an educational evaluative strategy and about its use and purpose in my research. Similarly, with any audiotape material, students were aware of why their class work or their discussions were being recorded. All students had the opportunity to listen to the tapes and/or read the transcripts. Similarly, the questionnaire and sections of logbooks and journals were photocopied with the students’ full knowledge of their purpose in the study. All participants, students and teachers, were invited to access their personal data and to view their files. Therefore, they had the freedom to verify, change or withdraw their comments and written ideas, or even to edit the videotapes if they so wished. Nobody asked to do so during any stage of this research. Each of the four participating teachers was asked to and did provide feedback on sections of this thesis that relate to their data.
3.9 Data triangulation

Denzin and Lincoln (1998a) argue from a Brewer and Hunter (1989) perspective that "qualitative research is inherently multimethod in focus" (p.4). They further argue that these multiple methods reflect an attempt by the researcher to produce an in-depth understanding of the emerging paradigm. They call this multimethod triangulation, and identify a number of ways to undertake this triangulation process.

I undertook two triangulation approaches to provide alternative validation; these were empirical data observation and interdisciplinary data triangulation. Each provided me with depth and breadth, and allowed reflectivity of the process. The triangulation procedures I chose to use are represented in Figures 3.10 (a) and (b), and they provide a twofold perspective of the triangulation processes that assisted in discovering the key questions.

Figure 3.10 (a): Data triangulation process - empirical data observation
Margot Ely, with Anzul, Friedman, Garner and McCormack-Steinmetz, discuss the idea that the triangulation process is “as suspenseful as it is important” (Ely et al., 1991, p.97), and this is certainly true of my process as each method revealed new ideas or extended old ideas. For example, Figure 3.10 (a) empirical data observation, allowed me to examine and extend my previous playbuilding knowledge by comparing and contrasting the classroom analyses. Figure 3.10 (b), interdisciplinary data investigation, created credibility and connectivity between such diverse areas as drama educators, critical pedagogic theory, phenomenology, movement analysts, theatre practitioners and theatre anthropology. Both these triangulation processes broadened my understanding of my research methods and lifted my interpretative skills above my dominant ways of thinking and operating in playbuilding by introducing new and stimulating ideas (Janesick, 1998, p.47).

3.10 Limitations of the research

There are a number of limitations to the research that I acknowledge at this stage:

- Firstly, there was only one school from which I obtained the data; therefore, no comparisons were made with other secondary schools except via the teacher interviews.
The school was a girls’ school, and no comparison could be made to boys’ or co-educational playbuilding environments. The school was Catholic and independent, and this provided a unique milieu from which to research, but again with no external comparison.

- Secondly, when collecting the students’ playbuilding data I did not deviate from the outcomes of St. Sistine’s and its Drama Department’s course and class programs. This means that I had only one junior secondary playbuilding project to examine, and therefore I could not compare student’ work across their own developmental stages. It would have been inappropriate to alter the Drama Department’s curriculum to suit the research.

- Thirdly, the senior secondary drama students were highly skilled. This is evidenced by their Drama HSC results where eight students out of the class of 18 came in the top 10 per cent of the State of New South Wales, and another four students gained results in the top 20 per cent of the State of New South Wales. This indicates that the senior secondary drama class was not an average or standard drama cohort.

- Fourthly, I did not approach secondary school teachers from other disciplines outside the Performing and Creative Arts. If I had done this there may have been a different perspective regarding learning through playbuilding.

- Lastly, who I am, and my experiences, biases and passions have an inevitable effect on how I have approached this research. The actual importance of my experience is open to question in that it might provide authenticity for the research interpretations as well as to detract from my arguments. To position myself in a personal history beyond Chapter One, I am an Anglo-Saxon female from British heritage, who has settled in Australia and in fact has become an Australian citizen. In this regard, I have my personal theatrical and drama education teaching and learning philosophy and practices, but hope that this research work is open to partisan positions and maintains a plurality of ideas and concepts, whilst also questioning the status quo of playbuilding (Fortier, 2002).
The research has been influenced as well as enhanced by these limitations. The initial drama concept was chosen because of my previous drama teaching knowledge and because of the work I had undertaken previously in playbuilding at St. Sistine School.

3.11 Initial drama education concepts

In 1999 I chose three initial concepts to explore: imagining, creating, and playbuilding. Each of these concepts could be dealt with in its own right, but I felt that I could not separate them as they were, in my professional experience, inextricably intertwined in the drama classroom. I explored how drama education concepts could be examined as a paradigm and a number of theoretical structures influenced my decision on how to approach and construct a paradigm for playbuilding.

Philip Taylor’s (1996) words that drama researchers themselves research through an “imaginary construct”, pulling together their “cultural, political, social-economic and personal consciousness” (p.273) to investigate paradigms influenced my thinking on the approach to creating a paradigm in my research. My thinking was expanded by Sarantakos (1993) who argues that “there is no complete agreement about the usage of the term ‘paradigm’ but that it implies a world view or general perspective, this view is used very widely in some contexts but very narrowly in others” (p.31). Sarantakos is initially referring to major paradigms of ‘thought in our society’ such as “Positivistic, Interpretive, Critical” (p.31). My data appeared to have the characteristics of what Sarantakos describes as internally experienced and socially constructed. On reflection this was not entirely congruent with theorising grounded in the data. I was discovering that imagining and creating in playbuilding is ‘critical’, as “critical theory proposes that humans have a great potential for creativity and adjustment” (p.36). After initially exploring alternative approaches to my data I discovered that a paradigm for my theorising required a grounded theory approach to make sense and meaning of the concepts. Sarantakos’ belief that a paradigm can also be viewed narrowly to create a perspective from the data, and Philip Taylor’s view that an imaginary construct is an important element in creating a paradigm, enhanced my belief that a structured grounded theory paradigm would be the
most beneficial approach and would provide the potential for creativity and adjustment whilst interpreting my data.

Reflecting on this I decided to use Strauss' and Corbin's (1998) grounded theory position on paradigms. Strauss and Corbin argue that a "paradigm is nothing more than a perspective taken toward data, another analytic stance that helps to systematically gather and order data in such a way that structure and process are integrated" (p.128). They argue that when a researcher looks "for answers to questions such as why, or how come, where, when, how, and with what results" (p.127) they uncover relationships between concepts. In my research this meant uncovering the relationships between imagining, creating and playbuilding. During the emergence of the paradigm that playbuilding groups learn through group kinaesthetics I created further concepts through open and axial coding, conceptual stories and matrices to look for phenomena. The use of Strauss' and Corbin's grounded theory paradigm concept was an analytical stance that helped me, the researcher, to systematically gather and order the data in such a way that structure and process were aligned.

The grounded theory approach to a paradigm was a useful conceptual analytic device for organising my data as well as acknowledging that a paradigm should not be constructed in a rigid way otherwise "it becomes the end rather than the means" (p.142). Strauss' and Corbin's concept of a paradigm suited the purpose of my research as this was to "gain more knowledge and to assess the significance of newly acquired knowledge against that acquired by colleagues" (Somers, 1996, p.172). More specifically, through the dimensions and properties of the data and the integrating and refining of concepts, the emerging group kinaesthetic paradigm slowly evolved, indicating that there were ways of viewing imagining and creating in playbuilding that could complement and contrast my traditional approaches. The notion of an emerging group kinaesthetic paradigm that represented the voices of many became integrated into the analysis of my data and explorations of the literature. Therefore, Strauss' and Corbin's concept of a paradigm was embedded in the coding of my data and this allowed me to explore and develop systematically my theory within the processes of grounded theory.
3.12 The methodological analysis of empirical data

The following sections of this chapter document the methods used in analysing and synthesising my research data through the strategies of grounded theory. Grounded theory, with its evolving processes, provided a perspective from which interpretations could emerge and evolve, and hence allowed a freedom and scope that I believe is necessary in drama research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For my research purposes grounded theory allowed me to ask two questions:

- What is my concern about the essence of my experience?
- What factors contribute to a departure from the conventional way of looking at this experience?

From these questions I investigated the empirical data that prompted the emergence of new concepts about imagining and creating in playbuilding, rather than starting from a preconceived standpoint.

Moreover, with a major emphasis on grounded research methodology I felt that I had a pathway to deal with multiple perspectives. The principles of grounded theory allowed for:

- making comparisons between all the data collected
- asking and generating concept-related questions
- conceptualising and interconnecting data into meaningful categories
- exploring the dimensions and properties of the categories
- creating a provisional matrix that visualised the micro-conditions and consequences to the macro-conditions and consequences, or vice versa
- testing the proposed links between the conceptual categories
- verifying the resulting interpretations

(Glaser, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

My qualitative analysis methodology was supported by a software package called QSR NUD•IST Vivo (NVivo) (Richards, 1999). This was a substantial tool to help me arrange, organise, compare and contrast my interpretations and to manage and synthesise the
complexity in these. Lyn Richards states that using QSR NVivo in qualitative research provides the researcher with:

The ability to combine rich text editing and writing of documents with coding and linking, in integrated processes, allows you to avoid delaying reflection till coding is done, and explore data as it accrues. This means too that the researcher is far more able to account for the research process, document what is happening and critique it as it happens (p.199).

In this regard the computer software was very useful in the analysis, notwithstanding that there were many times during the middle and latter stages where freehand writing, personal drawings, diagrams, sketches and flow charts assisted with the discoveries in a more individual and intimate way. Therefore, although QSR NVivo allowed me to see the project as a whole, and to hold onto the developing aspects (p.200), for me, in my role as researcher, it mainly served the research during the initial and middle stages of coding.

My analytical memos, notes and interpretative analyses were integral to providing a perspective; the analytical memos in particular helped to capture and keep track of the emerging theory. In analysing the data from the actual experiences of the students and teachers I participated as an active learner, whilst synthesising how the students and teachers constructed their playbuilding.

The organisation of the following section relates to the methods of Strauss and Corbin (1998) Basics of Qualitative Research Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory. This section analyses how the concepts were generated, where these concepts were systematically related, and how they had conceptual density. It also provides an understanding of how variation is built into the theory that signifies that a concept has been developed across its range of dimensions (p.271), as well as initiating argument and debate about what has seemed significant, and to what extent.

Figure 3.11 provides an illustration of the organisation of the next section of this thesis, and highlights the grounded theory procedures.
3.13 Open coding

Open coding in the opening stage of the grounded theory analytic method is the process of categorising and sorting data. Initially I began open coding from the student participants’ data; the codes served as devices to label, separate, compile and organise my thoughts (see Appendix 9.1).

Open coding was used to undertake a detailed analysis of the secondary students’ junior journals, senior logbooks, questionnaires, classroom workshop, observations and audiotapes. Where appropriate, a line-by-line analysis was conducted (see Appendix 9.2); at other times, it involved recording thoughts, annotating interpretations, analysing students’ drawings, and initial analytical memos. A scene-by-scene analysis of all of the playbuilding videotapes was also undertaken. During this open coding stage I also began a detailed examination of the teachers’ interviews. Eventually both the students’ and teachers’ data provided me with a fluid process of conceptualising. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that “The first step in theory building is conceptualizing. A concept is a
**labelled phenomenon.** It is an abstract representation of an event, object, or action/interaction that a researcher identifies as being significant in the data” (p.103).

In the initial stages of my analytical open coding I used around 90 labelled phenomena; these ranged from phenomena that related to my initial investigation, for example:

- creating
- imagining
- individual students
- playbuilding groups.

This was then extended to more conceptually labelled phenomena:

- bodily-kinaesthetic learning
- collective dramatic wisdom
- students’ symbolic worlds

- playbuilding group as developmental

(July 2001).

Each of the labelled phenomena required a description, and I tried to keep the descriptions as close as possible semantically to the drama education interpretations they represented. In the following analysis I present snapshots of two labelled phenomena within the open coding in order to provide a glimpse of the early analytical process and the emerging kinaesthetic paradigm.

I present this analysis in a ‘snapshot’ form whereby I highlight firstly the name of the labelled phenomenon in yellow (to metaphorically simulate a camera’s flashbulb that captures an idea), followed by the memo which is lightly shaded in grey to emphasise its integral and embedded nature in the research. I believe that this visual representation highlights how the analytical memos connect to the interpretive qualitative design process. Therefore, I use this representation to emphasis the dynamic “lived experience” (Janesick, 1998, p.53) of the participants in both the open coding and axial coding sections of this chapter.
Analytical memo: Imagining is the most important cognitive, affective and physical domain as it gives voice to students’ ideas, and allows possibilities to be explored. All playbuilding ideas have a connection with imagination; imagining has:
- a property of divergence
- a dimension of how a group operates as a community through ideas
- subcategories that explore who, where, when and why to provide variations in imagining. For instance, the age group of the different student participants impacts on the way they imagine due to maturity of ideas, combined with their diverse technical skills in playbuilding. External pressures such as the senior students’ HSC internal assessment and external examination impact on the individual student, and hence the group imaginings (July 2001).

Analytical memo: This labelled phenomenon relates to how the groups use their ideas in the devising; it also relates to the fact that some students in the cohort appear to have a collective dramatic wisdom. Has this developed from previous class playbuilding experiences? How much of this experience relates to technical skills and/or innate skills in playbuilding? What happens when the whole group embodies an experience?

The teacher participant data indicated that collective experiences are essential in developmental playbuilding learning, and more often than not this development group learning becomes collective wisdom. The data suggests that collective dramatic wisdom could be connected to an individual and/or collective kinaesthetic experience.

Collective dramatic wisdom has:
- a property of collective dramatic experiences which are connected to the cognitive, affective and physical domains
- a dimension of individual kinaesthetics, group kinaesthetics, individual intuition and group intuition, which operate to inform the playbuilders’ collective wisdom
• subcategories that explore who, where, when and why to provide variations in collective dramatic wisdom. For instance, how do students learn physically to deepen their drama learning? (July 2001).

3.14 Concurrent stages of open and axial coding

During the next stage, which was a concurrent stage of open and axial coding, I began linking labelled phenomena together, as axial coding is the process of relating categories from the data. For example, I merged the following labelled phenomena:

• imaginative and creative groups
• playbuilding group decision making
• playbuilding group satisfaction of needs
• playbuilding group shared purpose
• collective dramatic wisdom

into:

• playbuilding group as a transformative community.

(QSR NVivo codes 1st August 2001).

In this linking process I was moving from the macro to the micro and back again; I was searching for patterns and emerging ideas to try to make sense of the data, and the term ‘Playbuilding group as a transformative community’ allowed a dimensional depth to appear. I noted the reason why I merged these labelled phenomena through another snapshot.

Snapshot: Labelled phenomenon - playbuilding group as a transformative community

Analytical memo: The data indicates that the students discuss the group as ‘we’. They appear to take enormous ownership of their group. The group almost becomes a metaphoric individual. They share their collective dramatic wisdom. Sometimes in the classroom workshop this occurs as a group dynamises (Boal, 1992) the verbal into the physical, but it seems that dynamising the physical into language has stronger links, and may produce more energised imagining and creating.
Through physicalisation the group continually creates its shared purpose, and this can lead to a satisfaction of playbuilding needs. All these characteristics appear to connect to bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, learning and awareness. This may tie in with the idea of groups of drama students learning through kinaesthetics, and passing knowledge and ideas on to one another through kinaesthetic patterns (August 2001).

In this concurrent stage many of the following major nodes appeared to link regularly:

- actor/audience relationships
- assessing and pressure
- bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence
- bodily kinaesthetic learning
- creating
- collaboration - teacher and students
- embodiment
- empathic intelligence
- empathic teaching and learning
- group collaborating
- group decision making
- group identity
- group kinaesthetic knowing
- imagining
- improvising
- kinaesthetics
- kinaesthetic awareness
- manipulating elements of drama
- metaphor
- metaxis
- playbuilding group as a transformative community
- playbuilding teaching and learning strategies
- playing
- students intuitive skills, knowledge and understanding
• students symbolic world
(QSR NVivo codes 27th August 2001) (see Appendix 9.3).

The linking of these nodes continuously connected through the concept that students learn through their kinaesthetic domains. I had a substantial understanding of Howard Gardner’s (1993a & b, 1999) theories on bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, but it was imperative to elaborate on this knowledge so that my interpretation of kinaesthetics was broadened. One way I undertook this broadening of knowledge was by examining the dimension of ‘kinaesthetic awareness’ and linking this dimension to ‘bodily-kinaesthetic learning’, ‘collective dramatic wisdom’, ‘group identity and decision making’, ‘metaxis’, and ‘imagining and creating’. This linking is demonstrated in the following snapshot.

Snapshot: Labelled phenomenon - kinaesthetic awareness

**Analytical memo:** An individual student’s, or group’s creative capacity has links to kinaesthetic awareness and hence to students’ learning. The central dimension of individual kinaesthetic awareness has been drawn from Blom and Chaplin (1982, 1988) and Moore and Yamamoto (1988a & b), and I have elaborated upon these to explore playbuilding.

Kinaesthetic awareness is the result of accumulated experiences. Blom and Chaplin state that kinaesthetic awareness is “not found in words but in one’s body, in the awareness of the experience itself” (1988, p.18). They say “The body knows many things and can learn many more as various knowledge systems work together” (p.18). Therefore, the properties of kinaesthetic awareness refer to an individual student’s bodily kinaesthetic learning. This collective knowledge, from childhood to their present age, is informed by the integration of other knowledge systems, such as the cognitive and affective. The properties from the data indicate that the student’s individual kinaesthetic awareness is informed by the playbuilding group’s identity and decision making and a collective dramatic wisdom.

This means that teacher and students alike must be in tune with one another, to be aware of each other kinaesthetically, and to challenge the world of metaxical imagining and creating. The individual and group’s capacity for kinaesthetic awareness is embodied in their
playbuilding learning; similarly a teacher’s kinaesthetic awareness can be embodied in their teaching praxis (August 2001).

The above analytical memo highlights that the concept of kinaesthetic teaching and learning was becoming a major focus. At this point I examined connecting kinaesthetic concepts that related to technical hermeneutic knowing and bodily knowing.

Snapshot: Connecting concepts - Technical hermeneutic knowing and bodily knowing

Analytical memo: I discovered that the main dimension connecting these concepts was a playbuilding group’s innate ability to learn through past and present body movement. This was enhanced by a playbuilding group’s knowledge and understanding of drama conventions and techniques. Linking these two concepts together indicated that they had properties of how the drama students used their bodies, in the kinesphere, to solve problems and to dramatically create new or original works. This means kinaesthetic bodies connected to other kinaesthetic bodies in the playbuilding project (Newlove, 1993) through a teaching and learning framework.

This learning relationship allowed playbuilders to build a group kinaesthetic environment, to take risks, solve problems and create. This environment spiralled around:

- how the group negotiated meaning and understanding about previous drama knowledge that they could employ in their project
- how the group developed empathy
- how their devising was informed and influenced by imaginative use of drama properties.

There was a subcategory of risk-taking in all of these concepts, as there was often uncertainty at the beginning of the embodied active physical learning; individual students and the group were never really sure how all their ideas were evolving.

To one degree or another this learning relationship occurred through a group bodily memory that came from exploring and learning about the processes of drama. Furthermore, the video analysis of all playbuilding projects, based in part on the elements of drama (Board of Studies, 2003a; Haseman & O’Toole, 1986; O’Toole, 1992), demonstrated the fact that technical hermeneutical kinaesthetic knowing and bodily knowledge were based in
part on how the group organised pertinent elements or conventions and techniques of drama to explore and rehearse their plot lines, narratives and themes (Mitter, 1992) (August, 2001).

Connecting the concepts of technical hermeneutic knowing and knowing through the body linked back to the labelled phenomenon of embodiment.

Snapshot: Labelled phenomenon - embodiment

Analytical memo: Embodiment was the ability of the drama students to take on board their learning through active physical means. Embodiment had properties of physical awareness and realisation, and integrating the cognitive, affective and physical. Through embodiment the learning became ingrained into the students’ personal selves and linked back to kinaesthetics. There was a parallel to my research work with D. Winnicott’s (1971, p.111) concepts that a child learns through mirroring the significant other through active, physical play (August 2001).

These labelled kinaesthetic phenomena demonstrated a connection with each other.

3.15 Axial coding

Thoughts began to make more sense, and patterns began to emerge in the middle stages of axial coding. To further elaborate, axial coding is the process of relating categories to their subcategories; this is termed ‘axial’ because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) stated that “The purpose of axial coding is to begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding. In axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories to form more precise and complete explanations about phenomena” (p.124). At this point the analytical memos were accumulating and maturing and thus providing “the integrative binding and power to put it all together into a grounded theory” (Glaser, 1998, p.177).
For instance, I have discussed my initial analysis of ‘imagining’ with a property, a dimension and subcategories (see section 3.13). During axial coding I linked the property, dimension and subcategories together as I questioned and looked for clues as to what was occurring. My interpretation and conceptualisation from the actual words used by my respondents gave rise to a phenomenon that I labelled group imaginative divergence.

Snapshot: Labelled phenomenon - group imaginative divergence

Analytical memo: I described group imaginative divergence as how the individuals merge their imaginings to create collectively as a group. This means that the group has the capacity to depart from the set course, to spread out from the centre point to create at a meta-level. The group’s capacity to use kinaesthetics both physically and visually has an impact on the diversity of the imaginings (October 2001).

Another example is the labelled phenomenon of metaphor, which, during this axial coding stage, was reassembled into group metaphoric thinking and creating as a more complete explanation of the phenomenon that was occurring.

Snapshot: Labelled phenomenon - group metaphoric thinking and creating

Analytical memo: I described group metaphoric thinking and creating as that which allows the playbuilding group to see and physicalise their ideas in a new light, and their work becomes sharper and clearer. Metaphors can give the group a way to categorise and make sense of their ideas.

The data indicates that metaphoric thinking and creating has properties of playbuilding though the elements of drama, body language, visual language, verbal language, and an intuitive language. There is a dimension of how a group thinks and creates ideas through symbolic knowledge. If the teacher structures developmental activities which increase this symbolic knowledge (Arnold, 1998, p.129), an enthusiasm and empathy occurs in the group. Subcategories that connect are metaxis, as this allows the group to explore the in-between metaphoric world; group kinaesthetic creating is also a subcategory that needs to be harnessed by both students and teacher to help solve dramatic problems (October 2001).
Metaxis was also examined in detail and the following labelled phenomenon became the definition that assisted me in contextualising my knowledge about the learning that occurs in a metaxical playbuilding situation.

Snapshot: Labelled phenomenon — metaxis

Analytical memo: The data indicated that metaxis occurs in playbuilding when the fictional context and the real context are closely connected. For the participating students and teachers the fictional context provided momentary flashes of insight into the real context, and vice versa. The data also indicated there were moments in the dramatic action where the two worlds were connected as one (O’Toole, 1992). Metaxis extended Vygotsky’s (Vygotsky, trans.1994) notion of the dual effect where the world of reality, and that of fiction, are held simultaneously together and separate in learning. Therefore metaxis had multiple perspectives (Simons, 2003) in the playbuilding data.

Axial coding in the above examples connects the relational concepts of group metaphoric thinking and creating to metaxis and group kinaesthetic creating.

Within axial coding the maturing memos were a useful method of exploring the emerging kinaesthetic paradigm, and provided many opportunities to question what was occurring. The memos also gave me moments to reflect on how this work was giving voice to the playbuilding experiences of the junior and senior secondary students and teachers’. In the following snapshot I noted an area where the students were discussing the importance of physicalisation in playbuilding, and how this interrelated with group metaphoric thinking and creating.

A senior secondary student is explaining to her classmates what she believes helped her group to begin their playbuilding project. She also indicates the drama technique which her group wished to use to enhance their work.

Snapshot: Analytical memo - physical learning in playbuilding

Yvette: “You get your initial ideas, but you have to get up to be creative, and we wanted a physical theatre piece”.
Analytical memo: Why did Yvette say ‘you have to get up to be creative’? Maybe the notion of ‘getting up’ felt intuitively right, as she knew that solving dramatic problems though embodiment allowed her and her group a theatrical way forward. The group agreed with Yvette's statement that they wanted to do a piece of physical theatre, and had to get up to explore their ideas.

Getting up to be creative indicates how important it was for the group to use the range of their kinaesthetic abilities. How did the group visualise its initial ideas, and how did they connect these to the technical skills of physical theatre?

The data indicates that for Yvette and her group the act of getting up fostered metaphoric thinking. So, what are the characteristics of metaphoric thinking that help creating?

Metaphors can allow seemingly minimal ideas to reveal new aspects and perhaps transmit a definite message; this forces students to understand intuitively and to respond empathically to metaphoric creation principles (Moore & Yamamoto, 1988a & b). The analysis of the data, and my empirical observations, suggest that to create metaphor in drama education you must physicalise; you must problem-solve through physical language, and this has a property of risk taking and eventually embodied learning. Furthermore, is metaxis found at the intersection between ‘initial ideas’, ‘getting up’ and ‘exploring drama properties’, and how does this impact on metaphoric thinking and creating?

Finally, the data indicates that there is such a phenomenon as group metaphorical thinking and creating, and this connects to a group’s kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and use of drama properties (October 2001) (Fairclough, 1995).

Integration in the axial stage fed back continually into the data analysis and helped to refine the emerging paradigm, as the labelled phenomena group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and group kinaesthetic drama properties became central to the investigation. The following three snapshots begin to demonstrate these three concepts. The snapshots elaborate on the depth and breath in the participating students’ playbuilding projects and my interpretations of the pedagogic praxis that was occurring.
Snapshot: Labelled phenomenon - group kinaesthetic knowing

Analytical memo: Group kinaesthetic knowing merged with the dimensions and properties of ‘collaboration’, ‘playing and improvising’, ‘students’ intuitive skills, knowledge and understanding’, and ‘teaching and learning strategies’.

The data highlighted that the dimension of a group’s technical hermeneutical knowing was of paramount importance in the way the group created as it added depth and breath, and through the metaxical process of a group exploring its technical knowledge the playbuilding became more meaningful and satisfying to the students. Group kinaesthetic knowing emerged from how the groups understood and used such techniques as the elements of drama, or if they were able to explore past learnt drama strategies, such as Boal’s dynamisation, or Stanislavski’s voice, observation, and personalisation techniques (Burton, 2001) (January 2002).

Snapshot: Labelled phenomenon - group kinaesthetic empathy

Analytical memo: Group kinaesthetic empathy grew partially from the labelled phenomena of ‘empathic intelligence’ and ‘empathic teaching and learning’. These labelled phenomena had dimensions of an affective, cognitive and physical dynamic learning situation. Group kinaesthetic empathy had properties of listening, responding, inspiring and enthusiasm (Arnold, 1998).

The data suggested that a group empathy was integral to kinaesthetics, as empathy provided rich insights for the playbuilders to interrelate their emotional and problem solving development phases with their playbuilding physical development, but when group empathy disappeared, for what ever reason, the playbuilders struggled to make sense of their project (see Chapter Four) (January 2002).

Snapshot: Labelled phenomenon - group kinaesthetic drama properties

Analytical memo: The importance of a group kinaesthetic drama property became apparent through an investigation into the dimensions, properties, and memos that emerged from the labelled phenomena of ‘bodily- kinaesthetic intelligence’, ‘kinaesthetic awareness’, ‘kinaesthetic learning’, ‘manipulating elements of drama’, and ‘playing and improvising’.
For instance, playing and improvising both had a dimension of finding, managing and solving problems, and a property of risk taking, but in the context of a group improvising with a drama property, the dramatic problems and the solutions took on the attribute of releasing the potential in the playbuilding group’s creating. The video analysis of *The Wives* and the *Dominant Masks* not only highlighted this emerging problem-solving capacity, but complemented all other student data, and again reiterated that when students used a group kinaesthetic drama property it enabled a release of their imaginations.

The data revealed that many students understood the dramatic power of a tangible or imagined drama property, but to pass this information on to their group successfully they needed to work through a kinaesthetic and empathic sphere, otherwise the group would reject the ideas (see Chapter Four). If this occurred, the process of finding solutions to their work could be slow. On the other hand, if the group worked as one, regardless of whose idea it was to introduce a drama property, and if the group were able to manipulate, explore and solve problems through this symbolic object, then they could overcome dramatic difficulties as the property became endowed with a kinaesthetic imagining and creating action (see Chapter Six).

Combining these labelled phenomena therefore created the concept of a group kinaesthetic drama property. This labelled phenomenon linked synchronically with the emerging paradigm, and provided a range of variation to the concept as the data indicated that there were many stages to the patterns of connectivity in a group’s kinaesthetic manipulation of the drama property (January 2002).

From these snapshots a clearer interpretation emerged during the final selective theoretical sampling stages.
3.16 Selective coding

Through the process of integrating and refining the theory, and by comparing and contrasting the data, a central category became evident. This central category I describe as kinaesthetic teaching and learning in playbuilding groups.

Therefore, through the integration of the major labelled phenomena a refined theory emerged. The following conceptual story connects the patterns of the dimensions, properties, subcategories conditions, and consequences of the central category within the selective coding process.

3.16.1 Conceptual story

Teaching and learning in playbuilding are facilitated by groups of students working together towards a common dramatic group devised project. The majority of the participating students and all of the participating teachers indicated that their individual voice added their own history, skills and knowledge to the process of playbuilding, but all the participants shared the point of view that the group was central to the creative work that occurred.

There were complexities in all participants’ views on learning in playbuilding, but the phenomenon of kinaesthetic teaching and learning provided a depth and density. By kinaesthetic teaching and learning I mean the ability of the drama teacher to create a physical, affective and cognitive transformation process in the classroom, and thereby to enhance the drama students’ ability to physically solve dramatic problems, convey narrative, and explore emotions (Blom & Chaplin, 1982, 1988; Gardner, 1993b). The language and operating modality of kinaesthetic teaching and learning are related to physical movement and embodiment.
Kinaesthetic teaching, such as improvisation, provided playbuilding groups with a method of gaining cognitive, affective and physical substance in their work and this, in the main, was a pleasurable experience for them. Within the makeup of any playbuilding group, through active teaching praxis, an individual student, with the permission of the other group members, could experiment with the group’s physicality to develop the playbuilding; this in turn created a group experimentation of physicality to produce dramatic meaning. These phenomena indicated that through kinaesthetic learning the playbuilders often discovered new and imaginative ideas for their creating. The way that each playbuilding group experienced their learning was different because of the individual students’ accumulated experiences in drama education. The data demonstrated that there was a definite and tangible link between kinaesthetic teaching and learning, and kinaesthetic awareness that occurred in the students’ work.

Kinaesthetic awareness is a primary perception; it is an innate understanding of different sensations that are found not in words, but in the body, and in the awareness of the experience itself (Blom & Chaplin, 1982, 1988; Moore & Yamamoto, 1988a & b). Kinaesthetic awareness is also the result of the students’ accumulated experiences, but in this instance, from their life experiences. A critical condition that determined how the groups connected kinaesthetic awareness, kinaesthetic teaching and learning, and kinaesthetic intelligence, was the way in which the group could embody their learning through technical knowing, interpretative empathy and the sensorial exploration of drama properties. This holistic embodiment enabled the group to engage in, and to negotiate their particular dramatic context. The various degrees and varying frequencies with which the group used their kinaesthetic spheres also impacted on the teaching of playbuilding.

From the teachers’ responses there emerged a range of similarities and differences. One of the teachers had given little thought to bodily kinaesthetic awareness, learning or intelligence, but the response indicated that this was how that teacher instinctively taught playbuilding. This teacher, as with the others, was an advocate of starting the playbuilding process through playing that leads to improvising. All teachers felt that these strategies allowed initial ideas to be physicalised within the group on the classroom floor.
Similarities of ideas occurred in all teacher interviews, although all teachers had their unique way of approaching or expressing their playbuilding situation. All teachers felt that improvising was immensely beneficial throughout the majority of phases involved in playbuilding learning, but a number of highly creative senior secondary students had different opinions. So although the teacher participants generally used kinaesthetic physicality as a means of active discussion, followed by reflection, some students felt that verbal discussion better helped the group to go forward. The senior drama student Claudia stated: “The imagination has no barrier, but the body does if you want it to”, and indicated that improvisation was not always a useful drama tool for her. Similarly, Ursula also indicated that she often preferred to sit and think ideas through rather than improvising. Both these students were using what I describe as a type of dramatic and kinaesthetic visualisation process, as after sitting and thinking about the dramatic problem, Ursula and Claudia were both able to demonstrate physically and verbally to their group what they had in mind (senior secondary students, audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, September 2000). Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that it is not unusual to find outlying moments that fall at either extreme dimensional range of a concept, or that seem quite contrary to what is going on. Participants like Claudia and Ursula were highly imaginative and fitted into the category of kinaesthetic learners, though perhaps not always through improvisation.

Using the processes described in this conceptual story I clustered concepts and created matrices. I searched the data, examining large sections, sequences, and differences in ideas. I even sampled the data from my literature investigation. My ideas were explored through multiple perspectives.

### 3.17 Matrix relating various playbuilding factors

During 2001 and 2002 I designed various matrices to “show the density and complexity of the theory”, and this enabled me to examine the issues from all aspects (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.238). I was heartened by Joseph R. Roach’s (Reinelt & Roach, 1992) discussion about phenomenological perspective. Roach argues:
Phenomenologists like to pick objects up with their minds, so to speak, and turn them around, examining them from all sides. This cannot be accomplished by viewing them frontally as they are embedded in the rest of the experiential world (p.354).

This phenomenological concept helped me to arrange and re-arrange the data in my mind. A matrix that I developed towards the end of the process (July 2002) was helpful in allowing me to examine, from all sides, the array of interconnecting factors and experiences. This matrix, Figure 3.12, demonstrates the evolving and continuous interaction between the macro and micro conditions and consequences of my research.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 3.12: Matrix - theoretical saturation

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The macro and micro conditions shown in Figure 3.12 and their consequences demonstrate the paths of connectivity. The macro conditions are part of the backdrop against which to present my interpretations, just as the micro conditions are embedded in the experiential world of playbuilding.

Using the selective coding process I was able to reduce the number of categories by comparing category with category and by clustering my ideas. The central phenomenon of group kinaesthetics became a paradigm, and the key components were:

- **group imaginative divergence**
- **group metaphoric thinking and creating**
- **group kinaesthetic knowing**
- **group kinaesthetic empathy**
- **group kinaesthetic drama properties.**

The paradigm emerged as group kinaesthetic teaching and learning.

### 3.18 Theoretical saturation

Theoretical saturation occurred when no new properties appeared in the above key categories and I felt that the dimensions, properties, subcategories and relationships that emerged were true embodiments of the students’ and the teachers’ voices (December 2002). The forces in the data, driven by concepts, and derived from the evolving theory, indicated that when a group’s ‘kinaesthetics’ were working at a sophisticated level, as examined in Chapters Four to Eight, a great deal of dynamic drama imagining and creating was taking place.

The emerging concepts of group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating, intertwined with group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties, appeared continually as the key phenomena, and through theoretical saturation the relationship between each concept was established and validated.
The description which I had given to each key phenomenon provided me with a visual imagery (Glaser, 1998) to continually re-examine the data and to re-explore teaching and learning practices that enhanced group learning, enabling the participating students to convey effectively their intended meaning to an audience. This fluid approach has carried through even to the final writing of this thesis; it strongly correlates with the actual process involved in playbuilding, as both the drama teacher and the group are always in a continual stage of development.

These key practices which I discovered in so many examples of drama learning became the foundation upon which I argue and debate my case.

3.19 Paradigm emerging from the data

The paradigm of group kinaesthetic teaching and learning emerged from the data as a grounded assumption that I have taken towards the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.128); it is an analytic stance that has helped me to integrate the research interpretations. Each core concept below is described separately for ease of understanding and readability, yet all are interrelated. Each core concept exists because of the complexity of group imagining and creating in secondary drama education playbuilding, and because of the kinaesthetic teaching and learning that occurs. Their connectivity is the breath, depth and scope of the grounded theory paradigm.

Group imaginative divergence explains how individual students shared their ideas through visual, cognitive, affective and physical domains. In the sharing, group members accept and explore their individual ideas and the ideas of others; this creates a divergence of thought, ideas and possibilities, which allows for a richness and depth of imagination. Group imaginative divergence was evident in all the data, but it occurred in different phases of the playbuilding, depending on how the group went about the project. The results suggested that when the playbuilder’s imaginative operating modality merged from the individual into the group, group collaborative autonomy emerged (September 2002).
Group metaphoric thinking and creating depended upon the degree to which the individuals in the group understood theatrically the concept of a metaphor. Moreover, it was dependent on how the individuals were able to pass cognitively, physically and empathically this drama knowledge between one another, and to bring the metaphor to life in their classroom process work. Thinking about a metaphor was viewed by all groups as a positive experience, but creating the theatrical metaphor has elements of both positive and negative experiences. Even when it was a negative experience most groups continued to explore a theatrical metaphoric until they found a way to incorporate it in the group devising (September 2002).

**Group kinaesthetic knowing** is driven by technical and intuitive knowing. The data indicated that playbuilders thought that through negotiation, and the ability to just ‘know’ the best way forward group creativity would flow. Teachers also expressed a similar point of view. Group kinaesthetic knowing enabled the playbuilders to demonstrate how they would use a range of dramatic forms, structures and devices to create dynamic and engaging work. Group kinaesthetic knowing broadens the scope of how knowledge is dealt with in drama devising; in the main it can be empirical analytical knowing and technical hermeneutical knowing. The cognitive is informed by the affective and physical; there is a visualisation, mental and/or physical, as well as a metaxical process occurring in understanding drama conventions and techniques and the actor/audience relationship. This becomes embodied in the group’s dramatic explorations (September 2002).

**Group kinaesthetic empathy** belongs to the way the group creates through their instinct, senses and perceptions (Arnold, 1998). Therefore, sensorial dimensions are part of the individual and collective imaginings as the group playbuilds. Group emotional alertness and curiosity are a characteristic, as is a self-reflective knowing that can occur to one degree or another without the influence of the others in the group (Smith & Lovat, 1991). Group kinaesthetic empathy implies that learning has become an internalised and personalised experience; this could be pleasurable, enhancing the playbuilding regardless of whether a group had an elementary or sophisticated manner in which they created their playbuilding scene. When empathy was lacking in a group it was viewed as a negative experience and limited the group’s collaborative processes (September 2002).
Group kinaesthetic drama properties firmly depended upon technical and intuitive knowing. The data demonstrated that manipulation of objects to solve problems enables a group to deepen the exploration that stimulates and connects imagining and creating (Johnstone, 1981; Spolin, 1983, 1985). The drama property is therefore an object, tangible or imaginary, that the playbuilders use to enhance their devising work. It also provides an awareness of the unique relationship between knowing and empathy, as the drama property can allow a group to re-examine the frame they have established, and to consider how to utilise performance techniques and elements of drama in a collaborative and meaningful manner. A group kinaesthetic drama property acquires symbolic significance through the semiotics it is endowed with; the drama property is hence imaginatively and creatively textualised (September 2002).

I labelled all the above concepts as group kinaesthetics, and subsumed into each concept is the kinaesthetic teaching and learning that occurs to allow the group to function in an independent or interrelated manner in the playbuilding classroom. For instance, group imaginative divergence can be released through improvisation activities that stimulate ensemble ideas. Group metaphoric thinking and creating arise when playbuilding group empathy is strong, and when all areas of the paradigm could merge together to produce progressive playbuilding structures through the co-facilitation of teacher and students learning together. Examples are investigated in Chapters Four to Eight of this thesis.

The paradigm is therefore part of a larger frame of critical pedagogic knowing that takes place in a playbuilding inquiry context, and indicates that kinaesthetic teaching and learning occurs in a group context. Thus kinaesthetic teaching and learning progresses in the playbuilding classroom when students are given opportunities to enhance their kinaesthetic intelligence.

3.20 Trustworthiness of interpretations

"Being trustworthy as a qualitative researcher means at the least that the processes of the research are carried out fairly, that the products represent as closely as possible the experiences of the people who are studied" (Ely et al., 1991, p.93). During my analysis
process, I paid attention continuously to being trustworthy to the students' and teachers' experiences, to ensure the credibility of my interpretations. The emerging paradigm has sometimes been difficult to describe because of the active nature of drama education which is not easily transferable to the written word. I wished to explain my final reasoning, succinctly yet creatively so that the shape of the epistemological underpinnings submerged into my interpretations (p.164).

My interpretations were checked against my data, both raw and coded, and were discussed with colleagues (see Appendix 2.1). I felt that my inquiry was contributing to the improvement of teaching practices in playbuilding through my teaching of drama workshops in secondary schools and university, which focused on groups learning kinaesthetically. My interpretations were usable by everyday teachers, and could contribute to the ever-evolving teaching of playbuilding. The postgraduate seminars and colloquia I attended also provided me with opportunities to verify and to share the interpretations of my investigation (see Appendix 2.1). The reaction to and ideas from these debates were challenging, and provided stimulus and new ideas on how I might examine the data. I wanted to write and authenticate my ideas in a phenomenological sense, where the written world “will succeed to the extent that it awakens the reader’s memory of his own perceptual encounters” (States, 1985, p.1). This has been difficult to achieve, but I hope this study may trigger playbuilding memories that allow drama teachers to explore their teaching practice and enable them to use the interpretation of kinaesthetic teaching and learning in the classroom.

Authenticity came from continually addressing the judgments in the grounding of my interpretations. I have specified the conditions that gave rise to the phenomenon of a group of playbuilders working together kinaesthetically in a group devised project, and explained the consequences of this phenomenon. Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that, in evaluating the merits of authenticity, the theory needs to have the ability to “speak specifically for the populations from which it was derived and to apply back to them” (p.267). The theory does not provide a definitive answer on how to teach or on what always occurs in learning through playbuilding, nor should it, but it does examine and explore kinaesthetic teaching and learning processes as a major component.
Playbuilding has many facets, and the theory of groups of playbuilders devising their own plays kinaesthetically as a collective ensemble provides one important way to extend teaching and learning in drama education.

3.21 Gaining closure and reflections

I was encouraged by Glaser’s (1998) comments that a researcher does not have to be a writer, and his enthusiastic ideas helped me, a classroom practitioner, to express my interpretations through the written word (p.194). I was also particularly struck by Valerie Janesick’s approach to her dance research from “an aesthetic, artistic, and metaphoric perspective” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998a, p.xiii). Janesick (1998) used dance as a metaphor in her work on The Dance of Qualitative Research Design - Metaphor, Methodolatry, and Meaning. She argued that this was because dance is about a lived experience, just as qualitative research is about a lived experience (pp.35-55). Moreover, the visual and active images in Janesick’s concept and ideas were accessible and enlightening; they were images that suited my personal style of practical learning. Janesick’s writing fired my performing arts imagination and I chose to correlate the distinctive playbuilding teaching phases with my thesis research work to create a qualitative research metaphor. Figure 3.13 is a metaphorical representation of the processes undertaken in my teaching of the junior and senior secondary participants’ playbuilding at St. Sistine School, and it also highlights the conceptual ideas in Chapters Four to Nine.
Figure 3.13: Metaphorical representation of the processes undertaken in teaching playbuilding incorporated in Chapters Four to Nine

Another reason that teaching playbuilding as a metaphor is important in this thesis is that at the beginning of any playbuilding project, the teacher helps the students to ask the question: What do I want to say to an audience in this group devised work? This is similar to the way I, as a qualitative researcher, began my initial research (Janesick, 1998 p.37). Therefore there were many similarities in the process of qualitative research, and being a teacher of playbuilding. The metaphor provides an avenue to structure and write the thesis. Sometimes the writing came easily and sometimes it was stilted, but as I progressed I gained new insights, hoping to be able to share some drama education ideas that had emerged. I loved Margot Ely’s (Ely, Vinz, Anzul, Downing, 1997) notion that what is worthwhile in writing up qualitative research is that ideas build upon ideas, and keeping

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this concept and Valerie Janesick's approach in mind, I visualised continually the active structure of playbuilding whilst writing this thesis.

The thesis, and its metaphorical nature, generated new frames of reference for the problems associated with playbuilding (Ely et al., 1991, p.181). Working in this manner involved my imagination and feelings; this meant that there was an evolving transformation, and a high degree of self-awareness and reflection needed for the process. Donald Schön (1987) argues that researches do not just reflect on their practice, but that they are continuously undertaking research projects in their own practice to improve their practice. I experienced this concept throughout the years it has taken me to complete this thesis. In my ongoing teaching of playbuilding something unexpected would sometimes get my attention, giving me food for thought about my theoretical approaches to the thesis. This is especially true in the penultimate chapter where I discuss the playbuilding project called Performing an Essay. My zone of practice in this teaching environment, as well as others, has been enhanced and elaborated because of this research.

Finally, Marcel Proust’s (1871/1972; Barry, 1997, no page no cited) words at the beginning of this chapter demonstrate that he truly understood the nature of discovery and exploration as, at the end of my qualitative research method chapter, I still have a close affinity with his idea that “the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes”. The qualitative research method has been a true voyage of discovery, and it has opened my eyes to possibilities I never imagined at the beginning of the process.

The following chapters exemplify my empirical analysis, and simulate a metaphorical playbuilding journey (see Figure 3.13) that a secondary drama educator would undertake whilst teaching group devised work. In particular, the next two chapters, Chapters Four and Five, present teachers’ playbuilding experiences through the multimethods of my qualitative research process, and continue into the predictable and unpredictable drama form of improvisation and its affinity with group kinaesthetic playbuilding.
Chapter 4
Teachers’ views of playbuilding

Teachers’ views on the essence of playbuilding vary. They range from:

“Interacting” (Alice, teacher interview 18/04/2001)
“Risk taking and creativity” (Lucy, teacher interview 18/04/2001)
“Physical generated work” (Paul, teacher interview 30/03/2001)
“To be inspired” (Sam, teacher interview 10/05/2001).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the interviews with the participating teachers, and draws on the theories of other relevant educators (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Flow of analyses in this thesis
In-depth interviews with experienced drama teachers, Alice, Lucy, Paul and Sam, combined with my own experiences, are the bases for the classroom experiences analysed in this chapter. Collegial interaction is important in drama education, and each participating teacher’s point of view is testimony to the value of playbuilding and its multifaceted processes. Other teachers’ voices, such as those of Roslyn Arnold, Blom and Chaplin, Julie Dunn, Maxine Greene, John O’Toole, Lev Vygotsky and Betty Jane Wagner, to name but a few, have also provided implicit insights in this chapter. The complex issues raised during the analyses of imagining and creating in playbuilding indicate that there is not a singular drama pedagogy but a plethora of collective and diverse teaching and learning theories and practices.

This chapter is a metaphorical representation of the discussion and debate drama teachers engage in when planning teaching and learning strategies for playbuilding. In this regard Chapter Four synthesises all the key questions, but with an emphasis on the two key questions:

- What are the links between imagining and creating in playbuilding?
- What impact do kinaesthetic teaching and learning practices have on imagining and creating in playbuilding groups?

First and foremost, the pedagogies that relate to these key questions are primarily concerned with and related to group work.

### 4.2 Group dynamics in playbuilding

A playbuilding group is a dynamic entity with its own human social and cultural interactions, and its function is to imagine and create theatre portraying this very same human condition. “Our ordinary experience of ourselves is of a body-mind unity actively engaged with the world around us” (Matthews, 2002, p.29). Thus, the individual student works through the social and cultural norms of the drama processes and the expectations of how the group will develop its drama project. The group builds on this awareness of the project, emotionally relating in an integrated manner, whilst simultaneously creating personal and fictitious relationships in the drama metaxical world.
Collaborating is the essence of this relational work, and the teachers I interviewed were of one accord in this view, yet each perceived it in their own way. Sam argued that collaboration in playbuilding was “the ability to be inspired and to communicate that inspiration to others” (see Appendix 3.2). He suggested that inspiration can come from a catalyst such as the visual or emotional, and inspiration excites a group into “creative thought”. From “creative thought” the group can theatrically express the concepts in dramatic terms (Sam, teacher interview 10/05/2001). Lucy characterised collaborating in playbuilding as a process that “involved (students) taking responsibility, rather than sitting back and just allowing everybody else to create and lead”. She further argued that if a group took collaborative dramatic risks into the devising, then creativity followed (Lucy, teacher interview 18/04/2001)(see Appendix 3.3).

Collaborating in groups is therefore about the complex process of interacting (Foucault, 1983; Terry & Hogg, 2000). A fundamental pedagogy in drama education is about collaborating imaginatively and creatively with other students in a variety of group structures. An integral feature of playbuilding is that it provides an opportunity to work within a variety of group interactive projects.

4.3 Interacting

Interacting is fundamental to all playbuilding groups, as indicated in Alice’s quote at the beginning of this chapter. Individual members of a playbuilding group do not work in isolation, and interacting entwines the group members in their common project. Interacting in playbuilding, by its very nature, depends upon physical teaching. The depth and breath of this type of teaching depends on a teacher’s personal style, and for Paul, physically generated teaching and learning was the core of creativity in playbuilding.

W.J. Sprott (1958) argues that groups engaged in a project should be thought of as an integrated structure; he goes on to suggest that this structure is comprised of activities required by the project, and the emotional relations between the members. Playbuilding groups in drama education create their own projects and develop an emotional relationship
to their work. A principal ingredient in playbuilding is for the interacting parties to “develop a mutually agreed system of expectation in accordance with which the action of the individual is geared to the reaction of the others, and theirs, in turn, to his response” (p.144). In playbuilding, this mutually agreed system of expectation belongs to the cognitive, affective and physical domains of students working together in the classroom.

D. R. Forsyth (1999) defines a group as “two or more interdependent individuals who influence one another through social interaction” (p.5). Social interaction is important in a playbuilding group to enable ideas to flourish within its project. The drama group members need each other to create the curriculum project, and the relationships between group members can affect the decision-making, the structuring, the process, and the final performance. Perhaps this interdependence gives a type of creative permission for the group to interact dramatically.

Human behaviour is often group behaviour, and “individual’s actions, thoughts, and emotions can’t be understood without taking into consideration the group that they belong to” (Forsyth, 1999, p.xi); human behaviour can therefore have a profound impact on how individuals shape the action. The composition of each drama class that undertakes a playbuilding project, and the separate groups that are formed within it, are unique. Playbuilding groups comprise individuals with their own personalities and idiosyncrasies; the group dynamics are governed by the needs and wants of the students who are at different stages of their personal and dramatic maturity.

The participating senior secondary students who undertook Performing an Essay were in mixed ability groups. This mix ranged from students who were exceptional performers to students who preferred to research and analyse. Each group had six members to allow for a range and variation of ideas. The senior secondary groups for the HSC Group Devised Performance project were chosen by the students in collaboration with the teacher, and this meant that the groups had friendship structures as well a range of abilities. Two of the groups were structured so that they contained a number of the identified gifted and talented students; these groups playbuilt the The Wives and The Triangle. Each senior group contained an uneven number of students; the students wanted uneven numbers as they felt that this would provide the group with opportunities to create heightened dramatic tension.
through characters joining forces and creating allegiances with one another. Character allegiance, created through dominance and conflict, is elaborated upon in *The Wives* playbuilding scene which is analysed in Chapter Six.

The junior secondary students’ *Experimental Playbuilding* groups were comprised of students working with class members who they had worked with only two or three times before. This provided them with an opportunity to learn about the dramatic strengths and ideas of all their classmates. There was one friendship group of three which was formed due to problems within the school timetable.

Each junior and senior secondary group created its own dynamic forces because of its composition, the personalities, and the skills and abilities of the individual students. Therefore each playbuilding group created a unique milieu for the imaginative drama situation to occur.

### 4.4 Teachers and students as co-facilitators in a shared playbuilding space

Co-facilitation occurs when teachers and students together plan the management of the playbuilding processes. All the teachers interviewed during the research argued that teachers and students were co-facilitators in the teaching and learning of playbuilding, but to varying degrees depending on the different phases of the playbuilding process and the abilities of their students. The participating teachers claimed that it was important to the success of playbuilding for students to be co-facilitators because it empowered the group to take responsibility for their own creating, while trusting the teacher’s role in their learning.

Teachers and students, as co-facilitators in the shared playbuilding space, were surrounded by causal conditions such as how the students initially created their group devised work; there were in the main four broad areas as starting points, which were character, narrative, setting and theme (Bray 1991). Errol Bray explains that discussing these four starting points “can often help narrow the group’s area of search for an idea” (1991, p.5). An

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intervening condition that could alter this starting point was if the group decided to frame the drama by combining a number of these broad areas, thereby not closing off dramatic possibilities.

Other causal conditions that became evident in the data were that students could explore elements of drama to help provide a richness and complexity for their playbuilding, and hence their plot line structures. For example, the participating teachers discussed and compared a variety of plot line structures that they had observed in their classes; these ranged from simple one-story plot lines, to those with three or four complex actions taking place simultaneously, to cyclic plot lines where the play finished up where it had begun. The teachers argued that diversified plot line approaches were purposeful or deliberate acts taken by the group to resolve a problem of focus, narrative, dramatic tension or dramatic conflict, to name but a few elements of drama.

In synthesising, I was able to identify patterns in the participating teachers’ data on the function and operation of co-facilitating that created sets of circumstances that criss-crossed the dimension of the playbuilding project. This led me to deduce that one or two students do emerge as ‘super-dramatists’ (Dunn, 1996) with a pivotal idea that allowed the playbuilding project to go forward. This was because the issue of collaboration and co-facilitation is not just about creative individuals working in a drama group, but about building creative relationships in their shared group space.

The junior and senior secondary drama student participants corroborated this analysis. I asked the participating students from St. Sistine School after their final playbuilding project for 2000 how the group went about choosing the main playbuilding ideas from the range of possibilities. Their responses are shown in Figure 4.2.
Figure 4.2: Does a group usually take a couple of peoples’ ideas to make the main part of the playbuilding?

As shown in Figure 4.2, more than 80 per cent of the participating students agreed that a playbuilding group eventually takes a couple of students’ ideas to create the major themes and issues of the playbuilding (see Appendices 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3); this concurs with the participating teachers’ views. The question also illuminated the fact that there were silent voices (Hatton, 2001, 2002, 2003) in the playbuilding projects. There were ideas and opinions either not expressed, not heard, or not acted upon during the process. The participating students had to manage the power relationships in their groups, and in these power relationships some voices were overridden. This is discussed in section 4.12.

The analysis of the participating students’ audiotapes, respective journals and logbooks also demonstrated that the majority knew intuitively that super-dramatists (Dunn, 1996) had the ability to synthesise students’ opinions that had been voiced. When this occurred the ideas became group knowledge through a student/teacher co-facilitation process; this allowed group imaginative divergence to flourish. Furthermore, all students believed that it was important for group members to work together collectively and collaboratively, regardless of the ideas of the super-dramatists. When the participating students worked together collectively and collaboratively in their playbuilding project they entered into a peer learning phase which operated through experiential and discovery learning, regardless of their level of drama skills, or thoughts on how ideas were formed in a group.
The participating teachers, in common with educators such as Maxine Greene (1995) and Howard Gardner (1993a) explored how the imagination releases creative ideas. Ideas, imagination and creativity are all interrelated, and this thought is explored further in Figure 4.3.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4.3: The imagination generates ideas to fuel the creative process**

How does the imagination generate ideas to fuel the creative process? During the analysis of the data I wished to tease out and to illuminate the principal characteristics of ideas in the context of this research. The principal characteristics of ideas are tied to the phenomenological pursuit of the mind-body relation (Macann, 1993, p.171), and I attempt to bring the body, emotion, cognition and context into coexistence (1993) when using the word ‘ideas’ in this chapter, and in the whole of this thesis.

Ideas are multifaceted, they can be sequential, linear, interrelated, interdependent, independent, random, cyclic, chaotic; they can have a connectivity to each other; they can contrast with each other; they can be tangible or ephemeral. Playbuilding ideas are generated in response to a problem or situation, be that a cognitive, affective or physical problem and/or a situation. I have also discovered from synthesising the ideas of the participating teachers, the junior and senior secondary students, and other relevant drama and theatre educators, that ideas spring from the imaginative core of all these sources, and
therefore from the participants’ spontaneous and contemplative conscious and subconscious worlds.

The teacher participants discussed the function of students as peer learners in the generation of ideas in playbuilding projects. Sam argued that a group may require a leader, but unless the group “reflects more than one person’s view of the universe, it cannot really be a successful playbuilding experience” (Sam, teacher interview 10/05/2001). Paul argued that “there are natural givers and takers, … and sometimes you need to have leaders and followers. It is in this context that there are some students who have an innate creativity, and they will often be the people who spontaneously create ideas for other people to work off” (Paul, teacher interview 30/03/2001). Notwithstanding the above insights, all participating teachers pointed out that there are playbuilding situations where group members are unable to work continuously as co-facilitators or peer learners. This could occur because not all students are listened to during the process. In this case the teacher would move away from the role of co-facilitator and become the principal advisor, to help the group experiment and explore the necessary drama techniques and ideas to overcome the problem. In the main, the data indicated that this occurred through teacher modelling strategies, where the teacher helps the playbuilding groups to explore the risk-taking ideas they may find confronting, and they do this by modelling “successful learning strategies at a time of critical needs” (Arnold, 2000, p.14). This demonstrates that there is a need to incorporate more inclusive processes in the class to try and overcome the problem of silent voices.

The four drama teachers also claimed that as teachers facilitating the playbuilding process, they considered all variations and possibilities in a group’s membership structure, such as what skills and knowledge different students brought to their playbuilding group, and what friendship or tensions impacted on the playbuilding projects. The participating teachers reflected that essentially, playbuilding is a reciprocal process within a definitive artistic ensemble (see Appendices 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4). Effective collaboration is the “creation and maintenance of a shared (drama) space” (Schrage, 2001, p.1); this shared space provides an understanding of and a context for the teacher and a playbuilding group’s dramatic devising, where they can manipulate, create, reiterate and re-arrange their teaching and learning.
4.5 Playbuilding as a microcosm of society

In Western society we make laws and rules for social behaviour to help us to coexist peacefully, and playbuilding should be managed similarly for it to be effective; hence students have to be guided in how to function and coexist in drama groups.

Alice, a participating teacher, concurs, arguing that playbuilding groups are a “microcosm of society”, and similar rules and guidelines are required to govern the group (Alice, teacher interview 18/04/2001) so that each individual student can be a productive group member. To achieve this, a teaching environment needs to be engaged where the talents and capacities of all students are challenged continuously. Paul argues that drama teachers should set students creative limitations as “a methodical sequence of (teaching) ideas, or experiences, leads towards a goal” (Paul, teacher interview 30/03/2001). On the other hand, Alice suggests that it is important for the teacher to help the students “not only to listen to each other’s ideas, but that they try out everyone’s ideas” (Alice, teacher interview 18/04/2001), because a playbuilding group should not be dominated by one person as “one leader may ensure a theatrical success but not necessarily the success of the playbuilding” (Sam, teacher interview 10/05/2001).

Group membership can be contentious, and I strongly believe that the members of playbuilding groups should be selected by the teacher, sometimes in conjunction with the students, depending on the curriculum circumstances. This is because a drama teacher should understand sensitively how different relationships emerge through various groupings, enabling students to access each other’s talents and ideas, and allowing students to experience a multitude of ways of expressing, performing and critically analysing (Arnold, 1998; Horkheimer, 1972).

In response to a closed questionnaire given to the junior and senior secondary participating students towards the end of 2000, 95 per cent of student participants stated that they enjoyed working with other students who have drama skills different from their own (see Figure 4.4).
Figure 4.4: Do you (as senior and junior drama students) like to work with people who have different drama skills?

Figure 4.4, in conjunction with the analysis of the rest of the student data, indicated that the participating students valued the multiplicity of their peers’ experiences. Properties of distinct and contrasting skills emerged from the data as attributes to be appraised, evaluated and valued by all the students, regardless of their age or drama experience (see Appendices 4.2 and 4.3).

With the differing skills of its members, the playbuilding group therefore had characteristics of a learning community where there were identifiable differences but shared goals, with a discursive quality that catered for the needs of student participants in the equal relationships of a drama learning culture. This may have to do with the notion of risk taking as, by working with students with other skills, completely ‘left field’ ideas might be raised and then even have to be acted upon. Whatever the formation, group members learn to respect each other, and to “understand that risk taking and creativity is another step on the (playbuilding) scale” (Paul, teacher interview 30/03/2001).

Playbuilding groups are made up of all kinds of individuals; this means diversity, just as in broader society. Diversity is not simply a matter of individual intelligence, imagination and creativity, it is also a matter of preferred group working styles. Junior and senior secondary
students with whom they did not normally have a friendship outside of class. In spite of this response, my observations on the classroom floor led me to believe that the junior secondary students more often wished to playbuild in socially friendship groups, whilst the senior students enjoyed working in social friendly warm-up groups, but had a more mature understanding of the importance of diversity in group playbuilding. For example, Nina, a senior secondary drama student, reflected that in the process of playbuilding “we drew from past work with other classmates and other performances ... to combine the current group’s aims” (Nina, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance, evaluation, June 2000).

The individual students participating in this research would bring their personal attitudes and culture to the classroom; they brought the preceding lesson, and the argument or excitement they had just experienced in the playground, and their minds and bodies needed to adjust to entering this classroom drama world (Matthews, 2002). They had to be committed to the forthcoming activities; they had to re-arrange their ‘beings’ to work cohesively and collaboratively within their given drama group project. They also brought to the group the fact that they were all female, and the school’s social forces that helped construct their female perspective; this included such features as empowering them to speak with a female stance on social justice issues, or to value their academic and personal achievements, notwithstanding gender inequities in broader society. In this all-girls school environment, and hence in the drama classroom, the students were creating their own realities in their playbuilding, which was a further indication of how playbuilding is a microcosm of the student’s society; this is elaborated upon in Chapters Six and Eight.

4.6 Playbuilding engaging with kinesics and aesthetics

Playbuilding engaging with kinesics and aesthetics can be viewed as central to dramatic learning. Kinesics is the study of movements, gestures, and facial expressions as a form of communication; people’s kinesics are based on their memories of these ways of communicating. Scholars like Aston and Savona (1991), Blom and Chaplin (1982, 1988),
Fast (1970), Newlove (1993) and Seitz (2002), have studied kinesics to one degree or another to advance, progress and inform their respective educational and performance studies work.

Drama kinesic memories are also characterised by body movement, gestures and facial expression. Drama kinesics allow students to think and remember in terms of drama and theatre conventions and techniques, by mentally reconstructing the “muscular effort, movement and position in space” (Seitz, 2002, p.2) that they undertook whilst learning about these processes. Drama kinesics information provides students with a conscious appreciation and capacity to express their ideas and feelings. Hence I argue that all the bodily movements of a playbuilding group have some type of meaning; none is accidental (Fast, 1970), as the group bodily movements are a communication system which is enhanced by their perception of their work.

Aesthetics (Abbs, 1993; Dewey, 1934) in playbuilding has, in my opinion, a fundamental role to perform as it pertains to sense perception. This sense perception belongs to the students’ interpretation of what, for instance, they may think is beautiful, sublime, and/or disagreeable within their work. Students talk and reflect openly and freely about their experiences and the meaning of the project, either as members of the audience or as participants in the performance.

Dewy (1934) argues that the aesthetic has to do with perception. In the drama class, the students, either as the ‘actors’ or as members of the class audience, become totally engrossed in their work with their imaginative and creative capacities making perceptive connections; they are active learners. Learning is implicit in Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of “our being-in-the-world” (Matthews, 2002, p.9) where the “physical body acts as the mediator of the world” (Burton, 1991, p.103); the body is the mediator because the students perceive the world from their point of view. This centrality to kinaesthetic learning emanates from embodiment; the embodied awareness of the experience of learning relates to the goals of the project, and hence creates a meaning for the student group.

Peter Abbs (1993) argues that “the arts are not synonymous with the aesthetic but they depend on it and work through it” (p.11). Thus playbuilding, as an educational art form,
provides groups of students with an environment in which such aesthetic "experiences can take place" (p.12). In playbuilding the aesthetic is a living response to transforming; it operates through the students' senses and feelings, and is forged through their interaction. A process of learning occurs through this interaction and hence aesthetics is a primary and essential component of playbuilding.

Analysis of the teacher and student data, to help conceptualise the process and interaction of aesthetics and kinesics, revealed that it is an evolving process in response to a variety of contexts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For instance, aesthetics engages with kinesics in playbuilding when there is a memory connection of mind and body within the artistic creation. In some playbuilding groups students find it difficult to work constantly with their bodies; sometimes as secondary school students mature they become more self conscious or stilted in their physical work, due to the fear of appearing foolish in front of their peers and/or because they feel socially and culturally uncomfortable interacting with another student's body. Therefore, from the data, I had to ask questions that probed into problems that were emerging through the action and interaction of aesthetics and kinesics, and what form did this take. For instance, the data revealed that it is important for a teacher to help students to revisit their kinesic memories and to connect them to aesthetics. By doing so the teacher helps to advance students' kinaesthetic intelligence in playbuilding. Alice, a participating teacher, stated that some students are resistant to engaging in or thinking about physical activities; they find it somewhat confronting due to their age, maturity or sexuality. In these cases the teacher gently "over long periods of time" (Alice, teacher interview 18/04/2001) introduces varied physical activities that help the students in their active learning. Physical activities belong in the aesthetic world of a student's senses and feelings and their memory of kinesic communication; therefore the teacher is trying to connect aesthetics and kinesics to enhance kinaesthetic teaching and learning.

The consequences of these two concepts working together can be explained thus: for example, Paul, when discussing his playbuilding teaching strategies, reflected that movement-based work, and appreciating its dramatic principles, was at the core of his teaching. He said, "I probably devote one term to movement activities" (Paul, teacher interview 30/03/2001), adding that he complemented this with voice activities. By combining movement and voice he was catering to a range of abilities in the class and was
providing all students with an avenue to explore their sense of perception about what they liked or disliked, as well as tapping into their memories of physical communication. The other participating drama teachers also believed that active learning, where students make perceptive connections, is “much more beneficial than passive learning” (Alice, teacher interview 18/04/2001), as within passive learning students may “get trapped behind the mental success or failure of verbal and intellectual expression” (Sam, teacher interview 10/05/2001). The teachers expressed the view that body, movement, and their appreciation are central to expressiveness in the drama class; it creates a physical and mental energy that is visible to the student group.

Kinesics and aesthetics enable students to see what there is to be seen, either by taking in the whole of the visual stimuli around them or by focusing on themselves, or perhaps on a particular individual student’s way of enacting. Through watching each other perform the playbuilders form a visually distinct perception of their creating. Perhaps, at times, it is like a ‘poetic insight’, as visual kinesics combined with the other senses creates a rise and fall in the beat of the playbuilding work because the faculty of sight allows the students another intuitive way of penetrating their work. Therefore, although the student cannot actually see her work at the moment she creates it, she can visualise it in her mind (kinesics) simultaneously, depending on the others in the group and the teacher to be her eyes. This visual information is active and is presented to the other group members with a purpose that is relevant to the exploration or problem-solving occurring in the playbuilding group. In this instance, kinesics and aesthetics learning will take place, as a visual language exists, and because in the drama class “people can and do think visually; ... people can and do learn visually” (Moore & Dwyer, p.14).

The ingredients of kinesics and aesthetics create human rhythms in the drama class that can unleash the gamut of human experience, challenge the group to find its core creating moments, and allow the group to build up layers around that core. This harbours a principle of dramatic transformation as the students communicate with one another through movement, gesture, facial expressions and words. They listen to each other’s ideas and try them out to explore the possibilities; they must actually be willing to take risks, trying all ideas, and not being dismissive of one another. It is therefore important for drama students
to be in tune with what each other is saying and doing, and respond to this through engaging in kinesics and aesthetics.

4.7 Overview of teaching playbuilding kinaesthetically

Synthesis of the data indicated that to teach playbuilding kinaesthetically meant that a drama teacher had the capacity to be aware that drama students solve playbuilding problems through engagement with physical and mental learning activities. Furthermore, a drama teacher scaffolds embodied learning activities to nurture this physically active learning. The teacher teaches kinaesthetically through intuitive, inquiring and reflective teaching practices (Arnold, 1998, pp.114-116). Grounded theory demonstrated that the drama student and drama teacher connections are circular and non-linear, and hence all those involved are interconnected in teaching playbuilding through kinaesthetics.

I had chosen to undertake the research in my own workplace of St. Sistine School to capture the “lived experiences” (Janesick, 1998, p.53) of my students. Valerie Janesick (1998) says that “by staying in a setting over time” (p.53), the researcher has the opportunity to use a multitude of views whilst framing and addressing the research problem. For me, this was a process of discriminatory sampling of ‘lived experiences’ from the data, as I looked for incidents that demonstrated the dimensional range and/or variation of my concepts and the relationships among the concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.210). This meant that the concept of learning through kinaesthetics had to concern itself continuously with the interpretations of the students’ and teachers’ data, enhanced by the literature review.

Emerging from this grounded theory analysis is the dimension that kinaesthetic teaching could be considered the bedrock to learning in drama. Furthermore, teachers using kinaesthetic learning as an entry point (Gardner, 1993b; Hyland, 2000) from the very outset of a playbuilding project could create educational openings for their students that introduced new concepts and materials that complemented the topics, issues or themes of the group devised play (Naughton, 2000, pp.34-36). Therefore, the dimensions of the data
demonstrated that fostering student physicalised learning allows their imaginations to be released and a conscious process of creating to take place. This physicalised learning enables the teacher to engage their students so that the student:

... uses acting skills to adopt and sustain a variety of characters and roles
... uses performance skills to interpret ... material
... uses knowledge and experience of dramatic and theatrical forms, styles and theories to inform and enhance ... group devised works
(Board of Studies, 1999b, p.24).

Figure 4.5 demonstrates how kinaesthetic teaching forms the bedrock of learning in playbuilding.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4.5: Kinaesthetic teaching as a bedrock of learning in playbuilding**

Figure 4.5 indicates how students' playbuilding is deepened through the kinaesthetic teaching process as all learning areas are connected through the energy of motion; they are closely related and interdependent with each other. Kinaesthetic teaching methods that challenge the playbuilding environment depend on the initial teaching steps of playing and improvising, which in turn creates a kinaesthetic energy that stimulates the imagining. The imagining is not static, is it physicalised; when it is continually physicalised, accumulated
and embodied learning experiences take place in playbuilding. If teachers are in tune with the kinaesthetic energy in the classroom, by understanding the importance of physical learning to drama students they will capture an awareness of the depth of embodiment that takes place. Figure 4.5 also demonstrates that an energised configuration continually plays back and forth indicating an intensity of action through the awareness of the playbuilding experience. Blom and Chaplin (1998) analyse the “awareness of the experience itself” (p.18); they stress that “creativity can’t be forced to happen, but it can be encouraged and motivated” (p.49) through movement. Therefore, if the teaching is physically generated and vibrant, group creativity will be improved during the process, and the learning environment will be enhanced.

In the classroom, kinaesthetic teaching challenges the playbuilders and the teacher to open up entry points such as the student’s musical, linguistic, intra- or inter-personal skills and capacities. “Pluralistic approaches into teaching opens up multiple ‘windows’ into material” (Gardner, 1991, cited in Naughton, 2000, p.35), and a “skilled teacher ... is one who can open a number of different ‘windows’ on the same concept” (p.36). This multi-strategic approach to teaching drama is embedded in this thesis. Furthermore “if education is to have an overall impact on the quality of life, then students’ nonverbal potential should be nurtured as well as their verbal potential” (Moore & Yamamoto, 1998b, p.1).

Importantly, the data demonstrated that kinaesthetic drama teaching cultivates numerous physical problem-solving skills and knowledge in both the teacher and the students, and kinaesthetic teaching can be approached in a variety of ways that illuminate and enhance the sources of imagining and creating in playbuilding projects.
4.8 In what ways do a playbuilding group’s imagining and creating occur?

Imagination and creativity draw on all the cognitive, affective and physical resources of the individual, and hence the playbuilding group’s imagination and creativity cannot be forced, but can be encouraged and motivated through teaching. The teachers interviewed during this research, in common with educationalists such as Roslyn Arnold (1998, 2000) and Maxine Greene (1995; Pinar, 1998), suggested that creativity, and hence imagining and creating, can be taught through encouragement and enhanced through teaching.

During theoretical saturation the concept emerged that creativity can be described as ‘unlimited imagination’ in drama, with the capacity to create something new, even unique from what is already existing. This concept enabled me to examine the density and overlapping nature of the categories of imagining and creating. In playbuilding there is a dimension where students blur the lines between the imagining and creating, and a teacher can assist this blurring by providing group learning activities that enhance transformation. This is important as it enables students to develop an understanding of playbuilding in their own and in other people’s societies, as playbuilding (as part of drama education) “fosters an understanding of continuity and change, and of the connections between different times and cultures” (Board of Studies, 2003a, p.8). Hence, a property of this dimension is explained succinctly by Sam who argued that one of the glories of teaching playbuilding is that it is a culmination of the group’s view of the world around them (Sam, teacher interview 10/05/2001). This culmination of the group’s view allows for interpretation of ideas, as the group can think and act outside the square.

Eighty-five per cent of my junior and senior secondary student participants considered that in their playbuilding their group developed its own unique imagination during the process. By this they meant that their playbuilding group reflected their particular manner of creating, and that no other group could parallel the way they had given life to their ideas, as each group was made up of different students. The participating students’ responses indicated a cognizance of the pivotal role of a group’s divergent imaginings and creating
that, I argue, makes the students better informed as the creators and audiences of their work.

Further analysis and synthesis of the data demonstrated that there is no one kinaesthetic teaching method to help playbuilding groups to develop their own unique imagination, as each group project develops its own personality whilst the teacher develops an awareness and “consciousness of the classroom” (Simons, 2003, p.17). Sam found that in his teaching experiences some groups required a range of teaching strategies to “find a strong line, mentally, so that every improvisation and/or experiment of dramatic elements is vibrantly linked”, whereas other groups “mainly explore improvisation strategies that allow them to be up and moving and exciting the imagination before referring that imaginative excitement back to dramatic elements” (Sam, teacher interview 10/05/2001). In his opinion, both groups are goal-oriented through the teacher being aware of the needs of each group, although the final outcome of the playbuilding project was never understood or expected by either party at the beginning of the process.

Paul argued that creating was in part learned in the drama class, and not everyone has the same natural ability to create. He argued that students who instinctively and intuitively know how to create have an “indefinable x factor” (Paul, teacher interview 30/03/2001). This concept again concurs with Julie Dunn’s (1996) and Betty Jane Wagner’s (1995) observations regarding super-dramatists. Paul also observed that in his experience, super dramatists demonstrate certain characteristics; for instance, they are generally the ones who “think faster, and perceive the potential of an idea earlier than other kids and can visually, as well as practically, see all its possibilities in the drama space” (Paul, teacher interview 30/03/2001). The teachers’ data also indicated that there were some students’ voices that were at times ignored because of the super-dramatists, and that as educators they needed to be aware of how their students travelled “through the creative process, so that the drama can open up new insights and possibilities” (Hatton, 2003, p148).

A group’s imagining and creating springs from powerful imaginative divergence whilst devising, and is enhanced by a group’s kinaesthetic knowing which enables members to manipulate drama techniques in an unusual or original way. “The creative process starts with the imaginative invention of a poet” (Stanislavski, 1987, cited in Burton, 1991, p. 81),
and in playbuilding it materialises in a play that demonstrates a group’s imaginative inspirations.

4.9 In what ways does a playbuilding group create through metaphor?

Group metaphoric creating can capture the mysteries of dramatic meaning so that what the group believes is the essence of their storytelling is brought to life. Metaphor releases creativity because it is multi-sensory; this multi-sensory capacity means that the metaphoric layers in themselves provide substance and meaning to playbuilding. “A metaphor captures an intent to some extent. There are a million layers that go towards creating that metaphor” (Paul, teacher interview 30/03/2001), and group metaphoric creating actually expands dramatic meaning. It does this by providing a deep dramatic substance to the playbuilding group that enables them to explore avenues in their narrative that had not emerged before.

If the metaphor is working well for the playbuilding group it will crystallise the meaning and illuminate the nuances to their audience. Chapter Six provides examples of how a playbuilding metaphor can function in this manner. In that chapter I analyse one playbuilding HSC Group Devised Performance entitled The Wives, where the group used chiffon material as a metaphoric device to highlight their storyline about searching for a male Y chromosome, and another Higher School Certificate Group Devised Performance entitled The Triangle, which used the Bermuda Triangle mysteries as a metaphoric device to talk about diversity in society.

It would be helpful to explain here how the movement teachers Moore and Yamamoto (1998b) view metaphor, as the attributes they give to metaphoric thinking function in the same manner in a drama class. They write “students should be encouraged to see that (1) metaphors make new information and knowledge possible … (2) metaphors highlight certain features … , and (3) metaphors also suppress or hide certain features” (p.30). All participating teachers felt that experiential learning through metaphor was a dynamic way of releasing group imaginative divergence and metaphoric thinking and creating. Therefore, Moore and Yamamoto’s metaphoric attributes could be firmly embedded in
teaching playbuilding, and students can be supported in experimenting with the dramatic power of these metaphoric functions.

Simply stated, a metaphor is a comparative device which compares two things so closely that one thing is said to be the other. Unusual thoughts and metaphoric creating are of value to the creative process only inasmuch as they can be dramatised easily and add depth to the creating. Edwin Wilson (1998), in The Theatre Experience, talks about the function of metaphors in theatre as another form of “imaginative substitution” (p.29). Students, individually and within their group, can be taught ways to develop this capacity for imaginative substitution to extend their own and their group’s personal thoughts, feelings and experiences.

In our present-day culture, advertisements, television and teenage films use metaphoric devices. Secondary students in the early stages of playbuilding often bring in these metaphoric images, and it is important to replace or extend this concept of metaphor into a drama and theatre metaphor. Lucy reflected that students who were reasonably inexperienced in playbuilding needed to understand the structures of drama and theatre metaphor to begin creating multi-layered drama (Lucy, teacher interview 18/04/2001). All participating teachers argued that metaphoric structures explore the relationship between sensations, action and language, and significantly, if the group finds a fresh way of looking at their ideas, group divergent imaginings come to the fore and there can be a fresh way of looking at life’s complexities (Sam, teacher interview 10/05/2001). This fresh way of looking at life’s complexities belongs to the world of metaxis, as metaphors sit firmly between the actual and the fictitious at the start of a playbuilding project, and drama students have the authority to retain or discard their emerging metaphoric narrative.

During the theoretical sampling the data indicated that metaphoric creating and thinking requires a safe drama environment; this enables the playbuilding group to willingly explore concepts while feeling secure in the emerging ideas. This secure drama zone is an area where metaxis comes in to play, as the students can delve into or back away from their thinking and creating, depending on the group’s circumstances. In this context metaxis had multiple learning perspectives that provided students with embodied fictional
experiences and opportunities to reflect through group discussion, and their journals or logbooks, on the processes they had experienced.

A condition of the structural context is that the playbuilding group, working in a metaphorical framework, keeps imagining the comparisons they are trying to make between the metaphor and the drama. The consequences are that when they come up with the idea and attempt to put it into a practical performance, it can be an entirely different challenge for them. Translating group thought into group dramatic action can sometimes prove difficult; the group has to work kinaesthetically to make the metaphoric ideas active. The teacher has to pose kinaesthetic questions that allow the group to use their cognitive, affective and physical domains to solve the problems associated with the doing. Alice reflected on her teaching of metaphor in playbuilding by saying that she changed her strategies according to the students and the year group. If the composition of a class meant that the majority were risk takers, with a number of very quiet reflective students, her aim was to get the quieter students to offer ideas and try them out through group improvisation, whilst challenging the risk takers to extend their improvisations through their innate dramatic spontaneity (Alice, teacher interview 18/04/2001). The problem with a group creating a metaphor is that for it to occur “a group cannot keep theorising; they have to actually get up and do it ... using all their senses” (Alice, teacher interview 18/04/2001). The physicalising allows a group to break the rules that previously confined them, which in some cases are entrapped in cognitive thinking, as analysed in section 4.12 of this chapter. Once group members know how to use all their metaphoric senses they can create a new vision for their work (see Chapter Six, *The Wives* and *The Triangle*).

4.10 In what ways does a playbuilding group create through group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and use of drama properties?

At this point it is important to link the categories of group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties, notwithstanding that they are tied to group diverse imagination and metaphoric thinking and creating, as I wish to explain the action and interaction between
the three concepts. Strauss and Corbin write that "structure creates the context for action/interaction and, as such, is what gives it rhythm, pacing, form, and character" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.179). A dimension of the data strongly indicates the linkages between the three group kinaesthetics and demonstrates that they can occur continually, occasionally, simultaneously and individually, as this was a cyclic connection, not a hierarchical situation. All three group kinaesthetics combined with critical reflective knowing as each furthered the autonomy of the group though open inquiry teaching and learning strategies.

Group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and use of drama properties are non-hierarchical. For instance, group kinaesthetic knowing does not come first in the pattern that emerged, as it amalgamates into empathy and drama properties. But because drama is considered an artform in the New South Wales Junior and Senior Syllabi (Board of Studies, 2003a, 1999b), with a discrete body of knowledge including conventions, history, skills and methods of working, it is more practical to start from this technical knowing point (Smith & Lovat, 1991, pp.93-97). Group kinaesthetic knowing broadens the scope of the way dramatic knowledge is dealt with in group devised drama. This occurs when students explore their previous knowledge of theatre and drama conventions and techniques, tapping into their intuitive technical knowledge as well as their interpretative dramatic knowledge. Group kinaesthetic knowing links a group’s metaphorical thinking and imaginative divergence, as it is vital for a group to know how and why they are constructing in a particular manner so that scaffolding takes place in their learning environment. Group kinaesthetic knowing has properties of students manipulating the elements of drama to create belief and tension in their work, structuring their ideas through the skills of improvisation, and using appropriate performance styles and/or dramatic forms to give their ideas heightened clarity and dramatic meaning; it has further properties of students using appropriate performance spaces to enhance their work.

Group kinaesthetic empathy refers to the way the individuals in a group form an instinctive and sensorial way to communicate through the medium of movement, action, words and reflection. To varying degrees this creates a group cohesiveness, as every group member has likes and dislikes which link to other members (Sprott, 1958, p.144). Group kinaesthetic empathy has different properties from group kinaesthetic knowing, as
emotional memory, sensitivity, and the wisdom of the individual and group body create a dynamic intuitive reciprocity. Group kinaesthetic empathy can manifest itself as the foundation on which the group can debate, argue, improvise and reflect, enabling them to proceed in a sensorial manner with the devising and performing. It is a perceptual process that involves relationships, and how they change to enhance the drama devising; it allows the group to acknowledge the attitudes and views of others in the group through working collaboratively.

A group kinaesthetic drama property is a tangible or imaginary object that the drama group uses to enhance their group devised work. On a deeper level, it can allow a group to construct dramatic shapes that re-examine the framework they have established, as analysed in section 4.12 of this chapter. Such a re-examination allows the group to challenge their performance ideas. A group kinaesthetic drama property belongs to a process of engagement whereby the group’s drama properties acquire significance through the semiotics with which they are endowed, and relates to how intuitively and/or skilfully the group handles the core capacities of the tangible or imagined drama property.

Grounded theory demonstrated that the way the group used the drama property had properties of group transformation, as the group could alter or strengthen their perception of their work through the manipulation of the drama property. A drama property could enhance the theme, narrative, character and/or roles by adding the dimension of ‘possibilities’. Furthermore, a drama property provided a powerful visual element to the playbuilding, and gave the participating students an understanding that the function of a drama property must come out of what is actually happening in the playbuilding. Finally, when the participating students investigated and examined the drama properties metaphoric attributes, it enabled all of them to entwine their technical and interpretive knowing into their playbuilding projects.

All three group kinaesthetic areas, knowing, empathy and drama properties, had subcategories of problem solving, risk taking, and embodiment, again demonstrating the cyclic nature of the paradigm. Thus, the notion of a playbuilding group solving drama problems though their group’s imaginative body in the kinesphere of the classroom emerged at the forefront of my data. This concept pointed to an examination of the process
of playbuilders interpreting texts, either wordlessly or through utterances or through the body, and this is complex language to explore.

### 4.11 Group kinaesthetic language

David Abram (1996) argues that "EVERY ATTEMPT TO DEFINITIVELY SAY WHAT LANGUAGE IS is subject to a curious limitation" (p.73). The concept of a group kinaesthetic language appears limited by the restrictions of the words, as there is more than one way to experience this learning phenomenon. The limitations of language have constantly emerged during the writing, as at times words on a page appear inadequate and do not do justice to the complexities of physical learning and embodiment. Consequently, I do not attempt to say what a group's playbuilding language is, but rather to provide "a sense of its texture" (p.73) within the group kinaesthetic paradigm.

In playbuilding, wordless messages are a paralanguage that is situated side by side with verbal language, which in turn belongs to emotional communication. I believe that this three pronged language is a process of different types of "conscious familiarity" (p.73); this is because a kinaesthetic language is beyond words, but also belongs to words. The words are communicated by the teachers and students to each other with feeling and empathy about their given playbuilding project. Again, this feeling and empathy, although expressed in words, can also be expressed through non-verbal actions such as a look, a movement of the eyes, hands, or body to express intent. This is part of the potential of kinaesthetic movement embedded in the group's kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties. A playbuilding group's kinaesthetic communication can be further broken down into the language of observation, visual interpretation and dramatic action.

This thesis explores these languages because there is a "conscious familiarity" (p.73) among students who experience playbuilding with how these languages work independently and together. For instance, all teachers argued that a playbuilding group who could use their powers of observation to gain an understanding about characters and/or roles brought a breadth and depth to their physical creating, but if they could visually interpret their dramatic ideas this also added depth. Hutton (1978, cited in Moore &
Dwyer, 1994, p.14), argues that “visual literacy does indeed need to be taught because visual skills ‘are not inevitable developmental processes like standing and walking’.” Playbuilding is, in part, a visual teaching and learning language, and thus although not always overtly discussed as visual literacy or visual skills, it was part of the four participating teachers’ ways of communicating learning ideas to their students.

In drama, students learn the language of playbuilding “not mentally but bodily” (Abram, 1996, p.75), and it is important to examine how this type of language learning takes place as it occurs in a playbuilding situation, whilst the students use their bodies to discuss and devise; the physical vibrations being continually modified by the intent of the group drama. A comparison between a senior and a junior group of secondary drama students can be used to illustrate how each created a group kinaesthetic language within the group kinaesthetic paradigm of knowing, empathy and drama properties.

The group devised plays that I analyse in sections 4.12 and 4.13 sprang from:
- a senior group’s Higher School Certificate work on their Group Devised Performance. I have identified this group as The Three Eves based on the theme of their playbuilding project
- a junior group’s work in Experimental Playbuilding. I have identified this group as Television versus Reality based on the theme of their playbuilding project.

4.12 Senior secondary students’ playbuilding Higher School Certificate project: Group Devised Performance – The Three Eves

The Three Eves, Group Devised Performance theme was that Eve, with her biblical and religious connotations, had three personalities which were trapped inside Adam’s body. These three personalities were trying to escape both literally and metaphorically from Adam’s dominance. The group had a substantial technical knowledge and understanding of what drama conventions and techniques they wished to use, and why they wished to use them; their devising was based on making meaning of Eve’s place in the world through physical action, complemented or constrained by the spoken word.
In this language of group kinaesthetic knowing the group continually visualised their ideas, observing and listening to each other, as well as explaining how they felt they should go about their process technically to achieve the desired dramatic meaning mentioned above. They were able to discuss and debate their ideas in the initial process stages of their playbuilding, and they worked strongly within their cognitive domains; their dramatic ideas were complex, intellectually based, and somewhat didactic.

As the work progressed they began to have difficulties in creating a narrative that would engage an audience both emotionally and intellectually, which is what they wished to do. Ruth reflected on her group’s process work by noting that “our group was actually good at thinking” (Ruth, senior secondary student, audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, September 2000). She described how members of the group would go away and think about the dramatic action, and come back the next day and discuss their thoughts, but had difficulty experimenting with these thoughts on the classroom floor. In both creative and performative mode the verbal language of the group, situated beside their wordless language of physical action, was failing to communicate their desired outcomes emotionally to create a powerful but not a didactic narrative. The group wished to work through and within the level of group kinaesthetic empathy to enhance their embodied knowing, but something was lacking.

The group was lacking an empathic response to each other and hence their creating suffered. For example, this may have had something to do with each individual female student’s perception of what they really wanted to say about Adam and Eve, that they just could not communicate to each other. During a class discussion after their HSC performance (audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, September 2000) only two of the students from this group spoke about their problems. Analysis of the data indicated that the student who did not speak was the one whose major ideas were rejected but that she went along with the others’ ideas for the common good of the HSC project. Her silence indicating that she felt she was still not permitted to speak about her ideas and the problems in the group. However, during the HSC process classroom work *The Three Eves* group were able to articulate that they were trying to redefine their female relationship with the story of Adam and Eve by giving Eve a new status in their playbuilding, and this enabled
me as their teacher to put in place some kinaesthetic playbuilding strategies to try to help them around their impasse. As their teacher, I began to scaffold (Daniels, 1996, p.5) spontaneous improvisation activities from their ideas. The first of these was based on wordless image exercises relating to the students' perception of the relationship between Adam and Eve, progressing to activities that involved exploring the rhythms of their ideas through feel and touch, and then sound and melody (Boal, 1992); further activities involved the physical creation of their three characters, whom they named Eve, Eva and Evie. A simplified version of Yakim and Broadman's (1990) teaching and learning strategies was very productive; their teaching technique challenges acting students to physically approach characterisation by exploring, what they describe as, the "selves". The students in The Three Eves explored the notion of selves for their particular Eve. By doing this within a drama education pedagogical manner rather than that devised for training actors, the senior secondary students tried to physicalise some facets of their characters' objectives and tactics. As this work began to show rewards there was a return of group empathy and sensitivity. Cathy, another student in the group, remarked that as soon as they began using pertinent kinaesthetic theatrical techniques, "it made more sense to the (dramatic) action and their process work came alive again" (Cathy, senior secondary student, audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, September 2000).

The Three Eves had some wonderful thoughts on how to use apples to focus the action, as well as to create tension. The apples were highly symbolic to their theme of women becoming liberated, and helped to provide both a visual language and emotional communication between themselves and their audience; but frustration again appeared because the group added more and more apples during their rehearsals until there was a symbolic and metaphoric overload. The apples were encoded with an abundance of semiotic signs, such as The Three Eves' female liberation from Adam every time they took a bite from an apple, or female sexuality when they suggestively touched them, but there were so many apples on the stage floor that the apples produced limited if not muddled meaning. The students' understanding of how a group kinaesthetic drama property can function effectively came to the fore eventually through persistent experiment, and in the final few rehearsals they rid themselves of this plethora of fruit and chose to use just one apple. This single apple helped to create a thought-provoking piece of playbuilding,
symbolising the power of the three Eves working together as one matriarchal unit, in a patriarchal Christian society.

The next analysis is of a junior secondary group’s playbuilding work and its relationship to group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties.

4.13 Junior secondary students’ playbuilding project: Experimental Playbuilding – Television versus Reality

One of the junior secondary playbuilding groups had chosen the topic of Television versus Reality for their Experimental Playbuilding project. In contrast to the senior secondary group The Three Eves, the group working on Television versus Reality had an abundance of group kinaesthetic empathy. Through their intimate knowledge of television they were able to use instinctively non-verbal and emotional communication in the group dynamics as well as in the drama creating, to discuss their perception of the power of television to distort love, marriage and relationships.

As a group they also knew intuitively how to manipulate their chosen drama properties. For example, they had an actual television set on stage which was switched on and was a very effective ‘live’ symbol that represented love and trust, compared to the characters who watched it who represented love and mistrust. The group also used around 10 metres of white tulle to symbolise a white wedding, a white wedding veil, love, romance, desire and a baby; in contrast, it was manipulated by the students’ characters to symbolise frustration, hurt and anger. The themes and the drama properties functioned as signs, expressing to some degree their thirteen and fourteen year old female ideas on the distinction between viewing television romance, and their actual or perceived experience of ‘real romance’. The two drama properties were powerful and delightful, and the junior secondary students recognised their achievements, but this group needed to continually explore their technical knowing so as to achieve clearer dramatic meaning. They appeared to understand the drama techniques they wanted to apply, but even though they explored these techniques in
depth they did not reach a ‘group technical maturity’ on how to use pertinent conventions and techniques to their fullest.

Dianne, a student from that group, said that if her group were to change any aspect, they would try and make it clearer, through pertinent drama conventions and techniques, that ‘real people’ and ‘television people’ were watching each other through the emotions of love and distrust, but on the positive side she was so pleased that the “the material worked really well” (Dianne, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000). This group of junior secondary students achieved their goal of questioning the dialectical boundaries between television and reality, saying the playbuilding was a great experience, and if they did it again maybe they would get ‘real people’ to fall in love in reality rather than falling in love with ‘television characters’. The junior secondary students had used their visual observations from their personal viewing of television and manipulated them into powerful dramatic action. They were not individually using a drama language, they were using a group imaginative spoken (verbal) language to find the answers to the problems of the project; they extended this language to use the paralanguage of wordless messages and emotional communication during their performing.

Both of these groups, The Three Eves and Television versus Reality, explored a multi-group kinaesthetic language that provided a deep structure (Abram, 1996, p.85) for an honest acquaintance with their groups’ kinaesthetic learning capacity. As discussed, group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties had differences across their dimensions that enabled me to identify different patterns for different playbuilding groups.

By looking further into the properties of sensorial and physical language I have been able to locate concepts that are still central to my key questions, whilst providing variation to my theoretical sampling; for example, some students use their visual or sensorial capacity to a greater or lesser degree than others, and this is analysed further in this thesis. Analysis of these concepts shows how playbuilding meaning is generated by the teachers and students. The concepts do not evoke one unique way to teach or learn about playbuilding, but evoke a collection of associated images and ideas to express the action and interaction within the data.
4.14 Teaching with empathy to enhance embodied learning

While I was building my theory, grounded theory matrices provided an avenue for discussing the milieu of teaching playbuilding kinaesthetically and empathically, and for examining this teaching in a new way (Matthews, 2002, p.136); the matrices facilitated a broadening of my teaching perspectives. For instance, in playbuilding teachers stimulate the learning environment where the affective, cognitive and physical domains are opened up for students; they create a pedagogical journey that is exciting, vibrant, imaginative, perceptive and intuitive. Roslyn Arnold (1998) argues in her article *The Drama in Research & Articulating Dynamics – a Unique Theatre*, that truly inspirational teachers should be empathically attuned to their own and their students’ thinking and feeling states. Central to this concept is the principle that “teachers can engage students in a dynamic exploration of thought and feeling, leading to increased differentiation of both: thought becomes increasingly more complex and feelings become more accessible and finely tuned” (p.123). Arnold writes:

Empathic teaching creates a milieu within which the teacher’s non-judgmental, accepting, and validating stance allows affects, emotional states and cognitive understandings to be expressed, explored and modulated. The teacher’s purpose is to be empathic in order to facilitate the kinds of powerful learning about the world and the mastery of skills which begins in early infancy. Empathic learning contexts can promote shifts in affective and cognitive states which enlarge our awareness of life’s possibilities” (p.124).

Roslyn Arnold argues that teachers must have the ability to choose multi-faceted questions, to listen rather than to hear, to feel comfortable and yet critical within their own feelings; this encourages a “dynamic between affect and cognition” (p.124) within teacher/student relationships.

In playbuilding “no one can do it alone” (Brook, 1993, p.86). The groups of students cannot do it alone, nor can their teacher; they must be united, united, I believe, through empathic responses which allow the imagination to be released. Teachers, of course, have their checks and balances within the concept of teaching. Sam argued, “you have got to be
careful that teacher empathy doesn't go overboard and it is the teacher's imagination that creates the ideas for the students, in which case a student can think 'I wish I had thought of that ... or ... I wish he'd shut up, this is my show and this is my moment' ” (Sam, teacher interview 10/05/2001).

The theoretical sampling demonstrated that teachers can be responsive to the students' work; they can be the catalyst that inspires when the group gets discouraged, or the one that can help provide the urgency to complete the project when the group wavers. Lucy felt it was important to empathise when students got frustrated with their playbuilding projects as the students may lose heart and not create to their fullest potential (as evidenced in The Three Eves situation), but as the teacher, her job was to “let them know (when) they are not achieving and to facilitate ways to achieve” (Lucy, teacher interview 18/04/2001). These concepts sit firmly within Vygotsky's ZPD as each individual student is learning in a collaborative context where the teacher with the individual student, and hence the group, has the capacity to help plan, organise, check, evaluate and reflect on the playbuilding work being undertaken (Daniels, 1996). These ideas also harbour the principles of critical pedagogic theory, all of which generate transformation that allows new playbuilding structures to be generated and transformed by the drama groups.

Maxine Greene (1995) states that empathy is made possible through imagination. Imagination permits us to give credence to alternative realities; “It allows us to break with the taken for granted, to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions” (p.3). The empathic drama teacher taps into students’ imaginative worlds at the very beginning of the process through his or her connectedness with the project. This enables teachers and students to explore heightened emotional perceptions which, in turn, can create curiosity and a command of the playbuilding process.

Group ideas are unique; they are reflective and subjective. There is a need for the group to allow themselves space to think and act. There is a tension in this space which arises from letting the imagination run freely; this freedom causes the group to form its own drama perceptions, and these perceptions open up new spaces for drama students to explore.
In the drama classroom these new spaces open up ways to communicate “across the boundaries, for choosing, for becoming different in the midst of inter-subjective relationships” (Maxine Greene, 1995, cited in Jeffers, 1998, p.78). These new spaces can create a pristine experience in which the imaginative power of the group wells up in a fertile way. It is through transformative pedagogies that such instances can occur. Maxine Greene (1995) argues that “transformative pedagogies must relate both to existing conditions and to something we are trying to bring into being, something that goes beyond a present situation” (p.51). In playbuilding this relationship occurs when the group and their teacher know that “something significant has happened” in the classroom (Arnold, 1998, p.114), as exemplified by The Wives discovery of the dramatic and metaphoric possibilities inherent in their chiffon material which is analysed in detail in Chapters Six and Seven (see Appendices 6.1, 6.2, 6.8, 7.1 and videotape 7.9, 7.10).

The four teachers participating in my study argued that teacher empathy was integral to the playbuilding process. They had differing perspectives on the concept of teacher empathy, but a synthesis of the surveyed teachers’ ideas implied that they knew that empathy could give the group an urgency to go forward and function in a modelling and mirroring (D.Winnicott, 1971) regenerative environment to release imagining and creating. Within this learning environment teachers were able to use their insights to let students know when they were on track, or when they needed teacher modelling to find the way forward. The data indicated that teacher empathy provided avenues for the drama class to stay in tune through embodiment, and then transformation would take place (see Appendix 3.2).

Participating students appeared to know that to be physically in tune with each other through embodied learning helped them in their playbuilding as, in response to a closed questionnaire, 100 per cent agreed that being up and active helped their group to create powerful drama. Notwithstanding the above analysis, the students also said that when a dramatic problem arose in the group, such as who would play what character, or what performance style they might use, discussion was of more benefit to the group than solving the problem through physical action.

The students were asked, after their last playbuilding project in the study, if their group generally solved problems through doing or discussing. This meant that the senior
secondary students responded after their Higher School Certificate Group Devised Performance examination, and the junior secondary students responded after their work on the Experimental Playbuilding project.

Figure 4.6: Junior and senior secondary drama students' preferences for solving drama problems

Figure 4.6 demonstrates a preference by both the junior and senior secondary students for discussion to solve playbuilding problems, but also indicates that doing was a worthwhile technique to help solve problems. In many of the students' journals and logbooks they also indicated that they simultaneously mixed and matched these two techniques to generate solutions to playbuilding problems (see Appendices 4.2 and 4.3). Figure 4.6 illustrates the need for teacher flexibility when challenging students in the group to think and go beyond their confines. The four participating teachers, and the other teachers' opinions implicit in this work, indicate that both doing and discussing allow students to be the owners of their work within a multi-domained learning frame. This means that teachers and students alike understand that sometimes the immediacy of physical learning does not crystallise ideas and explorations, but there needs to be a visual and/or memory based physicality in the imagining so that the group can discuss the problems they are experiencing.
The interpretation of Figure 4.6, along with the other research data, demonstrates that the junior and senior secondary students found it useful to discuss problems when they needed to listen, think and respond in a different type of reflective manner to active physical improvisation. Analysis of this type of exchange demonstrated that it had properties of panel discussion and considered lengthy debate; as such, it could be called verbal improvisation, as there was a freedom to their verbal exchanges, but to the participating students it was solving problems in a different way from active physical improvisation.

Figure 4.6 also indicates the paradox in kinaesthetic teaching and learning, as physical problem-solving can belong to the physicality of words. This indicates that students must work continually within varied domains and interdisciplinary intelligences such as linguistic, spatial and interpersonal intelligence. The senior secondary students demonstrated a stronger preference for dramatic discussion and debate to enhance their practical work, which may be related to their age and experience, and hence capacity to know kinaesthetically how to solve playbuilding problems through memory.

4.15 Concluding thoughts

The participating teachers’ views and the opinions of other prominent teachers are, I believe, a true embodiment of the importance of collegial discussion and debate when teaching playbuilding in a secondary school environment. The discussion and debate can provide inspiration, and the experience of interacting may allow teachers to take the next step to create physically in the drama classroom. I suggest that this means that drama teachers have to know how to play and improvise, so as to help model the foundations of the playbuilding experience with their particular groups of drama students. This chapter has explored the phenomena of kinaesthetic teaching and learning, and has concluded that, in the main, drama students learn from a kinaesthetic perspective. To reiterate, kinaesthetic teaching and learning occur when a drama teacher facilitates and recognises that embodied learning takes place because of the group’s kinaesthetic interaction in the playbuilding project. The drama teacher then focuses kinaesthetic teaching activities to enhance the playbuilding. This concept is adopted as a basic premise in the following chapters.
Chapter 5
Improvisation embedded in playbuilding

The actor may get bored with perfecting his craft in order to perform in outdated plays; soon he will want not only to act but to compose for himself as well. Then at last we shall see the rebirth of the theatre of improvisation (Meyerhold, 1969, cited in Rudlin, 1994, p.1).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the drama education form of improvisation that is embedded in secondary school playbuilding projects (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Flow of analyses in this thesis
This chapter is a metaphorical representation of a teacher introducing playing and improvising to students as the foundations of playbuilding. The analytical focus is on the following key question from the participating students’ data:

- What impact do kinaesthetic teaching and learning practices have on imagining and creating in playbuilding groups?

This question also engages with two other key questions:

- How do phenomena such as group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating contribute to playbuilding success?
- How do phenomena such as group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and use of group kinaesthetic drama properties enhance the teaching and learning practices of playbuilding and the playbuilders’ potential to become group kinaesthetic learners?

Within the New South Wales drama education community, improvisation is a major teaching and learning form and is a pivotal activity in teaching and learning in playbuilding (Board of Studies, 1999b, 2003a). Improvisation allows cognitive, affective and physical freedom. Spontaneity in improvisation can be inspiring as thoughts and actions not previously dreamt about come alive (Johnstone, 1981; Pierce, 1993). Improvisation creates a group curiosity where the group’s ideas can be examined closely in a non-threatening environment. Improvisation, in the secondary school environment, is closely connected to free play.

Playing facilitates growth and health, it leads to group relationships and relationships within an environment, and it is a medium for communication. The word ‘play’ has many meanings in our society, and in the drama classroom the concept of play goes beyond the notion of young children engaging in a fantasy world, to playing as a way of allowing students to explore their imaginations. Play releases imaginings that enable students to explore who they are, yet allows them to see themselves in some sort of relationship with others. Playing, in drama, releases kinaesthetic energy, awareness, perceptions; it occurs in a social context. Play is an important part of the improvised warm-up activities at the commencement of a drama class as it realigns the habitual, physical and emotional behaviours of the students (Boal, 1992). Playing is immensely exciting as play has the
capacity to "create, think up, devise, originate, produce" (D. Winnicott, 1971, p.2) vibrant ideas.

In the grounded theory axial coding phases, the research data demonstrated that while the junior and senior secondary drama students were playing they problem-solved. This meant that they explored with full cognizance where the playing was leading them in their creating, and as elements of surprise occurred in the playing, the junior and senior secondary students took the necessary steps to adapt, adjust, expand or elaborate upon the playing circumstances. The data also indicated that in both classes, play worked alongside improvisation (Dunn, 1998), and hence play became a dimension of improvisation; the dimension being the range along which categories varied, giving specification to a category and variation to the building of my theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.101). The other dimension of improvisation was problem-solving; along this dimension were the properties of risk taking, experimentation, and embodiment, with subcategories of freedom in physical and verbal action, instinctive thought and body action, and actual and discernible transformation.

Figure 5.2 shows the entwined relationships among these factors; the yellow shading indicates that improvisation surrounds all dimensions, properties and sub-categories, and the red arrows provide a notion of the interplay between them. Each one of these concepts is embedded and analysed in this chapter.
5.2 Improvisation as a teaching tool

Improvisation is a valuable teaching tool. Through this technique the junior and senior secondary students were given the opportunity to enact, observe, interpret, problem manage, problem solve and reflect on their creating. Individually and in their groups, they explored and manipulated the elements of drama appropriate to their expressive need and to the needs of their projects.

The generally accepted rule of improvisation is ‘do it, don’t tell it’, and it is through the doing that creative embodied learning takes place.

In the playbuilding projects undertaken by the student participants within the classroom environment, improvisation was used to stimulate and engage their creativity and imagination, and to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of the elements of drama (Board of Studies, 1999b, 2003a). It was also used to manage and solve dramatic problems; if students were able to manage and then solve these problems they were able to develop a
cohesive performance, create an ensemble feeling, and provide the framework for playbuilding activities.

Three main types of improvisation emerged from the research involving the participating teachers, and junior and senior secondary students:

- 'warm-up improvisations' that engage students in situations that are so free and so safe that they explore intuitively their ideas without conscious volition
- 'spontaneous improvisations' that engage students in drawing on their own spontaneous dramatic response whilst utilising appropriate theatrical conventions and techniques
- 'rehearsed improvisations' that engage students in performance scenarios where they have had time to explore and rehearse their basic ideas using the conventions and techniques of warm-ups and spontaneous improvisation.

Each of these types of improvisation is analysed and illustrated from within the junior secondary Experimental Playbuilding project that is synthesised in the next few pages.

All improvisations have in common the characteristic that dialogue and physicalisation have a freedom in performance and do not rely on a memorised script, and the junior and senior secondary students understood this teaching and learning concept. Individual or collective experiences of improvisation sprang from all students' previous experiences. In a phenomenological sense, to understand what it is to ‘experience’ the world of improvisation can be explained in terms of the students totally ‘inhabiting’ (Matthews, 2002, p.49) the activities, rather than representing them. By this I mean that the junior and senior secondary students’ bodies were the means by which they explored their improvised world whilst engaged in a particular set of circumstances to which they were committed (p.69).
5.3 An example of the kinaesthetic teaching and learning processes which the junior secondary drama participants undertook in their *Experimental Playbuilding* project

The following is an example of the junior secondary drama students’ improvisation in the *Experimental Playbuilding* project. These students had undertaken the school’s 100 hour mandatory drama course in their first two years of secondary school; from there they chose to take drama as their elective. There were 19 female students in the participating junior secondary class and they were between 13 and 14 years of age.

The project on *Experimental Playbuilding* was undertaken towards the end of their first year of elective drama. The students had sound skills, knowledge and understanding of:

- acting for camera
- character and theme based playbuilding
- improvisation and comedy
- theatre in education script work.

They had also had had two experiences of performing for a public audience.

5.3.1 Basic improvisation terminology

The junior secondary drama participants had become familiar with basic improvisation terminology before their class work on *Experimental Playbuilding*, but this terminology was reiterated during the initial stages of this project to provide them with a scaffolding learning experience.

The basic terminology presented to the students was:

- *making offers*, which refers to a student or group giving an idea to another student or group
- *accepting offers*, which refers to a student or group receiving and paying deference to an idea from another student or group
• *sharing the action*, which refers to a student or group freely giving ideas and not obstructing the given idea

• *yielding*, which refers to the student or the group surrendering to the given idea even if they slightly modify it (Johnstone, 1981, 1999; Pierce, 1993; Spolin, 1983).

This terminology encompassed verbal, non-verbal and physical activities, and was one of the building blocks of the junior secondary students’ playbuilding project.

The project was called *Experimental Playbuilding* in so far as it demonstrated the learning focus for the junior student participants who were using non-linear scene structures, exploring non-verbal ways of getting their message across to an audience, and experimenting with neutral masks, music, and tangible or imagined drama properties. The purpose of this project was for the students to develop a non-verbal style of group devised scenes by drawing on performance styles from the surreal. Because of the complexity of undertaking this project at their stage of skills and maturity, the junior secondary students were expected to create only 2 to 5 minutes of playbuilt scenes.

### 5.3.2 Warm-ups

"The most important element of theatre is the human body" (Boal, 1992, p.xxx), and warm-ups were an excellent way or preparing the junior secondary students’ bodies individually and collectively. Improvised warm-ups realign students with their creative centre. In a whole class warm ups can have 20-30 students working together; this means leaving their social structures and personal lives in the playground, and by entering the playing, the class can find new perceptions and new awareness. Moreover, playing in warm-ups allows students to explore their bodies and voices by having fun whilst achieving personal interaction. It is through this ‘structured fun’ that they are at liberty to find out about themselves and their group. Structured fun can release a certain freedom that students would never have tapped into, and from this, the next stepping stone is crafting their intuition, and constructing their own original improvised presentations (Paul, teacher interview, 30/03/2001).

The first two weeks of the junior secondary students’ learning in the *Experimental Playbuilding* project were spent improvising before they began the actual structures of
playbuilding, as this allowed them time to experiment with the skills of improvisation within a problem-solving environment. For instance, a cognitive and physical warm-up activity that was used constantly at the beginning of class, and that also incorporated dramatic elements such as focus, mood and dramatic tension, was one the students called ‘Lightning Bolt’. The purpose of this activity was to pass an imaginary physical and vocal lightening bolt around the circle. The junior participants loved this activity, as demonstrated by their classroom discussions, because it was non-competitive, yet they were competing against themselves as a group. The junior students had to work out ways, through problem-solving, to pass on the lighting bolt imaginatively, to pass it to everyone in the class, and to stay concentrated and committed to the warm-up. This warm-up activity and its learning concepts were part of the liminal ritual in the drama classroom.

Victor Turner (1988, p.7) theorises that all performances have a core ritual action that is essential to transformation. In the junior secondary drama class, this small core ritual warm up enabled the students to play and improvise, and to recapitulate their previous learning; hence they were experiencing the liminal world where there is a transition from personal experience to drama creating. The warm-ups enabled them to begin every lesson by re-discovering the essences of drama and theatre. In the preface to Augusto Boal’s (1992) Games for Actors and Non Actors he tells the fable of Xua-Xua, the pre-human women who discovered theatre. The fable tells that in discovering theatre Xua Xua became human, because theatre is the art of looking at ourselves; it helps build our future rather than just waiting for it to occur (pp.xxvii-xxxi). Simple warm-up activities regularly demonstrated to the junior secondary students that they had entered a drama and theatre world, and that group ritual was part of discovering who they were and what they wanted to create and build during their drama lessons.

5.3.3 Spontaneous improvisation

Spontaneous improvisation activities were important to exploring group expression in the classroom. The data illustrated that when I, as their teacher, guided the students in spontaneous improvisation, their learning could be extended to the whole class simultaneously offering and accepting abstract activities. These activities carried an implicit sense of drama and theatre within them, suggesting to all the junior secondary
students that there was an educational opening for them to participate at whatever level matched their capacity. This meant that the philosophy that all humans can both observe and act was of paramount importance in the classroom (Boal, 1992).

Figure 5.3 is an example of a physical and sound activity that the junior secondary students explored in their first week’s work in November 2000. The concepts in this activity related to themes they would later explore in their playbuilding project. The improvisation was based firmly on playing and problem-solving, and had properties of risk taking as students did not know who they would work with, what sounds would emerge, what physical ideas would be created on the classroom floor, or how they would solve any of these situations; they were continually confronting the unknown (see Appendices 5.3 and 8.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical and sound spontaneous improvisation activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups of twos, threes, fours, fives, eights, and tens, were quickly formed and dispersed throughout the activity, with the students using their bodily-kinesthetic intuition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I asked the whole class to mill around the room, not talking to one another, but engage with imagery and sounds that suggested the feeling of each named concept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I asked the students to be conscious of each other in the space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I then asked the students to become:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In pairs:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• light and darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• happiness and anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In threes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• molecules attracting and repelling each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In fours:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a swirling nightmare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a tingling dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half the class:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a proud robotic machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• an angry robotic machine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.3: Junior secondary students - spontaneous improvisation

Figure 5.3 demonstrates how the improvisation subcategories came into play as in their physical responses the students were free to create ideas through body and sound by way of
their instinctive and sensorial nature. My empirical observations of this learning activity suggested that there was a tangible and perceptive ‘becoming’ on the classroom floor. At its simplest, the underlying idea of these types of spontaneous activities was that “a picture paints a thousand words” (Boal, 1992, p.xx) and that words can sometimes muddle the ideas of groups of students rather than clarify them. Boal argues that in some instances images can be closer to a person’s true feelings, even subconscious feelings, since the process of thinking with the hands can short circuit the censorship of the brain. This spontaneous improvisation allowed the students to explore the uniqueness of their ideas and to invent new embodied ways to act and think for themselves, individually, and as a group (pp.xix – xxi).

The junior secondary students were operating in their personal space during the spontaneous improvisations, and this space can be called their personal kinesphere. Jean Newlove describes the personal kinesphere as:

The space within our reach, our ‘personal’ space, is called the kinesphere. It is like a large personal bubble in which we are able to stretch out in all directions whilst standing in its centre, on one leg. If we move away to another part of the room, our kinesphere will always travel with us. If someone passes by quite closely, it is possible for both kinespheres to overlap momentarily (Newlove, 1993, p.22).

The junior secondary students travelled around the classroom floor, connecting to and overlapping with other students’ kinespheres. They were passing through the space using their physical and visual abilities, engaging with their imagination through creating body and sound metaphors; it was group kinaesthetic language occurring spontaneously on the classroom floor through their bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence (Gardner, 1993b).

A variety of other spontaneous improvisations were also used to enhance the junior secondary students’ dramatic problem solving skills, and to develop complexity in their creating. All the spontaneous improvisations related to the simple dialectical themes of Corruption versus Honesty, Sameness versus Difference, and Television versus Reality, which the junior secondary students would be exploring when the playbuilding project was introduced to them. Group work is integral to spontaneous improvisation, and during the
spontaneous improvisation activities groups were continually and randomly formed and reformed to create variation in group size, skills and abilities; the data indicated that this type of group formation had categories of inclusiveness, chance and diversification which created experiential peer relationships (see Appendices 5.3 and 5.4).

Viola Spolin (1983) argues that through spontaneous improvisation, an "organic unity and freedom of action" (p.20) occurs, which in turn generates student creativity. Group creativity was at the core of this junior secondary class’s improvised technical and interpretative learning, giving the junior secondary students a kinaesthetic awareness and consciousness of how they were using the particular drama language of spontaneous improvisation.

5.3.4 Rehearsed improvisation

After the spontaneous improvisation phase, playbuilding groups were formed in which the students would work for the rest of the Experimental Playbuilding project. To recap, the junior secondary students’ Experimental Playbuilding groups consisted of students working with members of the class with whom they had worked only two or three times before, on a prolonged project. There was one friendship group formed due to problems in the school timetable. In the main this provided all students with an opportunity to learn about the dramatic strengths and ideas of all their classmates.

In the rehearsed improvisation groups the students were developing the essence of their playbuilding scene which they collaboratively developed from the “fragments of ideas, issues, characters and stories that are explored in the collaborative workshop process” (Michaels, 1996, p.vi). This rehearsed improvisation group structure, which the students knew would remain the same in later playbuilding, had learning characteristics of points of concentration, a sense of belonging, a sense of community, negotiation, project obligation and peer learning.

During the rehearsed improvisations the individual groups spent time enacting, talking, thinking, responding, and concentrating on specific focus points. Analysis of the data
demonstrated that these points of concentration enabled the junior secondary students to build on the skills and knowledge developed during the first week through the various warm-ups and spontaneous improvisations. Viola Spolin (1983) argues that the "Point of Concentration" releases group power and individual genius (p.22), as it helps to isolate complex theatrical and dramatic conventions and techniques, as well as acting as theatrical and dramatic boundaries within which students must work.

Within the point of concentration the students started to consciously build their narratives to tell their own stories based on the opposing themes of Corruption versus Honesty, or Sameness versus Difference, or Television versus Reality. During these 4 x 50 minute lessons of rehearsed improvisation they explored movement techniques which allowed them to twirl, rise, sink, dart and leap, whilst adding emotional attributes such as love, anger, hatred, jealousy, envy and compassion to their group ideas. They refined these movement techniques using neutral masks and through adding stylistic aspects such as sudden, strong and automated movement, or flexible, sustained and light actions. These rehearsed improvisations provided each member of the group with a growing sense of belonging through the peer negotiation in the project. It was also a process where, as their teacher, I hoped all students’ ideas would be expressed, listened to, and acted upon. This was not always the case as a number of students indicated in a focus group discussion (audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, November 2000), that they listened to others’ ideas and acted upon these. The data indicated that the reason for this silence was a voluntary groupthink where the students felt that being silent was a necessary component of the playbuilding process.

One of the purposes of rehearsed improvisation was to allow the students to replay, revisit and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the elements of drama without yet stepping into the more complex structure of playbuilding. The students had explored mask and characterisation early on in the year in a comedy project. They had developed a basic understanding of the rules and powers of a mask (Appel, 1982), and these techniques were now being re-introduced, giving the junior secondary students an opportunity to explore and create a personality or concept with a neutral mask in a surreal performance style.
The junior secondary students also understood that the criteria of the *Experimental Playbuilding* project required them to create a drama with opposing forces in their scenes. They had already undertaken a character playbuilding project where the idea of opposing forces had been introduced, combined with the idea that sometimes an audience should think about the issues they presented (Willett, 1964), as well as having an emotional response. The introduction of conflicting ideology provided the juniors with a challenging and controversial aspect to their work; it also presupposed a certain level of dramatic maturity as the students were encouraged to create scenes with diametrical concepts. This enabled the classroom to become an interactive space where students had to come to terms with the diversity of opinions and concepts that bombarded them from various members of their peer group.

Within the rehearsed improvisation, individuals, interdependent and dependent upon each other, affected the decision-making, the dramatic structuring and the action of the drama. Therefore, the rehearsed improvisations began extending the different groups in their active pursuit of making meaning from surreal and dreamlike ideas and activities.

### 5.4 Improvisation overview

The junior secondary students preferred physical learning in their improvisation and playbuilding activities. As illustrated in Figure 5.4, 90 per cent of the junior secondary students indicated that they preferred physical learning to passive learning in the drama classroom. The 10 per cent who did not know if they had a preference for physical learning are an indication of a small variation of learning styles among the junior secondary students. Ultimately the graph indicates that embodied learning was the dominant learning style of the majority of the junior secondary students (see Appendices 4.2 and 4.3).
Figure 5.4: Do you (as junior drama students) have a preference for physical learning?

The data indicated that improvisation is physical learning; improvisation is acting with emotion, reason and physicality; it is not static, but occurs in dynamic interaction with other improvisers (Boal, 1992, p.48), and the junior secondary students were gaining the essential idea of tension and conflict in an improvised kinaesthetic environment.

Furthermore, improvisation enabled the students to solve some of their dramatic problems, to communicate or interpret other students’ concepts, and gave them an opportunity to act and react physically (Spolin, 1983). Margaret reflected that “we decided on the roles and characters by just playing and improvising first, then we ended up just sticking with those roles and working on them to make them clearer” (Margaret, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000).

The warm-ups and spontaneous and rehearsed improvisations occurred in an environment where the students understood and enjoyed the situation and approach to be taken. However, because of the theatrical nature of improvisation, none of them was exactly sure what was going to happen, or what the next step would be, so they needed to continually develop a group trust of each other through listening, touching, responding and reflecting on the embodiment of their work. There is continuous personal interacting within spontaneous and rehearsed improvisations, and the interacting parties must develop an agreed system of expectations (Fo, 1991, p.160) to allow the group work to go forward to the next step of playbuilding.
5.5 Embodiment in the junior secondary students' playbuilding scenes

The junior students had enjoyed using their bodies in creative ways during the two weeks of improvisation lessons and they then tried to extend this drama learning as they entered the playbuilding process. They focused on the technical aspects of playbuilding, such as how to link their scenes together, and working out how their bodies could express ideas symbolically. They also had to keep in mind that their scenes were to be directed at the audience's minds as well as their senses. The junior students found this playbuilding concept challenging (see Appendices 5.3 and 5.4).

Elise stated that “the most challenging part was to get the message across to the audience, whilst still remaining abstract” (Elise, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000). Jewel said: “I found starting the playbuilding the most challenging ... but once our group decided on the dramatic structure, by knowing we wanted to do something scary, the characters just fell into place” (Jewel, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000). Kathleen argued that by using a range of Experimental Playbuilding techniques, such as polarised dramatic action, music and masks, “even the simplest movements made the audience react” (Kathleen, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000).

The way the groups formed their symbolic narratives and characters was central to their embodied learning. This did not happen simultaneously for each group, or for each student in the group, but rather when the personal and dramatic exploration became clear to them. It followed that the student’s individual choice of character belonged to her own imaginings as well as to the group’s divergent imaginings. Within each group the particular student individualised her particular character, but the overall dramatised persona of the character was negotiated jointly with the group. The group created authentic character emotions and motivations through physicalisation, and when this occurred the students and ultimately the groups served as embodied agents of the characters and themes they created.
Cherry reflected that “we discussed between the group about the personality and characteristics of each characters, and then decided who would suit each character”, (Cherry, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000). Dianna reflected that after her group had begun creating dramatic structure, “we thought what would be interesting characters and put people in that wanted to be that character” (Dianna, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000). Both these critically reflective responses indicated a high degree of group kinaesthetic empathy and understanding.

Theoretical saturation of the students’ in-class performances for their peers as the audience indicated that, in the main, the groups’ characterisation work was enriched and enforced through physical kinaesthetic construction. This embodiment was further enhanced by the spatial and gestural relationships they created for their characters. Aston and Savona (1991) argue that “in performance, establishing the ‘I am here in this space’ is achieved both by verbal and gestural deixis” (p.116) and these junior secondary students continually arranged and connected their characters’ physicality in the performance space by speaking with their bodies in the drama space.

One of the indicators that embodied learning occurred in the playbuilding was that the groups used their “full sensory equipment on a single problem” (Spolin, 1983, p.23), whilst actually solving many theatrical problems. This happened when the groups became so absorbed by their physical activities that only later on, through reflection, did they realise how they had developed material for their playbuilding. For instance, Mary claimed that their movement piece was effective as they started off with just one student creating it “properly”, and eventually the group elaborated upon it so that all the characters were physically involved. Mary’s group chose the theme of Sameness versus Differences, and created a world dominated by masks. A synopsis of their performance indicates how they drew on the group’s kinaesthetic capacities whilst simultaneously creating their personal aesthetic environment.

I have identified Mary’s group as Dominant Masks, as this reflects the theme of their work that explored the elements of control and power in a fictitious society. The group’s playbuilding lasted five minutes. Their play was set nowhere in particular, in fact the place
was neutral and the masked and unmasked characters were enticed and/or motivated to become the same, yet throughout the performance there were always differences. In the synopsis, (see Figure 5.5), I have used the word ‘scene’ to describe what were in essence vignettes. This is because these junior secondary students, due to their age and dramatic maturity, felt that they were scenes. For each scene they had spent many lessons trying to imagine, and to create ways to link them all together, so I wish to remain true to my students’ understanding of what they where trying to achieve. The scene breakdown shows how the Dominant Masks group organised and presented their playbuilding ideas. This breakdown was analysed from the videotape (see Appendix 7.3) and is a synopsis of the Dominant Masks performance ideas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dramatic action</th>
<th>Evidence of embodied group learning:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Scene 1  
A white masked character (a) enters, upper centre stage, through black curtains, plays with an imaginary object that flows and moves.
An unmasked character (b) enters, upper centre stage, through black curtains, and interacts with the masked figure and moving object.
This is performed centre stage, around a white pool of light. Slow, atmospheric music surrounds the action until scene 4. | 1. ... an interactive group metaxical force  
2. ... focus, tension, rhythm, atmosphere |
| Scene 2  
A third masked character (c) enters, upper centre stage, and joins the movements. This is quickly followed by a fourth unmasked character (d), who joins in after a momentary pause. The imaginary flowing object turns into an object that is held high over all their heads. They all push this into the surrounding space. | 1. ... a unity through an imaginary symbolic drama property  
2. ... symbol, pacing, situation, sustaining roles |
| Scene 3  
A change of dramatic tempo occurs as characters line up (a), (b) and (c) create a stylised robotic movement. Although maintaining position in the line, (d) moves in a free flowing manner. This demonstrates the dramatic tension of characters - Sameness versus Difference. (a) draws a white flower from her persona and starts to entice (b) away; (c) and (d) look on horrified. | 1. ... an ensemble dramatic tension  
2. ... impact of varied movements:  
* harmony vs disharmony  
* mechanical vs flowing |
| Scene 4  
(a) endows (b) with a white mask. They become like one character. They repeat their robotic movements. (c) and (d) are rooted to the spot in fear and horror. There is a gap between the two groups. They are separated by a white spotlight. Turning slowly, (a) and (b) march robotically down centre stage and entice (c) into their Sameness. A slow motion tug of war occurs over (c). The stage lights flash. Eventually (c) becomes masked. (d) is left in the space, isolated because of her Differences. She repeats her free flowing movement from scene 3, whilst the others repeat their robotic movements. | 1. ... a complex imaginary society  
2. ... dramatic metaphor and the forceful properties of the mask |
| Scene 5  
Change of tension and pace through the use of hard metallic music. Lights flash. (a), (b) and (c) march towards (d). Through the stylised use of the hands they represent their conscious desire for all to become the Sameness. (d) becomes masked. (a), (b), (c) and (d) repeat, in a line, their robotic movements. | 1. ... one human force  
2. ... the tension of character interaction |
| Scene 6  
(a) crouches away from the line, head down. (b), (c) and (d) turn away from the audience into the curtain. (a), still crouching, looks up to the audience and now displays her Differences - she has become a red masked character. Music fades, lights down. | 1. ... a dramatic juxtaposition  
2. ... the power of physicality and movement to create dramatic meaning, audience engagement. |

Figure 5.5: Synopsis of the Dominant Masks performance ideas
A synthesis of this group’s playbuilding is that they explored their drama through kinaesthetic patterns, as they had a strong physical and technical knowing of what they wanted to achieve and how they would go about it. The group created a personal harmony and empathy in their process work. This did not mean that they always agreed, as sometimes they agreed to disagree. When this occurred they discussed, improvised, and used their visual kinaesthetics to decide which dramatic point of view would work best for their particular purpose. There was a super dramatist in this group and the data indicated that at times the other students, although permitted to speak, deferred to her ideas. Tensions arose because of this; tensions that manifested themselves in the group losing focus and at times becoming bored (see Appendix 5.1). The group always managed to work through these problems as they wanted to manage their playbuilding in a skilful and innovative way, and to be seen by their peers to be playbuilders who understood the complexity of the task (Hatton, 2003). The Dominant Masks group embodiment of ideas was expressed through acting with their whole bodies; it was both actual and discernible, linking them to understand intuitively and to know how to manipulate the elements of drama such as role and character, focus, tension, time, place, movement, rhythm, atmosphere and symbol to create dramatic meaning.

5.6 Elements of drama

During all stages of the evolving theory, the elements of drama (Board of Studies, 2003a; Haseman & O’Toole, 1986; O’Toole, 1992) underscored the Dominant Masks learning, and helped to give the performance its shape and form. The elements were embodied though the group’s experience of knowing, empathy, and the use of drama properties.

The elements of drama can be expressed as:

- **Role** and **character** are directed by **focus** driven by **tension**, made explicit in **time**, **place** and **situation** through the use of **space**, **structure**, **language**, **sound**, **movement**, **rhythm** and **moment** to evoke **atmosphere** and **symbol**, which together create **dramatic meaning** and **audience engagement** (Board of Studies, 2003a, p.14)
The above elements of drama were part of the labelled phenomenon of drama and theatre conventions and techniques, and as such they belonged to the features that give playbuilding part of its shape and form. For instance, ‘focus’ firstly refers to the performer’s focus, and it is used to create dramatic belief, the second type of focus refers to where the dramatic action is directed. Another example is ‘movement’; movement expresses realistic or abstract action. The ‘rhythm’ of movement is created with focus, and can impact on the desired audience’s reaction. (pp.38-40). The properties of the elements of drama did not relate to their theatrical characteristics, as these were implicit in the labelled phenomenon, but rather to the students’ personal and group feelings during their efforts in trying to achieve them. In this regard the elements of drama had properties of satisfaction, frustration, endeavour and social discovery.

John O’Toole (1992) claims that there is not an “objective truth” to the concept of drama elements as there is no universally valid definition of this (p.5). I concur with his argument, and have used the term ‘elements of drama’ as a means of explaining how these junior playbuilding groups tried to organise and construct their group devised work. Therefore, the Dominant Masks group used the elements of drama theatrically and personally in an “interrelated”, and sometimes “interdependent” (p.5) way, to create their dramatic imaginings kinaesthetically.

For instance, further analysis of Scene 4 demonstrates the characters’ symbolically represented states of mind, and the elements of focus, movement, rhythm and atmosphere increased the dramatic tension of the continuous metaphoric tug of war. This was represented through an imagined rope that pulled the warring sides backwards and forwards. There was total body involvement with this imagined group kinaesthetic drama property, and the rope carried weight, length and tension, with the winner symbolising power; it also indicated that war was a universal event and could happen at any place and time. The pool of light, centre stage, acted as a subconscious bridge for the characters to be pulled over, and the dream-like music they used heightened the symbolic property because of its surreal qualities. The imagined rope changed its weight, length and tension many times during the scene. Viola Spolin (1983) argues that “an object can be put in motion only through it’s own nature and will not respond to manipulation. To transform, or alter, an object requires total absorption” (p.46), and the Dominant Masks group, through an
awareness and perception of their central ideas, continually transformed their imagined property, using it in an active and kinaesthetic manner. This drama property, enhanced by their characterisation and narrative, created atmosphere and dramatic meaning, thereby allowing a truly active audience engagement when they performed in front of their peers (see Appendix videotape 7.4).

Their manipulation of the elements of drama allowed continuous exploration of physical proximity, and meant that the group focused the action so that their playbuilding did not become blurred and the meaning lost. All the students in this group also had a talent for creating characters that time and time again gave the impression that they were doing something completely new, something that had just physicalised at that very instant (Fo, 1991). The group felt a great satisfaction with this skill, and with their capacity to use improvisation techniques to make their playbuilding project meaningful.

Another group who chose the same theme, which I have identified under the Experimental Playbuilding theme of Sameness versus Differences, did not expand on the theme, but created their narrative using material as a drama property to enhance their message. This group had a strong and gentle friendship bond and enjoyed their drama classes, yet in this project they lacked a dramatic ensemble experience. Instead, there was the feeling of friends playing together to learn to create dramatic meaning. They were able to explore and manipulate the elements of drama, but not in such a sophisticated manner as the Dominant Masks group. The dramatic elements of focus, movement, rhythm and atmosphere that Sameness Versus Differences created were mild and soft, and the mood one of inquisitiveness. They tried to symbolise physically that for all the characters to become the same, it was important for humans to change their individual perceptions of the world (see Appendix videotape 7.5).

The students’ self evaluation from Sameness Versus Differences was one of pride and achievement. Nellie claimed in her evaluation that “everything worked well because we put a lot of time to make it good” (Nellie, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000). Eliday reflected that, “we came together with many different ideas, putting them all together using pieces of material to make it a bit more clearer” (Eliday, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000).
2000), whilst Larissa argued that “we wanted material, and a lot of movement, so we figured we could use different coloured material for *Sameness versus Differences*” (Larissa, junior secondary student, *Experimental Playbuilding* journal, December 2000).

This group explored how to work together as a physically connected unit; they tested and tried many different elements of drama, and settled on the ones that the group felt were important and dynamic, such as using a tangible drama property made from a lycra bag as a symbol to reinforce their meaning of their whole playbuilding experience. They composed their non-verbal performance through a process of their personal and social discovery.

John O’Toole (1992) argues that a genuine part of the dramatic process is one of personal and social discovery, and through this the participants must “relate to their own experience and feelings” to create drama (p.120). This group had its own friendly social dynamics, and created its identity by actively exploring members’ personal friendship relationships during the playbuilding process as demonstrated by their lunch time rehearsals where they laughed, played and chatted while attempting to refine their work. At the end of the project the group reflected collectively that their masks and material, which were their group’s drama properties, worked well “because it a told a lot of the story (and) it was a good way to show meaning” (Larissa, junior secondary student, *Experimental Playbuilding* journal, December 2000). Therefore, group kinaesthetic drama properties and empathy worked well within this group, but there seemed to be a lack of group kinaesthetic knowing whereby the students intuitively, or through previous drama knowledge, understood how to create this type of surreal drama. There is also the possibility that these three students were not yet able to fully conceptualise the criteria of the project, but in their own personal ways, had created a most outstanding playbuilding scene of which they were proud.

The elements of drama were therefore twofold in the generation of theory, as they firstly provided a dramatic structure for the framework of the playbuilding, and secondly the elements of drama engaged with the junior students’ feelings as the playbuilders attempted to express and communicate dramatic meaning.
5.7 Improvisation and playbuilding as transformation

Transformation is inherent in the playbuilding processes and performance. Transformation enabled the drama students to assign dramatic meaning to their ideas and to develop a range of complex enactments (Burton, 1991, p. 174). The properties of transformation that emerged from the data were that students used both their body language and oral language to alter, intensify and enhance their work. Through transformation the playbuilders could become an inspired group actively expressing their thoughts and feelings and thereby extending their understanding and experiences of the social and cultural context of their playbuilt ideas. Meyerhold (1969, cited in Rudlin, 1994) expounded the view that actors would eventually wish to compose their own plays, and composing their own works was a constant focal point of the junior secondary students’ Experimental Playbuilding project. Throughout the process the junior secondary students allowed their bodies to work as a collective drama unit. It was on a secondary drama education level comparable to how Meyerhold thought his actors should rediscover their movements through techniques “bound to make the performer aware of his body, and the meaningfulness of his behaviour” (Muza, 1996, p.9). Moreover, the junior secondary students achieved a substantial standard of dramatic achievement and personal success as they travelled firmly into the skills, knowledge and understanding of improvising, playbuilding and hence transforming.

The participating junior secondary students created their drama by having fun, by arguing, by being lazy and by being absorbed. Viola Spolin (1983) observes that “a group of individuals who act, agree, and share together create strength and release knowledge surpassing the contribution of any single member. This includes the teacher and group leader” (p.37). She emphasises the importance of group harmony. This group harmony is comparable to the group kinaesthetic empathy that manifested itself in all the junior groups, as through their Experimental Playbuilding processes there evolved an organic awareness of and empathy with each other, and through this they became a collective dynamic entity.

Improvisation is embedded in playbuilding, and both these drama education teaching and learning forms come from the essence of human play (see Appendix 5.2) in that they can elicit subconscious responses from individuals and groups to look at ourselves, to laugh at
ourselves and our foibles, and to help us tell our stories. In this chapter this has been exemplified by the junior secondary students.

Improvisation and playbuilding are a physical kinaesthetic system of teaching and learning in so far as the junior participating students analysed gathered their own information and understanding within a first-hand experience, whilst being equally aware of themselves and their peers through enactment (Spolin, 1983, p.21). The participating students brought their own truths into their playbuilding projects reflecting Merleau-Ponty’s argument that human beings do not simply reflect a pre-existing truth, but bring truth into being (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, pp.408-409). The junior playbuilding classes, as embodied subjects, were actively involved in the causal and spatial relationships that allowed them veracity in their creating. This meant that they underwent change and were altered by the drama learning, experiencing new ways of looking at issues, themes, topics and the human experience.

The following two chapters exemplify the next two metaphoric phases of researching playbuilding in secondary schools, where students collaborate to build their own plays and reflection and evaluation takes place afterwards. Moreover, both chapters examine kinaesthetic teaching and learning in conjunction with an analysis, reflection and evaluation of kinaesthetic pedagogy. Chapter Six presents an analysis of group kinaesthetic connections as demonstrated though two senior HSC Group Devised Performances, followed by Chapter Seven where teacher and student reflection and evaluation of embodiment in playbuilding are undertaken.
Chapter 6
Group kinaesthetic connections in student playbuilding

6.1 Introduction

"Playbuilding is a dynamic and interactive process that draws out individual creativity very intensely while also developing strong group co-operation and commitment" (Bray, 1991, introduction page).

This chapter addresses group kinaesthetic connections in student playbuilding (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Flow of analyses in this thesis
The metaphor of implementing teaching strategies that kinesthetically inform the collaborative nature of playbuilding is analysed from the perspective of the following two key questions:

- How do phenomena such as group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating contribute to playbuilding success?
- How do phenomena such as group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and the use of group kinaesthetic drama properties enhance the teaching and learning practices of playbuilding and the playbuilders’ potential to become group kinaesthetic learners?

These two key questions are interrelated and interdependent on each other and connect to my building of the theory that investigates a teaching practice that optimises imagining and creating in secondary school playbuilding groups. The research data indicated that the cumulative playbuilding experiences of both the participating teachers, and the junior and senior secondary students provided a space for growth and development. The teachers and the students gained experience through a series of teaching and learning events that became embedded in the memories of their bodies and minds. These accumulated experiences were then brought forward in new, collaborative playbuilding projects.

This chapter analyses two Group Devised Performances undertaken by the participating senior secondary students as part of their HSC drama learning. The chapter highlights the students’ accumulated playbuilding learning experiences, adding a further group kinaesthetic dimension to the synthesis of the teachers’ opinions and the junior secondary students’ Experimental Playbuilding project as analysed in the previous chapters. The story of this chapter is told through the senior secondary students’ own voices, and ranges from what it means to have a group imagination to what helped or hindered them in their group devised playbuilding project. A synthesis of the participating teachers’ senior playbuilding experiences, with my own classroom observations is also presented. This chapter elaborates on the senior secondary students’ kinaesthetic learning experiences while undertaking their Group Devised Performance, through both their individual and group ‘lived bodiliness’ (Fortier, 2002, pp.37-58).
The term *Group Devised Performance* identifies the senior participating students’ playbuilding project as one in which they have the liberty to actively build and explore any aspect of playbuilding they wish, as long as they adhere to the Higher School Certificate criteria for examination. The senior secondary students undertook this playbuilding project in their last months as school students. The project was undertaken within 4 x 50 minute drama classes per week over a 14 week period, and an analysis of the classroom processes and HSC internal assessment performance are interpreted in this chapter. As discussed in Chapter Four, the senior *Group Devised Performance* groups were chosen by the students in collaboration with their teacher, and this meant that the groups were comprised of friendship structures as well as a range of abilities. Each of the two groups analysed in this chapter, which I have identified as *The Wives* and *The Triangle* based on the themes of their work, included two identified gifted and/or talented students. Each group was therefore comprised of five female students of varying maturity, personal interests, and drama skills and abilities. Each group began with the topic list prescribed by the New South Wales Board of Studies administrators of the HSC examination. The groups were free to choose any of the given topics and to explore any aspect of playbuilding they wished.

The criteria for senior *Group Devised Performance*, which is a core component of the Drama HSC examination, are as follows:

- The Group Performance will be a piece of original theatre which:
  - is a complete theatrical statement demonstrating a sense of dramatic shape and structure
  - provides opportunity for each student to demonstrate his or her performance skills
  - is performed by **no fewer than three and no more than six students**
  - is 8-12 minutes in duration. (Board of Studies, 1999b, p.30).

The syllabus document further lists the criteria for examining the *Group Devised Performance*:

- Effective use of dramatic elements and theatrical conventions.
- Structure and dramatic coherence.
- Use of performance skills appropriate to the style or form.
- Capacity to realise and sustain role and character.
- Performance as part of an ensemble.
• Establishing an appropriate relationship with the audience.
• Innovation, flair and integrity in the presentation of the dramatic work.
(p.30).

These criteria provided the senior secondary students with a drama education framework within which to create their playbuilding project. Moreover, the students understood that collaboration, commitment and skilful engagement were embedded in the examinable project, as implicit in their previous drama learning was the dimension that drama “is a collaborative art form that involves the creative interaction of individuals using a range of artistic skills” (p.6). I too, as their teacher, had a curriculum pedagogic teaching framework. The New South Wales Board of Studies required that “the talents and capacities of all students – physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, creative and expressive – as well as developing self-confidence and self-esteem” (p.6) be explored in the teaching of this Group Devised Performance.

The chapter is organised so as to elaborate on the kinaesthetic connections involved in a group’s playbuilding activities. In the first section I analyse how students make the transition from individual drama students to a productive group of students with a common goal and purpose. Metaxical synergy plays a pivotal role in this transformation process, as does a group working together through imaginative divergence and metaphoric thinking and creating. In the latter half of the chapter I analyse the transmission of playbuilding knowledge through group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and group kinaesthetic drama properties. Although I synthesise these individually to emphasise the building process of grounded theory, they all converge and connect within the transformation process of playbuilding.
6.2 From individual drama students to cohesive playbuilding groups

The two senior playbuilding groups spent the first two to four weeks improvising, discussing and debating how best to go about their project (see Appendices 6.4 and 6.5); during this time they developed from individual drama students into cohesive playbuilding groups. The dimension and range of properties in Figure 6.2 indicate broadly the time it took to become a cohesive playbuilding group and the processes the participating groups underwent.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6.2: Dimensional analysis of a cohesive playbuilding group**

During the first few weeks of the playbuilding project the participating students’ personal identities merged within one another, as did their individual imaginations. Simultaneously, a collective group metaxis occurred and ensemble metaphoric ideas began to appear, which in turn enabled the group to continue to create purposefully. The individual participants took a number of weeks to merge into a cohesive group; when this occurred, the
playbuilding group formed its own unique identity where all students' backgrounds and social, cultural and technical knowledge were integrated into all aspects of the group project.

Theoretical saturation of the data indicated that when these two playbuilding groups became an ensemble, the playbuilders took ownership of their group by sharing their collective dramatic wisdom through energised physical and verbal learning. This learning provided the students with inspiration to maintain a shared playbuilding purpose, and this enabled them to assign dramatic meaning to their ideas and to develop a range of complex enactments. Even though grounded theory analysis indicated that a cohesive group situation occurred around weeks two to four for the two senior secondary groups, it also indicated that each group reached different phases at different times, and that the properties of the dimension could be progressive or occur simultaneously, independently or semi-independently. For instance, *The Triangle* group quickly found a metaphoric idea by using the setting of the Bermuda Triangle to debate diversity in society. On the other hand, *The Wives*, who began their process work with a flurry of diverse group imaginings, took a while to discover and/or visualise the metaphoric idea of the 'Y chromosome that all the wives were searching for'. Once this happened, the metaphor was continually embodied on the classroom floor as examined in section 6.4 of this chapter.

The dimensional analysis in Figure 6.2 implies that ensemble creating is multifaceted and multilayered, and that playbuilding groups function as a microcosm of society (Forsyth, 1999) every time they enter the drama classroom. The two senior playbuilding groups became a small community that explored and enjoyed communicating their stories through the process of transforming. The students' capacity to transform into a cohesive playbuilding group was enhanced by kinaesthetic teaching and learning that provided spaces for the students to solve personal and dramatic problems through the group's dramatic wisdom. While in this act of transformation the students were able to evaluate and reflect on how they were dramatically enacting their social and cultural messages. The data also demonstrated that by becoming a cohesive playbuilding group the student participants created significant meaning from their playbuilding experiences.
6.2.1 Kinaesthetic teaching and learning

Kinaesthetic drama teaching provides students with the opportunity to primarily solve playbuilding problems by engaging in embodied activities physically, visually, cognitively and affectively. The four teachers I interviewed argued that they used kinaesthetic teaching strategies to stimulate their senior playbuilding groups' transformative capacities such as enhancing movement awareness (Moore & Yamamoto, 1988b, p.18), and experimenting with and dynamising the activities from Augusto Boal's *Games for Actors and non-actors* (Boal, 1992). The four participating teachers suggested that kinaesthetic teaching is integral to helping fire a senior playbuilding group's imagination, and that students should be encouraged to continually attempt to interpret the complexities of their embodied learning.

Paul argued that:

> Kinaesthetic teaching is very effective in all playbuilding projects and is carried through to Higher School Certificate *Group Devised Performances*, as these senior students have to physicalise their learning to stimulate their imaginations (Paul, teacher interview 30/02/2001).

All participating teachers suggested that kinaesthetic teaching energises the students to learn; it allows ideas to be opened up, and students as a group can readily express their ideas. When groups physicalise an idea they often start to have fun; this can break down parts of the cognitive and affective domains so that the physical domain governs and fosters active creating which in turn stimulates imagination (see section 6.5 Group kinaesthetic knowing). Claudia, a student from *The Triangle* group, stated that "imagination helps me think up creative lies and this process is such good fun in playbuilding" (Claudia, senior secondary student, audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, September 2000).

Alice, a participating teacher, argued that senior playbuilding groups should not get trapped into intellectualising; they must tap into their individual kinaesthetic awareness and harness this in the group's creating (Alice, teacher interview 18/04/2001). Paul, another participating teacher, argued that a teacher can tell a lot about how a playbuilding group is
functioning and about its imaginative and creative results by the physical space that they use, and the physical shapes that they create individually or as a group. The physical dynamics of stillness, energy, fast versus slow, sharp versus vague, and whether or not there is an organic sense within the group that it owns the space, make the difference between a group of individuals and an ensemble (Paul, teacher interview 30/02/2001).

The data also indicates that supportive kinaesthetic teaching was pivotal to helping build a sense of group community and identity throughout the whole metaxical playbuilding process. For instance, The Wives and The Triangle groups tried to operate under democratic principles such as negotiation, dialectical thinking, discussion, debate, and argument, and as their teacher I was aware that all individual students had her own imaginative powers that could empower the group to explore ideas and solve problems. In the classroom I provided the two senior groups with kinaesthetic learning experiences that physically explored such areas as mood, rhythm and timing, which added texture and richness to their rehearsed improvisation activities through layering ideas onto their soundscapes, movement and characterisation techniques. As the students took control of their own kinaesthetic learning, The Triangle group went on to experiment with clapping, stomping, tapping, adding stillness and developing emotional intensity to enhance small segments of their work. The Wives group continued to explore changing the mood and rhythm of their developing characters to communicate female matriarchy in different ways to their intended audiences.

The senior playbuilding groups were engaged in kinaesthetic learning that was facilitated by kinaesthetic teaching and enhanced by the metaxical drama environment of playbuilding. They became a cohesive playbuilding group as they travelled from individual drama students to become ensemble playbuilding groups that were able to transform their ideas into an HSC Group Devised Performance.

6.3 Group metaxical synergy

As demonstrated in Chapter Three, the data indicates that metaxis occurs in playbuilding when the fictional and the real context are closely connected, and that there were moments
in the playbuilding process when these two worlds were connected as one. Juliana Saxton of Victoria University, Canada, claims that metaxis is a special imaginative and creative power that enables students to cross the two worlds of the fictitious and the actual. She argues that metaxis can transfer imagining and creating not only through the mind but also through the wisdom of the body (Professor J. Saxton, personal communication, University of Victoria, Canada, 24th March 2001). I have also observed that when groups of students work together in the drama classroom they develop a collective metaxis from the wisdom of their bodies. Thus metaxis had multiple learning perspectives (Simons, 2003) in dramatic group work.

The two senior playbuilding groups were familiar with the concept of metaxis, having studied Augusto Boal’s (1992) theatrical ideology; they were therefore able to discuss its function in their drama learning. Jacquelinia suggested that, in her opinion, metaxis belonged to a drama student’s “imagination and determination”. Jacquelinia went on to argue that drama students understood that they could hold the actual and fictitious worlds in their minds and bodies whilst playbuilding (Jacquelinia, senior secondary student, audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, September 2000). Another student, Nina, also believed that drama students subconsciously understood that they could hold the actual and fictitious worlds in their minds and bodies during drama work.

Nina explained that during the Group Devised Performance process in her group, The Triangle, she worked in two worlds simultaneously:

I think on things and bring it back to reality, because you can run away with these dreams, and yeah, let’s do a production where we are all fish under the water ... you have to bring it back. It’s good, that fundamental idea, but put it in (dramatic) realistic limits (Nina, audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, September 2000) (see Appendix 6.8).

Claudia, also from The Triangle group, claimed that metaxical power was: “like reaching for the moon and falling for the stars” in her Group Devised Performance process work (Claudia, senior secondary student, audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, September 2000) (see Appendix 6.8). During this class discussion, both these students spontaneously acted out their ideas, demonstrating a theatrical embodied awareness of metaxis.
Even so, there is something inexplicable about metaxis. It can occur actively on the classroom floor and also actively in the students' recordings of their work. Many of the senior secondary students' logbooks became active, almost physical and muscular, 'in-between' the doing and the writing. The doing and the writing were colliding worlds as the two groups rehearsed and scripted almost simultaneously, so that the understanding of their learning was coming from a "poietic" place (Turner, 1982, p.93); 'poietic' as in making, not faking. For instance, Yvette's logbook demonstrates this poietic making of the Group Devised Performance as she draws and notates how she and her group were working back and forth from ideas to active classroom improvisation to logbook entries, in a cyclic metaxical manner. The following is an extract from Yvette's logbook; Yvette was a member of The Triangle Group Devised Performance:

**Flight Scene Diagram**
I need to do a physical warm up as my character needs to be flexible (as indicated in the flight scene)

(see Appendix videotape 7.7).
From this scene we (myself and Claudia) go into our flash back scene on the boats. … We are basing this on physical theatre and to accomplish that we spent a lot of time together to become comfortable with each other” (Yvette, senior secondary student, *Group Devised Performance* logbook, August 2000).

Yvette’s drawing emphasises a dramatic fluidity, and combined with the meaning behind such words such as ‘flexible’, ‘flashback’, ‘physical theatre’, there is evidence to suggest that metaxis is operating in her logbook as she makes her playbuilding.

The metaxical colliding world of rehearsing, scripting, scripting, rehearsing was not unique to Yvette, as evidenced by all the senior participating students, who indicated that at some time during their *Group Devised Performance* process they used their logbooks in an active manner. This could be writing out snippets of dialogue, drawing stage or action diagrams, creating collages, reflecting on and evaluating their group’s work. Thus an analysis of the data indicates that there was a metaxical connection between the senior secondary students’ physical drama activities and their logbooks that helped embodied learning to take place (see Appendix 6.1). Consequently, metaxis helped the senior secondary students to explore their everyday lives and their imagined worlds in varied ways.

Metaxis is a plurality of imagining that allows creating to transcend what is already possible and to create something that was not there before. *The Wives* and *The Triangle* groups wished to try and push to the limits of their ideas, and in doing so they became a complex ensemble unit operating in a metaxical situation as they were trying to create something that wasn’t there before. The students had a shared purpose, group decision making was taking place, and their previous dramatic wisdom was connected to this final *Group Devised Performance* project as secondary school students. This meant that the two groups were trying to find the balance between each individual’s knowledge, skills and capacities and their emerging identity as a group, as well as the knowledge, skills and understandings inherent in the learning process.

The major knowledge, skills and understandings of *The Triangle* group were to become connected through what I have termed ‘metaxical play’. In their group work metaxical play occurred, allowing the students to explore their Bermuda Triangle imaginary project, whilst
also being young female students enjoying each other’s company. An emergent phenomenon from *The Triangle* group, analysed through an analytical memo, indicates how that group used metaxical play to create a group ensemble:

**Snapshot: Emergent phenomenon – metaxical play**

Julianna: I thought it was really heaps good with our group that we spent just time together, going over to Nina’s place … and some people are afraid, well not afraid, you know they don’t want to touch each other or anything. You know we just didn’t care, and we could jump into each other and explore our (drama) ideas. Everyone was just kind of being themselves (Senior secondary students, audiotape analysis, classroom discussion, September 2000) (see Appendix 6.8).

**Analytical memo:** All the other group members agreed with Julianna’s statement. Perhaps in her group, *The Triangle*, substantial group kinaesthetics and group metaphoric creating occurred because of the playing that occurred within the group.

From empirical classroom observation *The Triangle* group members appeared to be risk takers as far as their bodies and embodied learning were concerned. For example, the group members lacked physical inhibition in the classroom, allowing their bodies to become anything to enhance their Bermuda narrative. Moreover, the group members believed that their collective bodies could express their ideas.

It also appears that play allowed the in-between world of metaxis to occur for this group.

Perhaps free child-like play over at Nina’s place consolidated their lack of being afraid to physically touch one another. ‘To touch’ means that the group could touch each other physically and I would suggest visually, mentally and emotionally, that is, they felt safe in their group environment. Maybe this was because of their playfulness, and or was this playfulness part of the group just being themselves?
Conjecture: metaxical play released a combination of the group’s technical and interpretative knowing, which may in turn have allowed substantial group diverse imagination to occur, and hence to create in a kinaesthetic and metaphoric manner (March 2002) (Faireclough, 1995).

It is significant that in both The Triangle and The Wives senior secondary students’ Group Devised Performances a group metaxical synergy, connecting metaxical play and drama experimentation, was often present in their process work and was expressed through divergent and metaphoric imagery.

6.4 Group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating

To illustrate group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating I examine the data that emerged from The Wives HSC Group Devised Performance. The group had explored metaxical play for a couple of lessons early in their classroom work, using the idea of creating a narrative around dictators’ wives. They were very organised, using their logbooks to notate and review what they had developed and what they wished to keep exploring.

At the beginning of one class Ursula looked back over her journal entries and related to the others what they had decided in their last lesson. From this peer learning the students explored their previously discovered knowledge, breaking the information into parts, and towards the end of the drama lesson put it together in a new way. The conversation ranged from dictators’ attributes and characteristics to how to define dictators, and what the group wanted to say theatrically to their intended audience. Eventually one student, Lesley, conceptualised all the aforementioned ideas into one theatrical statement. “What one dictator hasn’t done for society” (Lesley, senior secondary student, audiotape analysis, May 2000). All students in the group had an empathic response to this concept and were ‘bouncing off’ each other’s ideas, verbally and through spontaneous improvisation, as the concept visually stimulated narrative ideas, plot line structures and character development for their Group Devised Performance project (see Appendix 6.4).
During this imaginative conversing, The Wives group had an understanding of the power of metaxical play in their drama work as the group was functioning at the intersection where ideas could be transformed through enactment. Therefore, the group was beginning to imagine in fictitious dramatic terms, while simultaneously discussing the actual actor/audience relationship. Their cumulative learning occurred through observation and experimentation, and this demonstrated a relationship between group drama “knowledge and human activity” (Held, 1980, p.296). The Wives group was beginning to analyse critically, distinguish, examine, compare and contrast their diverse group imaginings; they were ready to start the initial creating. The tumbling discourse enabled the group to notice what needed to be noticed about their ideas, and to be critical. A dramatic synergy occurred when the students decided to become the wives of one royal dictator, Henry VIII. Improvisation allowed an elucidation of this concept so that metaphoric creating occurred, pushing their dramatic problem-solving beyond creative limits to explore a world where a sixteenth century English Protestant monarch could symbolise a woman’s desire for power and control.

As Australian Catholic female students, they were fascinated that Katherine of Aragon was the last Catholic queen of England. Although the group did not follow this fascination through in their final narrative, they took great delight in helping one of their peers, Georgina, to develop her character of Katherine of Aragon. The Katherine of Aragon character became the matriarch; she was shrewish, manipulative, yet very pious, and created tension and conflict with all the other wives in her failed quest for the Y chromosome. The satirical narrative of the quest for a male Y chromosome reflected all their female voices, as they thought that Henry’s obsession for a male to be the supreme ruler an absurdity of the English monarchical tradition. Yet, implicit in their narrative voices was the girls’ femaleness tied perhaps to their maternal identity (Moi, 1986). Furthermore, the way the students created their overall narrative of females attempting to gain status and power in life through mothering gives some credence to Crawford and Rossiter’s (1998) argument that religious education can be explored through many varied stories.
The research indicated that during the first few weeks of learning, group empathy emerged because the girls were successfully exploring and experimenting with metaphors. *The Wives* group’s imagination was coming from macro conditions such as each individual student’s past social, cultural and religious experiences, and they were making connections to the micro conditions of the HSC *Group Devised Performances*. This connectivity had complexities of personalities, skills and talents. One student who had been identified as gifted and another as talented (see Chapter Three, section 3.7.1), became the leaders only in as much as they sometimes provided an added richness to the texture of the creating. For instance, Julianna was the first of the group to articulate the dramatic metaphoric idea of the Y chromosome; in her words this concept “went from nothing to something”. She stated how proud she was of the intellectual and theatrical ideas in *The Wives*, and most importantly “it was a true ensemble effort” (Julianna senior secondary student, *Group Devised Performance* logbook, August 2000). Julianna’s words reflected all the other group members’ pride in their capacity to collaborate, which was central to their substantial achievement.

During the next phase of *The Wives* process they worked as sophisticated problem solvers, theatrically improvising their abstract ideas and evaluating new improvisation information. The group’s playbuilding was beginning to take shape; they had understood from their active improvisations that they had the ability to act on their knowledge in a powerfully dramatic way. The group’s diverse improvisation created characters with central oppositions to one another that served to structure the narrative of the wifely quest. In developing their characters the students used opposing tactics and objectives to try and get what they wanted; they demonstrated frailty, vulnerability, charm and piousness contrasted with greed, self-centredness, spitefulness and envy. The students further researched their topic by gathering resources from the Internet, school and community libraries, and through interviewing the St. Sistine’s History and Religious Education teachers. The individual students were able to justify and elaborate their opinions to each other, and the group began making tentative decisions between different narrative and plot line structures.

In theory building about group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating, grounded theory demonstrated that there was a range of variables in this group’s creating. These included the way in which the group discovered their ideas, how they
theatrically manipulated their ideas, and the interplay of metaxis as demonstrated by the group’s concept that the audience has a particular role to play in their performance. The girls felt that the adults in the audience, and their HSC examiners, would know the historical facts about Henry VIII and his wives, but not the expectations and journeys of their enacted ‘wives’. The group wished their metaphor to create empathy, pathos and comedy, which they felt and knew compared and contrasted so subtly with historical records.

The following group to be analysed in section 6.5, The Triangle, also demonstrated the same range of variables in group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking, leading me to interpret that this concept is firmly connected to group kinaesthetic knowing, as both broaden the scope of how drama is a transformation process.

6.5 Group kinaesthetic knowing

Group kinaesthetic knowing broadens the scope of the way in which dramatic knowledge is developed and shared in playbuilding; this occurs when students explore intuitive dramatic knowledge (Spolin, 1983, p.4) and drama and theatre conventions and techniques that are known and embodied from their previous learning (see Appendix 6.3).

The theory of group kinaesthetic knowing is advanced through the investigation of another participating drama group, The Triangle. This group was working on a group devised piece around the themes and issues that manifest themselves in the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle, with a particular emphasis on how diverse people cope in a strange, alien environment. The Triangle group organised its initial approach to the process through empirical-analytic knowing, investigating widely into their topic by exploring information on the Internet and in relevant textbooks. The members of the group derived meaning from their research through the language of improvisation; they improvised using spontaneous emotional activities; they changed the emotions and intensity of an activity, and explored physicalising and heightening feelings and attitudes; continuous transformation was taking place as they understood the power of their process work. At this early phase in the process
a group kinaesthetic knowing was occurring, as the students understood the drama and theatre conventions and techniques they were using, and why they were using them.

An example of group kinaesthetic knowing occurred when they created an improvised movement and soundscape. The structure of the improvisation held the essence of all the imaginings they had been discussing in class; it was a dramatic physical identification within their kinaesthetic, affective and cognitive domains. Analysis of this example shows that as the group improvised a moving soundscape they were able to perceive their group’s bodily motion in the fictitious Bermuda Triangle environment; in fact, the improvisation was a metaphoric expression of their ideas. The group’s physical movements reflected how they imagined the environment; they became the weather, clouds, air and wind currents; their bodies created observable differences through being bodies joined in movement, whilst juxtaposing rhythm and sounds to become the mysterious environment. This improvisation involved the students using their bodies to channel sounds through their resonating cavities. This resulted from peer learning as Claudia, a gifted and talented drama and music student, spent a number of lessons modelling and exploring vocal soundscapes with her group (Linklater, 1976). Meanwhile, Yvette, another talented student, examined the dimensional qualities of movement having briefly studied Laban techniques (Davies, 2001; Newlove, 1993) the term before her Group Devised Performance, and after attending a workshop with the Sydney based physical theatre company Legs on the Wall.

In fact, the whole group became peer learners as they experimented with wordless messages alongside verbal discussion and peer evaluation, which in turn created a momentous sensory and emotional communication between them. Through their group’s spontaneous and rehearsed improvisations, many of their individual observations, visual interpretations and imaginings became one kinaesthetic knowing which was embodied in dramatic action, as referred to in Chapter Four.

The Triangle group’s kinaesthetic knowing belonged to an eclectic interplay of listening to one another, improvising with one another, reflecting with one another, and an intuitive understanding that the theatrical techniques of a moving soundscape would communicate the meaning of a mysterious and uncertain environment. Nina records in her logbook that
“I really like the way that we start in darkness with a (moving) soundscape to get the audience’s attention” (Nina, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance logbook, August 2000), which demonstrated how the students were empowered by extending their previously learned drama and theatre conventions and techniques.

In the students’ previous embodied learning they had explored elementary Laban techniques (Newlove, 1993), which they transferred to the moving soundscape using their kinaesthetic memories. The moving soundscape was followed by individual and collective dialogue to create a feeling of being swept into a place over which the characters had no control. This is illustrated below, and I use Laban’s basic motion concepts to bring The Triangle group’s scene to life in a written embodied sense on the following page.

During their scene, the students pass each other and their kinespheres overlap, creating a group kinespheric movement (Newlove, 1993, p.22) as demonstrated in Figure 6.3. In the building of the grounded theory the following analysis format emerged as a useful method of dramatically physicalising, on the page, the active group kinaesthetic knowing that occurred. In Figure 6.3, the ‘Action, Time, Weight and Space’ analyses are exactly the same for all students, as in this scene the students worked as one unifying body. Thus, this analysis provides a muscular, on the classroom floor synthesis of the opening scenes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b). The dialogue shown in italics is taken from Yvette’s logbook and from analysing the videotape (see Appendix videotape 7.6).

The Triangle group’s opening kinespheric dialogue in Figure 6.3, “You can’t get out. Whatever it is, it won’t let us out. It’s a white nothing. There is no way out.” demonstrates the students’ capacity to evoke a paralanguage to their audience, as embedded in this language was the dynamic kinesphere of movement (Davies, 2001; Fairclough, 1995; Newlove, 1993).
The characters are pushed by an unknown force upper centre stage, and fall back centre stage. All look terrified, bemused, afraid. Bodies open and vulnerable.

Stage lights come fully up.

There are five characters, almost in a circle, centre stage.
Some are lying, some half sitting, as if blown through a tunnel.
They slowly look around. Almost unaware of each other. There is a feeling of panic.
A character shouts: “You can’t get out”

They are looking for a way out.
They spot a mountainous environment.
They gaze into this mountainous environment which theatrically endows it with the symbol of freedom. They climb up to this symbol of freedom, except one character who slowly reaches out to the audience saying:
“What ever it is it won’t let us out”.
“It’s a white nothing””. “There is no way out”.

There is a change of pace and all the characters are moving around the space in a circular panic. They can’t remember anything. They huddle together, bodies slowly moving and turning.
They are terrified. They think there is no way out.
(May 2002) (see Appendix videotape 7.6).

Figure 6.3: Synopsis of the opening scenes from the Triangle group’s playbuilding project

The Triangle group subsequently refined their embodied ideas of loss of control over life by adding further dialogue which theatrically advanced their previous dynamic kinespheric dialogue. This subsequent kinespheric dialogue was not examined in the videotape data analysis because the students refined their work after their internal assessment video was made. They added the following words, to extend the dramatic meaning of their opening scene:
Nothing
White Nothing
Secure the Rigging
Clouds
The Vortex
Cold
Hark
Force
Water
Mist
Echo
Echo Echo
Burn Burn
Trapped
(Yvette, senior secondary student, *Group Devised Performance* logbook, August 2000)

This kinespheric language of imagery, demonstrated in Yvette’s logbook was a powerful addition to the group’s dramatic opening. It had grown out of their refinement of ideas after a public performance of their work, and their intuitive exploration of warm-ups combined with their knowledge of theatre conventions and techniques. The scene created a vision for their audience of what it might be like to be sucked into the Bermuda Triangle.

*The Triangle* group’s work was a metaphor for human uncertainty. When a drama group’s metaphoric thinking is opened up, the group allows its everyday ideas to be seen in a new light; they have a new understanding and knowledge of their work. For example, the scene following the opening provided the students with an embodied experience of what it might have been like to be a World War II pilot who lost control of his/her aeroplane. The narrative and content analysis in Figure 6.4 indicates the embodied ideas of the senior secondary students and reinforces to some degree the volatile, contextual meaning of shared knowledge, rules and codes employed within this group (Manning & Cullen-Swan, 1998, pp. 246-273) (see Appendix videotape 7.7).
The Triangle group’s embodied flight scene

A theatrical flashback occurs as one character, dressed as a World War II pilot, finds her compass. The compass becomes a symbol of freedom for her. Some of the other characters are frightened by the power of the compass; some want to steal it. There is a growing indication that these characters do not know each other in this mysterious place, and that they do not belong to one another in any time zone.

The pilot suddenly remembers the journey that brought her to this place.

All other characters go into role and form a plane around her centre stage; they embody the flying plane. The plane moves fast and furiously.

Pilot: I remember, due north. I was flying above the Atlantic Ocean, 33.33 latitude 20 degrees 45 minutes north, longitude 60 degrees, 20 minutes west.

The students, in role as the plane, begin a slow motion movement embodying the aircraft as it goes down into the sea. This is contrasted to the panic in the pilot’s words and voice. The eerie mysterious sounds begin again as the students create another soundscape.

Pilot: There were three lights pointing down. I saw those lights, the compass went haywire.
The plane loses control
Pilot: The Plane lost control
Soldiers: Parachutes, parachutes
Pilot: I kept getting sucked in.

All the students snap back into their characters in the mysterious environment of the Bermuda Triangle and again they realise they are in the middle of nowhere. The characters are utterly disillusioned.

(May 2002) (see Appendix videotape 7.7).

Figure 6.4: The Triangle group’s embodied flight scene exploring adversity

Figure 6.4 shows that The Triangle group’s playbuilding belonged to a metaphoric embodied world; metaphors gave the group a way to categorise and make sense of their topic of diversity. The participating students’ drama experiences emphasise the shifts and discourse they explored to create this scene. As the group enacted and embodied the metaphor of loss and confusion in the pilot scene, they were highlighting certain aspects of their previous drama learning experiences, such as exploring physical learning, and becoming inanimate objects, while obscuring others such as their knowledge about objectives, tactics and motivation, but all was implicit in the scene.

Kinaesthetic knowing links a group’s metaphorical thinking, creating and imaginative divergence, as well as their technical knowledge about how to experiment with pertinent drama and theatre conventions and techniques such as soundscapes and physical theatre. The Triangle group knew what they wanted to construct in their Group Devised Performance, and what drama and theatre techniques they wanted to use. This may have been intuitive at the beginning of the playbuilding process but, as the weeks went by, they
understood that their intuitive knowing stemmed from and was an amalgamation of learned drama and theatre conventions and techniques and their group’s own imagination. Moreover, The Triangle group’s performance verifies Peta Tait’s (1994) argument that women who create their own theatre work are far-sighted, provocative and imaginative in their styles of presentation (p.2).

6.6 Group kinaesthetic empathy

During the open and axial coding stages, as well as during the theoretical saturation stage, it became apparent that transforming is a dimension of a secondary drama playbuilding group, and this is enhanced and manifested by the group members’ ability to respond empathically to one another in the classroom context. In a phenomenological sense, this demonstrates that in playbuilding, secondary drama students take into account their own realm of awareness, the way they perceive their broader environment, their drama teacher, their adolescent influences, as well as the way their personal awareness judges and sets limits on their empathic behaviour (Fortier, 2002, p.41). Gavin Bolton (1980, cited in O’Toole, 1992) argues that as a teacher he wants to find out what his drama students mean, or he “cannot do anything about extending that meaning” (p.107). To elaborate on Bolton’s concept, without the teacher and the group having an empathic connectivity to each other, neither can go beyond the limits of their awareness and hence extend their playbuilding.

Consequently I have identified empathy as a pivotal dimensional link that lies at the heart of a group’s transforming ability, and have labelled this ‘group kinaesthetic empathy’. The properties of group kinaesthetic empathy are concerned with the individual drama student, and with the way individual drama students in a playbuilding group can listen with their minds and bodies to their group’s dramatic ideas. Individual drama students can contribute their dramatic ideas in the knowledge that they will be listened to and explored by their group; hence group kinaesthetic empathy emerges.

To be heard has variations for the individual student. At times individual suggestions will not be used, or at other times individual suggestions will be embraced but will dramatically fail (Arnold, 1998, pp.126-128). Such achievements and failures inevitably occur in any
playbuilding group situation because the students are consistently problem-solving. For example, *The Wives* group felt that the middle of their process work had been long and difficult, and to paraphrase Jacquelinina, even though they were a committed group “they could not always see the light at the end of the tunnel” (Jacquelinina, senior secondary student, *Group Devised Performance* logbook, August 2000) (see Appendix 6.1). The data indicated that because of the pressure of the HSC exam they did not always want to listen to one another, believing that their own ideas were the best, and then becoming disheartened when their ideas were rejected. However, through perseverance and an awareness of the dramatic problems they encountered, they remained empathically attuned to one another in an instinctive and sensorial way, communicating through the media of movement, words and dramatic action to build their ideas for their narrative. They were working for the common good of the project.

Group kinaesthetic empathy is different from group kinaesthetic knowing, as emotional memory, sensitivity and the wisdom of the group body create a dynamic intuitive reciprocity. Kinaesthetic empathy can manifest itself as the bedrock on which the group can debate, argue, improvise and reflect, enabling them to proceed in a sensorial manner with the devising and performing. Group kinaesthetic empathy is a perceptual process that involves relationships, and the way they change to enhance the drama devising. Subcategories from the analysis appeared to be simple, complex and abstract as evidenced in *The Wives* group’s first idea to become dictators’ wives, to the more complex idea of becoming the wives of one dictator, to the abstract idea of altering the function of time and becoming a conglomerate of dead wives on a living quest (Arnheim, 1969, pp.98-100).

Group empathy also extended into visual kinaesthetics, as visual concepts could be tangible and/or illusive (p.84); they could belong to previous playbuilding ideas and/or be rich in variations of ideas. For instance, in *The Triangle* group’s process, group kinaesthetic empathy was apparent when Claudia said, “Why don’t we talk about some of the images we are seeing” (Claudia, senior secondary student, audiotape analysis, classroom rehearsals, May 2000). In her imagination she was seeing, hearing and visualising the images that could help construct their *Group Devised Performance*, and she imagined that everyone else in her group was also visualising dramatic images. The group members responded positively to Claudia’s question, discussing how they imagined the drama might
unfold. Claudia then evoked the most dramatic guttural sounds to enhance her images; they were primeval, wailing, eerie and beautiful; the other group members were very quiet.

There was a pause, and then another group member said, "God, imagine everyone doing that" (The Triangle group, senior secondary students, audiotape analysis, classroom rehearsals, May 2000) (see Appendix 6.5).

What is important from this example is the group’s emotional reaction to the evocation of these sounds, as they were elusive yet tangible, and certainly a rich variation to previously explored soundscapes. Claudia had touched each individual student’s sensory response, which served to identify, interpret and mentally physicalise the group’s imaginings. An analysis of the audiotape data of their classroom work indicated that there was a heightened sense of theatrical possibilities in the group. Their conversations were running over one another, ideas jumping around, but there was also a contemplation of how their own voices could evoke a strong narrative to their playbuilding. All students were stimulated by this moment through the perception of their own experiences, feelings, intuition and awareness. The individual sounds contained an essence of group meaning; it was an imaginative conversation conducted through the empathy of vocal work (The Triangle group, senior secondary students, audiotape analysis, classroom rehearsals, May 2000).

In this imaginative conversation the students excitedly went on to talk about the "individuality of our group", saying that the group had its "own creative thing" (The Triangle group, senior secondary students, audiotape analysis, classroom rehearsals, May 2000). They discussed the importance of creating something unique "when we do it with our own voices" (The Triangle group, senior secondary students, audiotape analysis, classroom rehearsals, May 2000). The students were drawn to the emotion and imagery of the sounds. The vocal sounds were, to quote Kristen Linklater (1976), in "direct contact with emotional impulse, shaped by the intellect but not inhibited by it." (p.1). Kristen Linklater’s philosophies and techniques on voice work state “The natural voice is transparent—revealing, not describing, inner impulses of emotion and thought, directly and spontaneously” (p.2). The Triangle group responded to their inner impulses of emotions and thought because Claudia’s vocal sounds were so theatrically and emotionally revealing. At that moment the group had linked their sensorial domains, allowing a true liberation of their imaginations, provoking powerful empathic images.
The students in this group were in the realm of metaphoric empathic creation; this was framing dramatically the way the group thought and related to each other. The group had the dramatic ability to understand that they could change these sounds into action so that an audience would be emotionally touched in the same way they were. The group was undergoing an act of transformation, and entering the realm of a cohesive playbuilding group; this was evidenced by:

- their process work containing many ideas for the final performance
- devising was occurring individually and collectively
- ideas were sparking between all members
- theatrical imaginings belonged to individuals initially, but were later taken on by the group.

The group’s discussions scaffolded upon one another. Julianna excitedly said “I keep seeing the Bermuda Triangle as another world, within the triangle” with Nina responding “I like that ... another reality” (The Triangle group, senior secondary students, audiotape analysis, classroom rehearsals, May 2000). They experienced a harmony of drama ideas. In this classroom experience, The Triangle group were extending and transforming their original ideas as the interplay between the actual and the fictitious occurred. All the students were consciously involved in the present, yet they were actively involved in creating this fictitious world through emotional associations and body movement perceptions. The group was making their own personal and social discoveries, and was relating this to their own experiences and feelings (O'Toole, 1992, p.120).

Moore and Yamamoto (1988a & b) describe body movement perceptions as a cluster of dialectical functions working in opposition, yet harnessing internal and external intuition. In this sense The Triangle group were sitting down and discussing, while their intuition was actively constructing the drama; a dialectic of the passive and the active which harnessed the group into comprehending fully the physical movements that they were exploring. The Triangle group had the ability to perceive and empathise their kinaesthetic world in relationship to each other.
In *The Triangle* group’s process work the sensorial dimensions were ignited by a group kinaesthetic empathy. David Abram (1996) discusses the notion of sensorial dimensions through debating the importance of cultural stories; he talks about the profound association between storytelling, human terrain, and the wholeness of a story in relation to the characters that act and move within it (p.163). He writes “A story envelops its protagonists much as we ourselves are enveloped by the terrain” (p.163), and argues that human beings “are characters within a huge story that is visibly unfolding all around us, participants within the vast imagination, or Dreaming, of the world” (p.163). *The Triangle* group members were enveloped in their own personal stories as well as exploring the ‘terrain’ of the stage world.

The sensorial dimension was part of *The Wives and The Triangle* groups’ devised work, and therefore part of their individual and collective imaginations. The data indicated that the individuals in each group were interconnected in their group work through a developing sensitivity to other group members, and through this sensitivity they related deeply to each other, enabling their respective groups to tell their ensemble stories.

### 6.7 Group kinaesthetic drama properties

A group kinaesthetic drama property is a tangible or imaginary object that the drama students use to enhance their group devised work. On a deeper level, it can allow a group to construct dramatic shapes that re-examine the framework they have established; this is achieved through playing, discovery and improvisation (Grodnick et al., 1978; D. Winnicott, 1971). Such a re-examination allows the group to challenge their playbuilding performance ideas, and the drama property can have metaphoric and symbolic qualities that enhance the group’s imaginative divergence and metaphoric thinking and creating. A group kinaesthetic drama property belongs to a process of engagement whereby that drama property acquires significance through the semiotics with which it is endowed, and through the skill with which the group handles the core capacities of the tangible or imagined drama property.
In building the theory about group kinaesthetic drama properties, a range of data showed that the macro conditions of a kinaesthetic property were created through a group’s capacity to develop concrete or abstract transformation through an object relevant to their chosen dramatic situation. This capacity was broadly based, depending on how the group agreed on the exploration of the agreed object (Spolin, 1983, p.213). The micro consequences of an agreed object were the way the group actually went about transforming it, and the manner in which they observed the possibilities of the drama object to change or alter the intensity of dramatic action in their narrative.

For instance, The Wives group knew that they had an interesting playbuilding idea, but after their initial burst of creativity their devising work was slow. There was an underlying tension between group members as the pressure of the HSC external examination loomed. This pressure provided a negative focus that kept their own experiences and stories at a distance from their work. The students were trying to create a drama that they thought the HSC examiners would find palatable and creative. The data indicated that after a drama lesson where this group played games, rather than focused on their task, the tension evaporated. Through their playfulness they decided that they needed a narrative that would allow each student her own voice in the project. They achieved this by creating a narrative where Henry’s wives were all searching for a Y chromosome so that England could have a male heir. This meant that each individual character was working together for the good of ‘Old England’, whilst at the same time secretly looking after their personal desire to be the wife to bear the future King of England. Each individual student could now create their own personal story for their particular character. The tensions did not completely disappear during the initial process work and the group struggled continually to find the right way to theatrically connect their narrative ideas; at moments they became static, until one day they came up with the idea of using strips of chiffon material hung from the drama studio lighting bars in the shape of a Y to symbolise the male chromosome.

In Ursula’s logbook she identifies the multivariate ways of manipulating a drama property:

- We thought of different ways we could use the material.
  * Babies
  * Dancing partners
  * Horses
  * Scarves
*Dancing apparel, dresses, etc.
*To hide behind when spying

(Ursula, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance logbook, August 2000) (see Appendices 6.1 and 6.2).

Once the group began using the material it opened up their dramatic action, and their work flowed. One piece of material was allocated to each character; each piece of material was a specific colour that could endow that character with their attitudes to the quest. For instance, Katherine of Aragon's was purple to symbolise that she was the first queen amongst all these other queens, while Catherine Howard's was red to symbolise her youthful sexuality. Exploring the dramatic property also enabled scintillating, funny and satirical dialogue to emerge and heighten the dramatic tension. In one scene each queen is dressing herself with the chiffon material; they hear Henry's favorite tune and all begin to dance with the coloured chiffon material that personifies each wife's relationship with Henry:

Catherine Howard and Katherine of Aragon danced towards centre stage debating who is Henry's favorite wife.

Catherine Howard: Oh, it's Henry's favorite song
Katherine of Aragon: Catherine
Catherine Howard: Katherine
Katherine of Aragon: That's Queen Katherine to you
Catherine Howard: Not anymore it isn't Katherine
Katherine of Aragon: I'll always be Queen Katherine, Catherine
Catherine Howard: Then I'll always be Queen Catherine, Katherine
Katherine of Aragon: I was his first, Catherine
Catherine Howard: I was his fifth, Katherine.

(Ursula, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance logbook, August 2000)

As evidenced in the videotape analysis of the above, as the absurdity of this situation increased, the coloured chiffon material swung across the stage in a hilarious rhythm with the bizarre vocal dance of the characters' queenly jealousies.

Reflecting on the process of discovering the material, Ursula stated, "it was very intimidating having a blank stage (in rehearsal) and five people who want to do something,
it can inhibit your imagination. Then we hit on the idea of the material, and the colours” (Ursula, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance logbook, August 2000). Ursula used the word ‘blank’; blank as in nothing, no substance, no interaction, no response, no thought, and therefore no imagining or creating. The group was not able to communicate with one another and Ursula felt intimidated by this fact. Once the material was endowed with queenly symbolism this blankness disappeared; the material became a transformational object for the group to problem solve some of their dramatic difficulties.

The use of improvisation, and its dimensions from playing to problem-solving, provided the group with the ability to explore their problems through taking risks with how the material might be used (for example as horses), to experimenting with endowing the material with human characteristics (for example as babies), hence creating opportunities for a “richer release of imaginative energy” (Linklater, 1976, p.208). Thus, The Wives embodied their drama learning through the exploration of a group kinaesthetic drama property, as discussed in Chapter Five.

The Triangle group incorporated white parachute material as a group kinaesthetic drama property; this created timelessness in their drama. The students called this material the ‘white nothing’. The white nothing was a metaphor for their themes, highlighting the mystery and the complexity of all the diverse characters meeting in the Bermuda Triangle. They felt that this drama property could be used actively by the group to incorporate myth and legend, be mystical and mysterious, bring fear, leave room for character development in extreme circumstances, and explore human emotion (Claudia, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance logbook, August 2000).

In the group discussion on imagination and creativity Claudia said that once they started using their parachute material “it triggered off a little spark”, as by using their parachute material the group gave themselves a freedom in physical and verbal action. She reflected in her logbook evaluation that the material enabled “our imaginations to run free to all the possibilities of the triangle” (Senior secondary students, audiotape analysis, classroom discussions, September 2000).
The group discussed how they wished to use the material for different purposes, and that the parachute material was very effective when they “made it flow like waves” to create a feeling of movement in space, and to enhance their wordless scenes which were “to symbolise the isolation of the setting” (The Triangle, senior secondary students’ logbooks and evaluations, August, 2000). The white parachute material was hung over the drama studio set, covering boxes and tables, and extending up to the back lighting bars.

Yvette recorded the opening segment of their group devised piece; this was enacted with the white parachute material, either actively part of the opening, or as a backdrop used to create the vortex of the Bermuda Triangle:

Beginning pose, frozen images in time, Juliana comes in, soundscape begins. Julianna starts to shine a torch on our faces. Start to slowly move to front. (This is done by the end of the third Ah, Ah, Ah,) Three random runs Run to audience, stand in line Torches on, one by one “Oh my god” Swoosh movement (Back diagonally to our left, turn to right, back along the back, turn to right, forward DIAGONALLY, to the centre front, turn to audience).

(Yvette, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance logbook, August 2000).

The opening scene was a discernible act of transformation for the group and for the audience, and the white parachute material created a transitional change from one place to another, playing an integral part in setting the atmosphere and creating the mood of suspense and dread.

Group kinaesthetic drama properties allowed The Wives and The Triangle to play and improvise in their process and performance work; play and improvisation are fundamental building blocks of playbuilding (see Chapter Four, Figure 4.5 and Chapter Five, Figure 5.2). The group kinaesthetic drama properties had qualities of illusion as well as those of shared construction capacities. The objects released a playful kinaesthetic energy that maximised creativity, as both groups theatrically understood the power of their drama property as an embodied tool in group imaginative divergence and metaphoric thinking.
The group kinaesthetic drama properties were hence embodied symbols of dramatic and aesthetic meaning (O'Toole, 1992, pp.220-221).

6.8 Kinaesthetic connections in playbuilding

The individual kinaesthetic factors synthesised in this chapter have been analysed to provide clarity on their characteristics, but during every stage of building the grounded theory it was apparent that they all ultimately converged to connect with one another. Sometimes in a participating group’s analysis one factor had more prominence than another, but there was always an implicit relationship with all the other factors in the group’s playbuilding process and final performances. My interpretation of the emerging grounded theory is that the individual student’s bodily-kinaesthetic, and the way the individual student works with all other participants, creates a group kinaesthetic connection. Figure 6.5 demonstrates how these kinaesthetic connections and characteristics interact synergistically to enable a more ambitious and dynamic method of imagining and creating to occur.

![Diagram of kinaesthetic connections]

Figure 6.5: Group kinaesthetic factors required to create a playbuilding performance

Figure 6.5 serves to illustrate the specific and overlapping factors required to solve particular kinaesthetic problems during the process of playbuilding. Some of these drama problems were familiar, such as how exploration of improvisation can release ideas that can be incorporated into the playbuilding, and other problems were unfamiliar, such as what process to undertake when the playbuilding work was static. Through both groups solving
their difficulties, and sometimes finding more problems to tackle, they demonstrated that embodied drama learning was taking place. The diagram is therefore a continuous web of imagining and creating, and highlights the fact that all kinaesthetic factors are interconnected in the playbuilding process.

The HSC Group Devised Performance was an opportunity for the senior secondary students to become involved in a meaningful project in which their understanding and growth came to the fore (Gardner, 1999b, p.33). The project had a web of kinaesthetic characteristics and an awareness of how the senior secondary students wanted to convey their ideas. They were undertaken through an intelligence medium in which the groups were strong, that is, kinaesthetic intelligence. The group members became risk-takers, as they believed that the wisdom of their bodies could express ideas in multiple levels of dramatic expression.

Imagining and creating are personal attributes; not everyone shares the same imagination, or the same ability to create, yet through the spectrum of group kinaesthetics a particularly fertile playbuilding ground can occur. This coexists with the kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies that nurture and enhance this medium. Creating in drama is not hidden away; it is private in so far as the students may wish to reveal their personal ideas and imaginative capacities, and it is public in so far as they may wish to share these ideas and imaginings with one another. Playbuilding groups are capable of creating varying experiences that fire students’ imaginations and that touch their sensibilities. Playbuilding is a shared teacher and student experience, and there is the ability to create physically from nothing but a group’s imagination. Everyone in the group collaborates to problem-solve through some part of their physical selves, and in this sense the students undergo a posteriori experience. These a posteriori experiences are a synthesis of internal and external mind and body consciousness that developed through a kinaesthetic medium, and flourishing in a safe drama learning environment.
Chapter 7
Pedagogic factors in playbuilding

Figure 7.1 (a): *Experimental Playbuilding - Dominant Masks*

Figure 7.1 (b): *Group Devised Performance - The Wives*
7.1 Introduction

In this thesis the chapters are part of the metaphoric journey of playbuilding, and are designed to give the reader a sense of how drama teachers and drama students operate within a scaffolding teaching and learning environment, as well as how different pedagogic factors affect a playbuilding project; these factors are now addressed in this chapter. Figure 7.2 highlights where we have travelled so far on this journey.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 7.2: Flow of analyses in this thesis*

In this chapter the following key questions are analysed:

- What are the links between imagining and creating in playbuilding?
- What impact do kinaesthetic teaching and learning practices have on imagining and creating in playbuilding groups?
- What teaching practice would optimise imagining and creating in secondary school playbuilding groups?
Through the analysis in this chapter I examine the pedagogic factors of body-mind-embodied learning enhanced and engaged through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Daniels, 1996, 2001) and kinaesthetic intelligence (Gardner, 1993b, 1999). I also analyse pedagogic factors which generate and extend the possibilities of imagining and creating, and hence dramatic problem-solving in playbuilding. These include formal and informal secondary school assessment (Board of Studies, 1999a, 2003a; Hyland, 2000; The Assessment Reform Group, 2001, 2002; Wiggins, 1998; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998), the actor/audience relationships (Board of Studies, 1999b, 2003a; Schlossberg, 1998), and the drama-theatre connection (Benedetti, 1998; Boal, 1992; Burton, 1991; Davies, 2001; Haseman & O’Toole, 1986; Jones, 1986; Milling & Ley, 2001; Newlove 1993; O’Toole, 1992; Willett, 1964).

At different times in the participating students’ playbuilding projects, in response to the different needs of the students and/or the New South Wales Syllabus requirements (Board of Studies, 1999b, 2003a), all of the above pedagogic factors influenced the learning that took place. I further argue that these pedagogic factors add a depth and breadth to the complex nature of playbuilding experiences, and enable embodiment to occur. At the beginning of this chapter, the junior and senior participating students’ visual quotes, Figures 7.1(a) & (b) (that is Dominant Masks and The Wives), provide images that will be analysed to discover how these pedagogic factors influenced their playbuilding projects.

7.2 Body-mind-embodied learning

Body-mind-embodied learning occurs when students engage in kinaesthetic and cognitive playbuilding activities that enable dramatic embodiment to occur on the classroom floor. Body-mind-embodied learning emerged in my theory building during the axial coding stage. It consistently became a factor that influenced my thinking on how the participating students created their playbuilding projects, and it connected with Vygotsky’s ZPD (Daniels, 1996, 2001) and with kinaesthetic intelligence (Gardner 1993a chap. 8, 1993b, 1999). Body-mind-embodied learning has the property of drama teachers scaffolding students’ learning within an experiential learning framework; they do this by providing effective kinaesthetic and cognitive teaching strategies which in turn enable the
playbuilding groups to solve problems collaboratively, and to engage in activities that affirm and validate the embodied learning that is taking place (Hughes & Johnson, 1998).

Body-mind-embodied learning also enabled playbuilders to segregate and sequence their knowing and to engage in active experimentation so that new learning spaces opened up, such as the ones analysed in Chapters Five and Six. A playbuilding experience does not endure in a concrete sense like words on a page, because each time the students’ experience segregating and sequencing the building of their plays it is ephemeral and unique. In this experience, each student’s body-mind-embodied experience is encapsulated from the group’s transient experience. For instance, in analyses of the research data, a dimension of body-mind-embodied learning indicated that during initial classroom explorations a drama teacher would scaffold spontaneous improvisation activities to help the playbuilders solve some of their primary creating problems in areas such as dramatic structure, narrative, atmosphere and conflict. In some cases the teacher would help the group to find the dramatic problems which students cannot always recognise due to lack of skills, knowledge or understanding. For example, lack of group focus, or inability to observe the possibilities in a spontaneous improvisation, are problems that students encounter but do not always recognise as a problem. The data demonstrated the teacher encourages authorship and ownership of the drama journeys that take place in the playbuilding process. This is achieved through continual discussion and debate. The teacher can also find ways to notice the silences and value the discussion of the students by listening to all their voices (Hatton, 2003, p.153). Listening enables the teacher to reflect upon the students’ lived experiences in the learning process.

This dimension of body-mind-embodied learning also extended after the initial teaching phase, indicating that scaffolding activities allowed teachers to assist with the continually emerging problems of the playbuilding project. In Philip Taylor’s (1998) words, this continuing process “presses the participants to generate a relationship to the work” (p.81). An analysis of the four participating teachers’ responses indicated that generating an ongoing relationship for their students to their projects allowed different levels of body-mind-embodiment to occur. For instance, Lucy, a participating teacher, argued that in some playbuilding groups there can be some students who are resistant to physical learning; the ideas are “in their heads, and they want to script as if they were individual playwrights”
(Lucy, teacher interview 18/04/2001). Lucy argues that the teacher may help these students to embody their ideas through discussion, or through drawing dramatic images in their logbooks and/or journals (see Chapter Six), whilst encouraging the others in the group to select and explore the physical characteristics of their work. In playbuilding terms this means that the teacher creates a variety of kinaesthetic ways to assist the students in their process and final performance work.

Body-mind-embodied learning has grounded theory properties of Vygotsky’s ZPD. ZPD is an important factor in drama teaching and learning as it is concerned with the cognitive, affective and physical domains and with the teaching and learning practices of modelling, feedback and questioning. Implicit in ZPD are social and psychological factors that encourage teachers to assist and expand learning, or enable students to learn through their “more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Daniels, 1996, p.4). I am now using Vygotsky’s term “more capable peers” (p.4) as opposed to Dunn’s “super-dramatists” (Dunn, 1996, p.21) (see Chapter Two, section 2.31 and Chapter Four, sections 4.4 and 4.8). The data indicated that some participating students, who were reflective and analytical, like Ruth in *The Three Eves* (see Chapter Four), could impact on body-mind-embodied learning in a substantial cognitive way, thereby allowing her group new spaces to compare and contrast dramatic ideas through research, discussion and debate. Moreover, students learning through more capable peers, combined with super-dramatists, provided multiple problem-solving intelligences for their groups, as evidence by Claudia in Chapter Six when she used her multiple intelligences to demonstrate to her group why a soundscape would provide a powerful dramatic opening so that the audience were in no doubt that they had entered an unfamiliar world. This multiple intelligence framework existed consistently in the playbuilding classroom through teacher and student modelling, feedback and questioning. Howard Gardner says that, while “some individuals may develop greater intelligence in one or another competencies ... we all both need and employ a blend of intelligences” (Wright, 1998, p.258) in learning.

Grounded theory subcategories of body-mind-embodied learning indicated that the students blended their intelligences, as the problems encountered by the participating junior and senior secondary students were varied and did not solely belong to creating dramatic meaning for their given project. These problems included:
• personal relationships in the group which were affected by:
  - relationships with boyfriends
  - relationships with girlfriends
  - invitations to parties and social events
  - parental involvement and concerns
• negotiating the use of classroom space out of normal class time
• organising rehearsal times outside of class time
• extracurricular activities such as sport and debating that clashed with drama rehearsals.

There was little concrete evidence in the students’ journals, logbooks or audiotaped conversations to suggest what intelligences the students employed to solve these problems. My empirical observations verified that other intelligences, beside kinaesthetic, were in operation, for example interpersonal intelligence, which the *Sameness versus Differences* group from the junior *Experimental Playbuilding* were particularly strong (Chapter Five). Furthermore, the participating playbuilding groups did resemble a microcosm of society, as analysed in Chapter Four, and therefore societal problems emerged in both junior and senior playbuilding work. These I suggest, were solved, in the main, through the groups’ linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and kinaesthetic intelligences.

Notwithstanding these multiple intelligence approaches, the data demonstrated that body-mind-embodied learning was reliant on kinaesthetic teaching, which provided the participating students with a route to solving playbuilding problems using an intelligence that was relatively strong for each participating playbuilding group (Gardner, 1993b, p.33). In playbuilding, “an intelligence can serve both as the *content* for instruction and the *means* or medium for communicating that content” (p.32). In other words, kinaesthetic teaching strategies provide the means by which to teach, and are also the way the means by which students perceive and learn. For example, in the participating junior secondary students’ project on *Experimental Playbuilding*, the content of the teaching was based on improvisation strategies, both spontaneous and rehearsed, and was a means by which the junior secondary students explored their project. In the initial content of the teaching strategies, students improvised with neutral masks in whole class activities, and then used masks as a means to enhance or elaborate their group work. This is demonstrated in Figure
7.1(a) *Dominant Masks*, where the two masked figures are attempting to pull an unmasked figure into their world to demonstrate to the other characters on stage, and to the audience, the power of their masked environment. The seniors’ visual quote (Figure 7.1(b)), suggests a dynamic kinespheric movement as they ride their metaphoric horses, and this scene also evolved from improvisation strategies.

My evolving playbuilding theory began with an examination of Howard Gardner’s (1993a &b & 1999) concept of bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence as a cognitive approach to learning. I extended this cognitive concept, as during theoretical saturation of the data a different way emerged to perceive Howard Gardner’s work so that ‘physical and affective intelligences’ were equally valued in the data analysis. Howard Gardner’s approach to education is still considered by some drama educators as one “of the power of mind to give order to the world” (Roper & Davis, 2000, p.217), rather than one that allows the drama student to “deal with the world as it is”; it presupposes that drama teaching should not be “given to the child through the media, dominant ideology” (p.217). Bill Roper and David Davis argue that Gardner’s theories are populist, and not enough thought has been given to the drama teaching ramifications of cognitive accounts of drama education (p.225). As evidenced in the data, I suggest that it is how drama teachers move beyond these boundaries of their drama teaching practice to facilitate physical and affective intelligences, as well as cognitive intelligence that allows for an exciting, embodied elaboration of Gardner’s Kantian theories.

My evolving theory also demonstrated that teaching and learning through kinaesthetic intelligence and ZPD activates a body-mind-embodied learning environment. This means that the teacher becomes aware of the developmental stages in the individual students’ and the group’s kinaesthetic awareness, kinaesthetic awareness being the result of the senior and junior students’ accumulated experiences from varied knowledge systems work together (Blom & Chaplin, 1988). In the junior *Experimental Playbuilding* class the students’ bodies were adept at improvising but their kinaesthetic awareness was in general not as mature as that of the senior secondary students. They did not always make the knowledge connections between the improvisation and its dramatic possibilities in the playbuilding project. Furthermore, the senior drama students individually and as a group could perform many actions that they would never attempt if they had “constantly stopped
to consider one set of circumstances after another” (p.19), as evidenced by *The Triangle* group’s dynamic movement and soundscape that was explored through spontaneous improvisation, and then transferred to the opening scene of their *Group Devised Performance*. Hence, both the junior and senior groups’ kinaesthetic patterns give credence to the construct of body-mind-embodied learning. Figure 7.3 provides a visual representation of this type of embodiment in the learning experience.

![Figure 7.3: Body-mind-embodied learning in playbuilding](image)

Figure 7.3 represents body-mind-embodied learning in playbuilding; it reveals the influences of scaffold learning, kinaesthetic intelligence and problem solving, and indicates that both individual and group kinaesthetic patterns may emerge when the teacher provides opportunities for students to create meaningful relationships with their learning in their playbuilding projects (see Appendix 5.1). The teacher invites and values the different voices, different life experiences, and respects and supports the students as they create their playbuilding narratives (Hatton, 2003, p.153; Simons, 2003). Figure 7.3 indicates the potential for teachers and their students to engage critically with playbuilding through the learning process of embodiment. Furthermore, inherent in body-mind-embodied learning are opportunities for a drama teacher to generate teaching possibilities that are interactive, and which emphasise such kinaesthetic and cognitive practices as segregating and sequencing learning through modelling, feedback, questioning and peer learning, rather than basic skills. This brings about a teaching experience where drama students are viewed
as active thinkers and doers with valid emerging ideas about the world as demonstrated in Figures 7.1(a) and (b).

7.3 Assessment for learning and assessment of learning in secondary school playbuilding

Assessment for learning and assessment of learning were implicit in both the junior and senior playbuilding projects, and were therefore part of the grounded theory analysis (Board of Studies, 1999a, 2003a, Hyland 2000; The Assessment Reform Group, 2001, 2002; Wiggins, 1998, Wiggins & McTighe, 1998).

Assessment of learning in secondary drama education comes at the end of the playbuilding process when the teacher judges the project using the given criteria, and adheres to the mandatory assessment requirements of the New South Wales Drama Syllabi. Implicit in assessment of learning is that the project is complete, and that there can be no further opportunity to help the group strengthen its weaknesses or enhance its strengths. In this end assessment the criteria are applied to each individual student, rather than to the group.

Assessment for learning is continuous throughout the playbuilding project, and is concerned with assessing the ways in which the group and the individual students within it learn. It is more often than not teacher assisted, and has an emphasis on the playbuilding group’s potential for change to expand its learning.

During the grounded theory stages of analysing playbuilding assessment, both assessment for learning and assessment of learning entailed varied factors that impacted on the senior and junior secondary students. The dimension and properties of the labelled phenomenon ‘assessment’ indicated these varied factors, as student assessment was constrained by the New South Wales Senior and Years 7-10 Drama Syllabi, and by St. Sistine’s School and its Drama Department’s assessment policies and procedures. It was also constrained by the fact that the senior secondary students were devising their Group Devised Performances and gaining theory knowledge from Performing an Essay for an external examination as part of their Drama HSC mandated requirements.
The labelled phenomenon of assessment emerged in the form of questions, and choosing the questions to ask about playbuilding assessment arose from the emerging dimensions and properties in the data, such as ‘release of the imagination’, and ‘feedback strategies’. The two major assessment questions were:

- How can assessment in playbuilding release the imagination of students, and hence their creating?
- How can teacher and peer feedback be presented to the group to enhance their imagining and creating?

These two questions intersect through the dimension of assessment for and of learning.

7.3.1 How can assessment in playbuilding release the imaginations of students, and hence their creating?

Analysing the assessment components in the junior and senior playbuilding projects demonstrated that this labelled phenomenon could indeed release a playbuilding group’s imagination, and hence its creating. This was because the learning of the student participants had been organised around meaningful projects that were carried out over a significant period of time (Gardner, 1993b, pp.141-143). The three playbuilding projects analysed, Experimental Playbuilding, Group Devised Performance, and Performing an Essay, were deemed by St. Sistine School’s Curriculum Coordinator and the Drama Department to be significant to the students’ drama education learning. The data correlated with this, adding a property that the students also believed that the playbuilding projects were meaningful to them.

The dimensions of the labelled phenomenon of assessment were that assessment of learning fostered the junior students to embody kinaesthetic knowledge in future playbuilding projects. It enabled the senior secondary students to refine their Group Devised Performances so that they could perform to their utmost satisfaction in front of external examiners, as well as to gain embodied kinaesthetic knowledge about the HSC drama theory topics as analysed in Chapter Eight, Performing an Essay. Assessment for learning fostered understanding in both the junior and senior students that led to deeper playbuilding.
knowledge; it also provided motivation to achieve at the highest possible standard of learning during classroom activities and in solving the group’s dramatic problems (The Assessment Reform Group, 2001, 2002).

For instance, Ursula recorded in her Group Devised Performance logbook that her group gained further playbuilding insights under the pressure of an assessment for learning task, and because of this task they gained a greater knowledge of the issues surrounding their project. She further wrote that after this assessment for learning task, everyone in her group understood the criteria for the project. She reflected that one of the drama techniques her group would continue to employ would be accepting and exploring improvisation offers, as “this of course is one of the most important strategies in order to create ideas … and produce great scenes from them” (Ursula, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance logbook, August 2000).

Properties emerging from the dimension (assessment for and of learning) indicated that the assessment component in both the junior and senior playbuilding projects could release the groups’ imaginations and creativity when the learning structures were flexible. Teacher and student flexibility had subcategories of:

- metaxical teaching structures
- spaces for the unknown to be explored
- spaces for reflection and questions
- spaces to create within the time available.

These structures and spaces provided the participating groups with the ability to explore self and group knowledge. Alice, a participating teacher, observed that during playbuilding projects the “creative process can be slow to start, but towards the middle and end of the project student creativity comes into play”, and considered that a teacher must take these variables into account while forming assessment for learning activities. She asserted that assessment for learning activities that had a clear statement of purpose, as well as being appropriate to the learning outcomes being assessed, provided ways to deepen playbuilding knowledge (Alice, teacher interview 18/04/01).
Theoretical saturation confirmed that assessment for learning activities allowed spaces for the unknown to be explored. Figure 5.3 Chapter Five, demonstrated this assessment for learning finding, as the junior secondary students worked through dramatic experimentation, with space for questions and reflection to occur in their assessment for learning spontaneous improvisation activities. Both the junior and senior groups’ journals, logbooks and audiotapes, confirmed that space for questions and reflection and space for experimentation, were important to enhancing the group’s imagination, the group’s relationship to the project, and group knowledge.

An analytical memo from the audiotape analysis of the senior secondary students’ classroom discussion in September 2000 further demonstrates that spaces to create within the time available were an important property of assessment for and of learning.

Snapshot: Connection between pressure and assessment for and of learning
Claudia: “I think we worked best when we had pressure on us. Pressure of the assessment”.

Analytical Memo: I am very interested in this concept of ‘pressure’ and if, or how, it can produce highly imaginative work. The pressure of the HSC assessment tasks put timelines on all groups. Perhaps these timelines, instead of hindering the creating, opened up ‘spaces’ to allow dynamic creating to occur. The pressure Claudia was discussing was the senior HSC assessment tasks for their Group Devised Performance - The Triangle. The words ‘assessment’ and ‘pressure’ have negative connotations to me as a drama teacher as there is often a personal tension associated with the teaching of HSC assessment task; yet Claudia uses these words in a positive manner to say that they produced the ‘best’. Does she mean the best result, and the best way to get the group creating and producing for assessment? Perhaps her whole statement demonstrates Howard Gardner’s idea that, when the assessment structures are “intelligence-fair” (Gardner, 1993b, p.xv), it is a very positive experience.

Interestingly, during the rest of the discussion, not one of the other senior secondary students mentioned the word assessment. Why not? Assessment for and of learning was a core component of all their drama HSC playbuilding projects. Over the HSC year this
senior cohort had indicated that they thoroughly enjoyed Drama HSC assessment activities. From my professional experience this was because all their assessment activities were ‘intelligence-fair’, based around physical learning. Perhaps this is also why no other senior student thought ‘assessment’ per se was important enough to comment upon in this final class discussion on imagination and creativity in playbuilding.

Conjecture: assessment for learning and assessment of learning, activities put individual pressure on these senior secondary students and therefore the groups, but the assessments allowed creative exploration and gave groups the opportunity to realise their potential in a manner that suited their learning styles, often physically active, and through a group kinaesthetic awareness. Therefore, group pressure in assessment for and of learning was positive in enhancing playbuilding as it opened up spaces to be imaginative (Fairclough, 1995) (March 2002) (see Appendix 6.8).

Claudia’s statement and my conjectures contrast with those of Sam, a participating teacher, who argued that at times the:

Threat of assessment activities in the senior years can lead to despondency, because it is not only the threat of assessment from the drama course, but in the senior years, the threat of assessment arrives from every other course. This accumulates within the students’ psyche, and their overall anxiety can effect the playbuilding groups imagining and creating (Sam, teacher interview 10/05/2001).

In the case of The Three Eves, the students certainly had times when they were anxious about assessment activities for their Group Devised Performance, but this is only my classroom observation, and none of the three students from this group discussed their anxiety in any of the collected data.

The final stages of analysis of the participating teachers’ and students’ data indicated that if assessment components in junior and senior playbuilding projects are designed to improve and educate student performances, the assessment will acknowledge that playbuilding is both a personal and group experience; it is tied into the student’s understanding of the feelings and intentions of others in the group. Howard Gardner (1993b) speaks about creative assessment in schools, arguing that “Artistic learning does not merely entail the mastery of a set of skills or concepts. The arts are also deeply personal areas, where
students encounter their own feelings as well as those of other individuals” (p.143). The Education Department at University College, Cork, Ireland, has examined Gardner’s assessment ideas, and their research investigates assessment and teaching for understanding (Hyland, 2000, p.11). In the research report, Pat Naughton (2000) argues that “assessment should be integrated into the learning experience as far as possible” (p.43) to improve the quality of student learning. This learning is not only skills based, but also deeply personal. In the building of the grounded theory, ‘assessment’ did provide structures that allowed the playbuilding groups to enhance their imaginative and creative capacities (Wiggins, 1998), and it was also important to analyse how effective feedback could enhance a group’s learning.

7.3.2 How can teacher and peer feedback be presented to the group to enhance their imagining and creating?

Teacher and peer feedback on assessment varied along the dimensions of ‘explanation’, ‘interpretation’, ‘application’, ‘insightfulness’, ‘empathy’ and ‘group knowledge’ (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Feedback was given in a variety of ways to the senior and junior participating playbuilding groups; that is by the teacher or teachers and through peer discussion and debate. Teacher or peer feedback, given in an empathic and insightful manner, enabled the groups to expand their knowledge and problem-solve dramatic dilemmas. This is exemplified by Marissa who, after an assessment for learning task during her Group Devised Performance project, wrote and drew decisively in her logbook about the teacher feedback given, which enabled her group, The Triangle, to improve and refine their playbuilding and helped them to produce outstanding work for their final performance in front of family and friends (Marissa, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance logbook, August 2000). Furthermore, elaborating on the snapshot from the previous intersecting assessment question, Claudia continued to say that, although her group worked best when there was pressure on them, this pressure enabled the group to give each other peer feedback. This peer feedback opened up their imaginations, as “everything the group does is based around imagination” (Claudia, senior secondary student, classroom discussion, September 2000).
The paths of connectivity in the analysis showed that group interpretation of teacher or peer feedback was important in helping the group to achieve its goals. For example, *The Wives* and *The Triangle* groups, analysed in Chapter Six, were encouraged to keep exploring their group kinaesthetic drama properties in an insightful manner to augment their explorations. Of course, for some groups, assessment feedback is consistently reiterated and reinterpreted so that the group can effectively and meaningfully apply the feedback when it makes sense to them, as evidenced by *The Three Eves* and their apples in Chapter Four. Therefore the assessment feedback had properties of:

- teacher and peer openness
- teacher sensitivity to group feelings
- teacher receptiveness to the group’s learning.

In fact, these feedback properties from the data were relevant in both assessment strategies because when the assessing took place with empathy, openness and sensitivity it could provide the junior and senior secondary students with more opportunities to strengthen their imaginative and creative work. For example, the participating secondary students data analysis indicated that assessment of learning, which culminated in performing in front of a school, peer, and/or public audience, was the pinnacle of their dramatic assessment experience. This experience provided embodied feedback for the groups through the audience’s reaction, the group’s or individual’s instinctive awareness of how they performed, and their teacher’s response and/or those of other drama teachers. These different types of feedback filled a drama education space from where the junior and senior secondary students could step comfortably and safely outside of their classroom learning (Daniels, 1996). This type of assessment of learning experience enabled the junior groups to identify whether or not certain conventions or techniques were appropriate for their chosen topic, and to debate ideas they would use to refine their *Experimental Playbuilding* if they had had the opportunity to do it again. For the senior playbuilders it was a catalyst for reshaping, re-editing and refining their written and *Group Devised Performance* work before their external HSC drama examination. With regard to the *Group Devised Performance*, the participating teachers argued that for their senior secondary students, the reality of the HSC final assessment with a public audience, was more often than not the
factor that continued to encourage the group to create and achieve beyond their potential for the external examination (Board of Studies, 1999b).

Therefore, the two questions on assessment provided evidence for my premise of the importance of kinaesthetic teaching and learning. Educative assessment for playbuilders created kinaesthetic learning for the group, and at the intersection of the two questions it was further evidenced that assessment for and of learning always had an audience component, even if it were only the teacher or peer group. This audience component was further investigated, and perhaps it would be more precise to describe this component by saying that within the complexity of playbuilding there is always some type of audience.

### 7.4 The actor/audience relationship in playbuilding

Playbuilding, in New South Wales drama education, has an actor/audience relationship embedded in its processes. Playbuilders have to ask continually what they want to communicate to the audience, and how they would like to communicate it. In New South Wales secondary drama education, the “processes and performances of drama are valued equally” (Board of Studies, 2003a, p.8) and “participants in drama performance create meaning through their relationship with the audience and experience of this engagement is essential in dramatic presentations” (p.8). Therefore, the actor/audience relationship is a factor that has an influence on the teaching and learning in playbuilding; the connectivity of the data indicated that this was both a direct, and indirect influence, and changed according to certain curriculum conditions.

In playbuilding the audience is to some degree interactive, and it can play diverse roles, such as a spectator, participant, or even ‘spec-actor’ (Boal, 1992), depending on the nature of the project. These are causal conditions which represent the different functions of an audience in the playbuilding classroom. The causal conditions mitigated the impact of the various audiences on the playbuilders, so that the junior and senior secondary students viewed diverse audience functions as an integral, necessary, and purposeful component of their learning. These causal conditions were:
• a playbuilding group’s capacity to watch and critique their own work in a role-play audience situation or as conventional audience members
• the whole class’s capacity to watch and critique each other’s work in role-play audience situations or as conventional audience members
• a playbuilding group’s experiences of a school and/or peer audience
• a playbuilding group’s experiences of public audiences.

These types of audience engagement all served different purposes in the junior or senior groups’ learning, and had a basis in metaxis as previously analysed in the Literature Review.

For instance, causal audience conditions for the senior Group Devised Performances, analysed in Chapters Four and Six, were manifold, as sometimes during their process work the senior HSC playbuilding groups were required to be their own critics, to be their own audience, as well as to be performers. They achieved this in part through the act of group visual emotional literacy, whereby they had to imagine the reaction of an audience whilst rehearsing, and this method served as a metaxical visual process for continued active construction. At times during the process work I would also ask a group to act as outside critics to another group, and this served as an interactive problem-solving device between different groups. Both these types of audience interaction proved useful learning tools for the senior secondary students, as it was important for the playbuilders to be able to critically analyse their own work and that of others, whilst appreciating the varied innovative dramatic approaches that their peers were exploring. This meant that as performers, and as an audience, they were able to give and receive positive criticism for the refinement of their work (Board of Studies, 2003a).

The senior secondary students eventually performed in front of a public audience for both their Group Devised Performances, and Performing an Essay playbuilding projects. This public performance enhanced their learning, giving them further opportunities to explore the relationship between the way they communicated their dramatic messages and the way the dramatic messages were received by people outside their classroom environment.
The junior participants’ context was slightly different to that of the seniors in that they performed to their peers in the drama classroom, but they underwent a similar method of critiquing their own work using methods such as role-play situations as audience members, or having the whole class watch and critique each other’s endeavours. Both these activities were interactive and provided further scope for scaffolded learning for the junior secondary students. The manner in which both junior and senior groups perceived the active and interactive influence of the actor/audience relationship in their playbuilding contributed to their embodied learning. However, the junior and senior participating students did not perceive the first two causal conditions as the function of an audience. When asked, only 10 per cent of the them acknowledged an audience’s function as peer critiquing of a project in the classroom. An audience, in the main, meant to them people who sat in the tiered seating in the St. Sistine School’s drama studio to watch and applaud their dramatic work.

Furthermore, the junior and senior secondary students had different perspectives of the role of an audience, as evidenced in Figure 7.4. The junior and senior participating students were asked how they, as playbuilders, knew when they had performed their piece so that it engaged their given audience.

![Graph showing audience engagement](image)

**Figure 7.4:** How do you (junior and senior drama students) know you have engaged the audience during a playbuilding performance?

Figure 7.4 illustrates the playbuilders’ responses to the question about knowing how they engaged with an audience during their performance. The variance in the graph indicates that the learning experiences of the two cohorts were different (see Appendices 4.2 and
4.3). The junior secondary students perceived an audience in a more personal way, indicating that, in the main, they individually knew when their performance engaged the audience. Only a quarter of these junior secondary students conceptualised that a group can have its own instinctive way of knowing when a performance was correct. In the seniors’ case there was a higher percentage of students who said that the group knew when a performance had engaged their given audience, but they also indicated that they individually and instinctively knew when a final performance felt right.

Even though there were variances in the junior and senior responses, further analysis of the audiotapes, videotapes, senior logbooks and junior journals demonstrated corresponding and overlapping properties of individual students knowing when the performance was engaging their given audience, and the playbuilding group knowing when the performance was engaging to their given audience. Therefore, the properties of the actor/audience relationship seemed interchangeable in the playbuilding project, with neither dominating the other in a student’s embodied learning.

The research also reveals that the ability of an individual’s and a group’s ability to listen to, see and sense each other’s actions and interactions during the performance belonged in the realms of the students’ imaginative and creative capacities. The groups were able to work in a metactical situation in front of an audience, thereby understanding what they were trying to communicate, how they were trying to do it, and whether they were achieving their dramatic goal. Thus directly through their performance and indirectly through their sensory awareness, the influence of their playbuilding artistry in an ephemeral situation demonstrated their imaginative capacities to themselves and to their audience.

To secondary school playbuilders the notion of an audience, is one in which they “have a shared and understandable framework” (Schlossberg, 1998, p.11). More often than not, the students valued the audience “as part of the act of composition” (p.5). I suggest that the actor/audience relationship in New South Wales secondary school playbuilding is an integral part of embodied learning.
7.5 The drama and theatre connection through embodied learning

In the literature review I considered drama practitioners’ opinions regarding the overlapping nature of drama education and theatre, arguing that “the drama process is inherent in the activity of theatre” (Burton, 1991, p.6). I also reviewed various professional theatre practitioners who have influenced this thesis and my drama education praxis. This overlapping nature of drama education and the activity of theatre have impacted on my drama teaching strategies, as I have employed various theatre conventions and techniques from different theatre practitioners in facilitating the participating students in devising and embodying their playbuilding projects.

Bertolt Brecht (Jones, 1986; Willett, 1964), Augusto Boal (1992; Milling & Ley, 2001), and Konstantin Stanislavksi (Benedetti, 1998; Milling & Ley, 2001) were the main theatrical influences on the junior and senior secondary students’ playbuilding projects, and therefore the writings of these three directors were examined in detail in the analysis of the participating students’ data. These three directors constructed a continuous kinaesthetic embodiment into their own theatre practices which have been transformed into the playbuilding conventions and techniques of the participating students. Some of the directors’ theatrical elements were embedded in the participating students’ learning and were, in a few instances, fundamental to the process of the playbuilding projects which are analysed in this section of the thesis.

The kinaesthetic embodiment process that these directors undertook with their respective ensembles was a macro condition of the analysed data, and interacted with the micro conditions of how the participating students learnt in a kinaesthetic manner in their playbuilding projects. Also, in a direct way, these directors’ theatrical ideas about the collaborative ensemble process, which highlighted how their processes stimulated meaning for their given audience, became part of the participating students’ situational context in the classroom.
The participating junior secondary students employed simple Brechtian dialectical techniques in their Experimental Playbuilding projects, as analysed in Chapters Four and Five. For instance, dialectics has the capacity to negate the spectators’ concepts of the world, which Brecht (Jones, 1986; Willett, 1964) believed were taken for granted, and to provide a narrative that enabled spectators to examine their social and political place in the world. Thus Brechtian dialectics gave the participating junior students an opportunity to investigate their beliefs in such areas as the dual function of television in their lives, or the power structures in their thirteen year old society, and also provided them with a chance to examine many sides of their problem through the conduit of playbuilding. Furthermore, Bertolt Brecht’s key concept of theatre as art and education, enhanced by techniques such as alienation (Jones, 1986), informed the students’ learning and engaged them in thinking and acting upon change in our society (Kennedy & Lovesy, 1997). In working with the junior secondary students I was informed by Bertolt Brecht as a director who was not primarily intellectual or theoretical, but whose work experimented with the physical, as he looked for every detail, isolating an element “or shading and then expanding it into meaning, into an image” (Jones, 1986, p.87). This detailing is the alienation affect as it establishes and connects a character’s physical action to the spectators to make them question what it is they are seeing, and what this seeing may mean. Therefore, in the Experimental Playbuilding project the same principle applied to the dramatic experiences of the junior students.

The junior secondary students’ visual quote (see Figure 7.1(a) at the beginning of this chapter) demonstrates how the Dominant Masks group applied this physical aspect. Figure 7.1(a) shows how they were trying to detail dramatic action and interaction between their characters, thus enabling them to ask their audience probing non-verbal questions about power and domination in society through the sheer force of numbers. It also demonstrates the acting technique of gestus. For the junior secondary students gestus was an emphasised acting style where, in any one given moment, a character’s opinions, actions, or attitudes were expressed through physical action, as made visually explicit in Figure 7.1(a) in the emotionally charged pulling of outstretched arms. Exploring gestus enabled the junior secondary students to start experiencing the function of being an observer on stage, as well as simultaneously being an actor. This was an extended function of metaxis, as the junior secondary students were having to step outside their previous drama experiences, where
they had generally become totally absorbed in their imaginary dramatic action, into an experience where they were now consciously trying to think and pretend simultaneously.

The micro conditions of the analysis demonstrated that the junior secondary students explored a modified Brechtian technique of blocking as a major factor in their making and creating. Brechtian blocking (blocking is David Richard Jones terminology for Brechtian staging techniques, 1986), by itself, should be able to tell the main story of the play and its contradictions. Brecht wished the spectators who watched his work to understand the main elements as if they were observing them through a glass wall (Jones, 1986, p.90). This meant that Brecht’s actors had to have a strong kinaesthetic connection to the narrative, and he employed rehearsal techniques such as running scenes with no dialogue so that the visual message was clear and powerful. The junior secondary students explored non-verbal narrative to experience creating a clear, powerful narrative through their physical staging, and it also helped them to engage with the power of visualising an actor/audience relationship that was not beholden to the spoken word. The analysis of the junior data during the theoretical saturation stage also demonstrated that the junior secondary students found this process challenging. They discussed in their evaluations that the non-verbal aspects of the project were the most challenging, as they had to work differently and in a new way with the elements of drama, such as clarifying mood, atmosphere, and dramatic meaning, to get their non-verbal message across to their audience.

To exemplify this, the Dominant Masks group tried to find opportunities to think about their audience in a different way through constructing their narrative without any words. This meant that the narrative had to be clear visually. The Dominant Masks playbuilding project was part of an analysis of embodiment in Chapter Five, but in this instance I will analyse Scene 6 in further detail (see Appendix videotape 7.8) to illustrate the drama and theatre connections achieved through embodied learning.
### Dramatic action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene 6</th>
<th>Evidence of embodied group learning:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) crouches away from the line, head down. (b), (c) and (d) turn away from the audience into the curtain. (a), still crouching, looks up to the audience and now displays her Differences - she has become a red masked character. Music fades, lights down.</td>
<td>1. ... a dramatic juxtaposition 2. ... the power of physicality and movement to create dramatic meaning, audience engagement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Analysis of Scene 6

The students attempted to visually construct their last scene to provide clear understanding of their playbuilding project’s dramatic intention and meaning. This was achieved through physically creating dialectical characters and by using gesture to emphasize their character’s actions and opinions.

At the beginning of Scene 6 the three white masked characters symbolically represented opposite states of mind from their initial appearance on stage. The purpose of this was to indicate to the audience that humans should be satisfied to be similar. At this point, the group constructed another beat to Scene 6 to heighten the tension. This heightened tension revealed differences that emerged again among the characters. They achieved this by one character transforming herself into a red masked species, whilst all others remained masked in white. By creating this dramatic conflict the students were embodying their ideas about power in society.

For these junior students they were shading and expanding their dramatic meaning, and experimenting with the alienation effect, to allow the audience to question what they were seeing. The scene demonstrates that the students’ approach to alienation engaged them in thinking about change in our society and embodied them in the physical activity of acting and reacting to their theme.

Figure 7.5: Analysis of the Dominant Masks drama and theatre connections achieved through embodied learning

In developing my theory the above analysis enabled me to examine the connections between theatre, drama and embodiment, and to analyse the influence of these factors on physical learning. The junior secondary students reflected that the challenge of creating a visually clear narrative in a non-verbal environment was exciting and thought provoking for them. The junior secondary students’ recontextualised the work of Brecht through broadening their range of cultural and artistic experiences, as for the first time in their drama curriculum their acting role was to encourage thought and change, not only in themselves but also in their audience.

Elise said “I wouldn’t change much. It was fun. Something I’ve never done before, so I think it was fantastic.” (Elise, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000). Margaret commented “The thing that worked well for our group was the number of people we had since it suited our structure, and it gave us theatrical time to develop our ideas ... and, because it was abstract, it all worked fantastically” (Margaret, junior secondary student, Experimental Playbuilding journal, December 2000).
The evolving theory indicated that the macro Brechtian techniques of dialectics, alienation and gestus became micro conditions for the junior participating students which:

- challenged their conventional verbal and non-verbal practices
- demonstrated that there are a larger number of theatre and drama options available than they had normally assumed or experienced
- provided them with the opportunity to find a new relationship between themselves as the actors and their given audience.

The senior secondary students had studied Augusto Boal (1992; Milling & Ley, 2001) during their Drama HSC course, and this also provided them with opportunities to find a new relationship between themselves as the actors and their given audience. In this regard they used Boal’s technique of ‘spec-actor’ to help them solve their playbuilding problems; in essence, a spec-actor is pedagogical in the sense that the actors and the audience learn together through a simultaneous and dual dramaturgy situation. Although the senior secondary students’ visual quote (see Figure 7.1(b)) does not show them stepping outside their group’s rehearsal action and critiquing their work, then stepping back into the rehearsal action to solve, not necessarily a social oppression but the difficulties that occurred during the group devising, my empirical classroom evidence is testament to their manipulation of this and other Boalian techniques.

For instance, The Wives employed spec-actor techniques to help them to construct theatrically the social, cultural and political aspects of their characters. As the wives of Henry VIII they were searching for the Y chromosome in the fictitious hedge maze of Windsor Castle; each physical transition from maze to maze (that is, chiffon material to chiffon material) was created by a student who stepped outside the rehearsal action to comment and advise the rest of the group how they could construct their character’s social, cultural and political selfish objectives. They also explored dynamisation techniques. For example, all of the wives assisted Georgina to discover the physical specificity of Katherine of Aragon’s pious and arrogant behaviour when trying to find the Y chromosome. The group did this by demonstrating their individual representations of Katherine of Aragon’s physicality, and then went on to create one image that showed their multiple views of Katherine’s physicality. These two acting techniques helped The Wives to enhance their
narrative. The group was not in any sense true Boalian spec-actors, or adhering to the social vision of the dynamisation technique, but they understood the power of these techniques to help the group to solve performance problems.

_The Wives_ also employed simple Stanislavski (Benedetti, 1998; Milling & Ley, 2001) techniques, such as character super objectives and moment by moment objectives and tactics, to identify with their chosen roles. Through a transformation process of physical, affective and cognitive domains the senior secondary students discovered, from their own experiences as well as outside research experiences, the inner life of their characters (Burton, 1991). The following example is based on the videotape analysis which employed grounded theory strategies such as axial coding, as well as an analysis of the elements of drama that enabled the students to negotiate meaning (Board of Studies, 2003a; Haseman & O’Toole 1986; O’Toole, 1992). Figure 7.6 shows how _The Wives_, in the final internal assessment performance, created characters with verisimilitude.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senior students create characters through verisimilitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Wives entered Henry VIII ballroom. Gossip, slander and intrigue are the tonal qualities among the devious women. Flattery and sarcasm reign in the sounds, timbre, pace and pausing of the dialogue and dramatic action. The Wives dance Henry's favourite dance and socialise with the imaginary guests, hence their idiosyncratic personalities are further established; they are ambitious; they try to seize any opportunity; they try to lose one another and go alone on their search for the Y chromosome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Boleyn: Personally ladies, I don't think the Y chromosome is in here. (Knowingly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Howard: Yes...um excuse me while I go and powder my nose. (Ingeniously)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine of Aragon: Has anyone seen my rosary beads? Oh I must have left them in my saddle bag. (Craftily seizing an opportunity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The characters move through the kinesphere with malevolence and malice, relying in part on the spoken word and physical movement to create a tangible atmosphere of vicious competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students had negotiated dramatic meaning through a multimethod process of group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating (May 2002).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.6: _The Wives_ - creation of characters with verisimilitude

In Figure 7.6, _The Wives_ looked to the physical rhythm of their voices and bodies through phrasing, pauses, timbre, and character groupings; this created a complex meeting point of discernible emotions for the students in role, and for their audience. The students were experimenting with Stanislavski’s reliance on the spoken word to create rhythms and deep

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meaning within their scene, whilst simultaneously exploring dialogue through the embodiment of feeling, gestures and emotions.

The senior secondary students who undertook the Group Devised Performances were not required to reference any particular theatre directors, or any particular theatre conventions and techniques; they could, if they so wished, connect their learned ideas. This connection was part of the "conscious familiarity" (Abram, 1996, p.73) analysed in Chapter Four, and part of their group kinaesthetic language. In the following section I explore how the students connected their previous embodied drama and theatre knowledge to make their own particular drama and theatre conventions and techniques.

7.5.1 The Wives – embodied analysis

The evolving grounded theory demonstrated that there were paths of connectivity between group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy, group kinaesthetic drama properties and embodied learning. For instance, The Wives performance opens in half light, and loud snoring is heard as the characters peep out from behind the chiffon material. As they walk softly towards the snoring the audience hears whispers in English accents; the tonal qualities of the English accents create a feeling of secrecy which is contrasted by a loud, impatient, German accent:

All the wives: "is it", "shhh", "can we", "shhh".
Anne of Cleves: "vell is ze coast clear?"
(Ursula, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance logbook, August 2000)

These accents immediately establish a variety of different personalities looking for ‘him’. Snippets of information are given to the audience who glean that the characters are the wives of Henry VIII, and that Catherine Parr is missing. The quest for Henry VIII’s Y chromosome starts. At this juncture in the opening scene the properties of thought and feeling combined with energy and breadth manifest themselves (Linklater, 1976).

The dialogue is enhanced by the vocal nuances, and the dramatic complexities are made explicit through the characters’ body language in the next scene, as female bickering and
bantering begins. The wives are on their own personal quest; they ride purposefully as they wish to find the Y chromosome quickly for England’s sake. They are united because of their social and cultural connections as queens and wives and they hate one another because of this very commonality. They are desperate women; they are vulnerable because no one can produce the male heir so desperately needed by the kingdom.

As seen in Figure 7.1(b), The Wives mount their chiffon material horses. Each horse and character has a particular personality, a particular way of trotting, cantering, riding the horse, and the dramatic tension is evident in the manner in which the characters ride so furiously. All wives appear to be working together for the common good, but each wife has her own personal goal. The dramatic tension is achieved through the comic pacing and timbre of body language and spoken word, as well as the dynamic use of a group kinaesthetic drama property.

Figure 7.7 is part of an analysis of the videotape where the Action and Vocal Vibrations columns give an indication, an impression, of the overall atmosphere created by bodies and sound in motion (Davies, 2001; Linklater, 1976; Newlove, 1993). It should be read swiftly, and in earnest, to capture the essence of the embodied action (see Appendix videotape 7.9).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Vocal Vibrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane Seymour</td>
<td><em>To the horses</em></td>
<td>Punching</td>
<td>Strong pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(horse sounds)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lips resonating and burring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne of Cleves</td>
<td><em>Why?</em></td>
<td>Dabbing</td>
<td>Rising vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Seymour</td>
<td><em>Is going to be so difficult to find</em></td>
<td>Gilding</td>
<td>Chest resonating, rich tones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine of Aragon</td>
<td><em>What's going to be so difficult to find</em></td>
<td>Pressing</td>
<td>Heavy timbre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Seymour</td>
<td><em>Y</em></td>
<td>Flicking</td>
<td>High pitched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne of Cleves</td>
<td><em>Why? What?</em></td>
<td>Flicking</td>
<td>Lively inflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Seymour</td>
<td><em>Henry's Y</em></td>
<td>Wringling</td>
<td>Higher pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine of Aragon</td>
<td><em>Wife? There's clearly more than one of us</em></td>
<td>Pressing</td>
<td>Middle pitch jumping to falsetto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne of Cleves</td>
<td><em>Not wives, Y</em></td>
<td>Slashing</td>
<td>Strong tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Howard</td>
<td><em>Why is there more than one?</em></td>
<td>Punching</td>
<td>Rising vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine of Aragon</td>
<td><em>There's five</em></td>
<td>Pressing</td>
<td>Loud with strong timbre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Boleyn</td>
<td><em>Not wives you old fool, Y</em></td>
<td>Flicking</td>
<td>Deep and low timbre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne of Cleves</td>
<td><em>Why? What?</em></td>
<td>Dabbing</td>
<td>Air exploding from mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Seymour</td>
<td><em>Henry's Y, there's only one. Y we need to find</em></td>
<td>Floating</td>
<td>Soft and elongated tones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine of Aragon</td>
<td><em>Why do we need to find Y anyway?</em></td>
<td>Pressing</td>
<td>Vowels creating love and tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Howard</td>
<td><em>Y, the Y chromosome</em></td>
<td>Dabbing</td>
<td>Vowels creating despair &amp; tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Boleyn</td>
<td><em>To give Henry a male heir</em></td>
<td>Flicking</td>
<td>Slashing timbre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(horse sounds, riding furiously)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lips resonating and burring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne of Cleves</td>
<td><em>Will do we know exactly where sit Vy chromosome is?</em></td>
<td>Pressing</td>
<td>Chest resonating with loud tones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Seymour</td>
<td><em>I'm sure we'll find it</em></td>
<td>Flicking</td>
<td>Stronger tones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine of Aragon</td>
<td><em>For Henry's sake</em></td>
<td>Wringling</td>
<td>Piercing pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Seymour</td>
<td><em>For England's sake</em></td>
<td>Punching</td>
<td>Raucoos pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Boleyn</td>
<td><em>To the mission</em></td>
<td>Punching</td>
<td>Robust physicality in pitch, tone and timbre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td><em>To our mission</em></td>
<td>Slashing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.7: *The Wives* - analysis of dramatic action and vocal vibrations created by bodies and sound in motion (May 2002)
Although Figure 7.7 is a written analysis of the group's embodied imaginations, the connections between character, dialogue, action and vocal vibrations create a written source of dramatic meaning, a verisimilitude to their heightened acting style. The language of this drama is both verbal and gestural; it is fast and pacy. This is the language of the bizarre. The vocal vibrations, pitch, tones, timbre and rhythms of each voice and body are utterly believable; it is the audience who senses and sees the comedy in this dire situation. The students embody human experiences which include pain, desire, anger and doubt (Linklater, 1976). The embodied languages inform the audience of the mission as well as indicating how selfish each wife is. They succinctly let the audience know the importance of a male heir to their husband Henry, and to the England establishment, so that the narrative progresses forward. The analysis of the action and vocal vibrations demonstrates that there was a strong group kinaesthetic empathy occurring in the ensemble situation, as the ensemble was able to manipulate dialogue and action to create conflicting dramatic meaning. Simultaneously, group kinaesthetic knowing enabled The Wives to develop diversity in each of their characters. The students explored the different verbal and gestural characteristics of each wife. For example, Jane Seymour is practical and determined, Katherine of Aragon is wily, old and pious, Anne of Cleves is naive and ignorant, Anne Boleyn is smart and savvy, Catherine Howard is simple, girlish and sexy.

Towards the end of the performance the wives' chiffon material becomes their personal Henry (see Appendix videotape 7.10). They talk to him, hold him, caress him, and demonstrate their desire to have his baby through playing such tactics as pleading with his sense of honour, or appealing to his sexuality, but inevitably there is a decline in their respective relationships with Henry.

Katherine of Aragon:  
All the wives:  
Catherine Howard:  
All the wives:  
Snore, then a woman’s moan.

Look at me Henry.  
Why won’t you look at me Henry.  
I’ll make you feel young again. I’m doing it for you Henry.  
Just for you.

(Ursula, senior secondary student, Group Devised Performance logbook, August 2000).
Lesley (Anne Boleyn), out of character and discretely, creates the majority of the horse and snoring sound effects.

The following scene is one of fury and disbelief as they discover that Henry is in bed with an imaginary Catherine Parr. They hide behind their material, they peep into the bedroom. They are distressed. They squabble. They discuss love and romance and Henry’s sexual whims. They all felt they had something special with him. They try to get back to the quest and search for the Y chromosome. Then Anne of Cleves proudly announces that she thinks she “might be pregnant”. The physicality of all languages, verbal and non-verbal, explodes onto the audience, as evidenced in the videotape analysis of The Wives Group Devised Performance. This senior videotape analysis evolved within the grounded theory method and enabled me to identify how students made dramatic meaning and embodied ideas from Boal’s and Stanislavski’s varied theatre conventions and techniques.

The videotape analysis of the junior and senior secondary students’ final playbuilding performances, combined with the remaining student data analyses, enabled me to investigate the variety of ways that students identify dramatic problems, find solutions to problems, and how a group’s imaginary situation unfolded so that embodied learning occurred during their performances. Gavin Bolton (2000) argues “that all forms of make-believe qualify for theatre, if there is a spectator reading into the object or action for fictional meaning” (p.27). In this thesis, the spectator reading into the object or action for fictional meaning is me as the researcher, and the student participants are the playbuilders. The playbuilding projects analysed in this section support the theory that a group kinaesthetic paradigm is present in embodied learning, and that the paradigm operates within the complexities of the drama and theatre milieu.
7.6 Embodied learning

In closing this chapter, I conclude that embodied learning in playbuilding has been influenced by such factors as kinaesthetic intelligence and ZPD, assessment for and of learning, the actor/audience relationship, and drama and theatre connections. Embodied learning demonstrates that there is a complex appeal to the playbuilders’ senses and the senses belonging to the physicality of a playbuilding language (States, 1985, pp.52-54).

Kinaesthetic embodiment refers to the merging of the spoken word and the physical body. The playbuilding group needs to explore when their bodies or their brains talk too much or too little, when there is a need for stillness and reflection, or to pause in the drama to heighten their understanding of their work. It is an expressive dynamic that combines the body and mind in a continuous cycle of learning; this ensures that the ensemble work of playbuilding brings the whole group together time and time again. This does not mean that everyone has identical thoughts and ideas, but that sections of the work, and individuals, can be in different places at different times while others move on. The learners travel at their own learning pace while a synthesised group develops, as evidenced by Georgina, whose characterisation work was intensified and moved rapidly forward when all the students from The Wives group helped her to build her character of Katherine of Aragon whilst simultaneously developing their own character profiles.

Embodied experiences in playbuilding result in multiple realities for different students at different times; this is part of kinaesthetic problem solving in different phases of the group playbuilding process. To one student it may be a lived experience during drama class time, to another it may be that something is absent that they cannot fully express; to another it is a release from learning in a school chair, and to another it can be a challenge to invent, predict, examine and prioritise their imaginative work.

results in complex interactions. The analysis in this chapter confirms that this is the case, as the dimensions and properties of embodied experiences that emerged indicated that teachers may choose to balance technical, interpretive and critically reflective pedagogies to generate the most appropriate number of kinaesthetic learning possibilities for their playbuilding groups. The visual quotes (see Figures 7.1(a) and 7.1(b)) at the beginning of this chapter articulate the wonders and enjoyment of the collaborative playbuilding learning process. Each of the groups in the photographs communicates a palpable enjoyable embodiment of their work to the visual, kinaesthetic reader.

Chapter Eight examines in detail a process whereby the senior participating students engaged in a kinaesthetic playbuilding project in an HSC drama topic area. Chapter Nine concludes with recommendations and suggestions that have emerged from the group kinaesthetic paradigm.
Chapter 8

Group kinaesthetic playbuilding - 
Performing an Essay

“We should know the world we live in, the better to change it”  
(Boal, 1992, p.xxxi).

8.1 Introduction

This chapter on Performing an Essay concludes the reporting of my qualitative research analysis (see Figure 8.1). The metaphorical journey of implementing innovative kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies is addressed within a synthesis of all the key questions.

![Enhancing secondary school playbuilding through kinaesthetic teaching & learning](image)

Figure 8.1: Flow of analyses in this thesis

The shared experiences of me as the researcher and the participants in the study (Janesick, 1998, p.37) have shaped the interpretation of the key questions that relate to imagining and
creating, kinaesthetic teaching and learning, group imaginative divergence, group metaphoric thinking and creating, and group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties. This chapter synthesises a posteriori knowledge, bridged by a priori knowledge, relating to playbuilding explorations of *Performing an Essay* prior to this study. The chapter recontextualises these experiences through examining the shared kinaesthetic teaching and learning that occurred in the *Performing an Essay* playbuilding project with the senior secondary students participating in this study.

The practice of teaching senior drama students to perform their written drama essays was developed a number of years prior to this study. In my drama teaching praxis during the 1990s I observed that imagining and creating could have a relationship to the written word, as well as to the spoken and physical experiences of senior secondary students (Wagner, 1998a). While teaching senior drama theory topics and experimenting with groups of students analysing and synthesising their ideas that arose from these theory topics, I questioned the depth of learning involved when students translate their active classroom work into their written essays. The following questions guided my theorising: How was I providing openings for my students to use their physical knowledge and skills in written drama essays? How was I opening up learning spaces so that their personal drama experiences could be included in their written drama essays? How was I making the drama essays fun and enjoyable, as well as pushing the boundaries of the students’ imaginations, and could this in turn scaffold the release of group creativity? Through this ongoing reflective practice about drama learning processes, I discovered educational spaces where I could facilitate and harness the embodied performance knowledge and written abilities of the St. Sistine School’s senior students. This was an important discovery, as these students are required to write essays as part of their internal school assessment and external examination procedures.

The HSC drama examination requires individual drama students to deconstruct a given question and then construct their answer within a particular set of logical traditions, such as giving a series of examples, using comparison and contrast within blocks of paragraphs, and trying to answer in an expository manner so as to communicate their ideas (Clanchy & Ballard, 1997; McLaren, 2001). A drama essay provides an opportunity for secondary school students to express ideas in writing, to analyse and synthesise others' ideas, and to
create hypotheses, to explore phenomena, and to challenge current and past thinking (1997). In my experience a well-written drama essay utilises the imagination; it opens up doors, it challenges perspectives, and the student writing the essay can provide new material, metaphors, images and narratives that challenge the reader to think and question. The HSC Drama Syllabus requires that "students learn to analyse, interpret and synthesise their research through discussion and debate, and through structuring their opinions in written responses" (Board of Studies, 1999b, p.23). These drama essays demand a drama and literary point of view, and many of the senior drama students, including the students participating in this study, struggle with writing these formal essays, as it is problematic for them with their predominant kinaesthetic learning styles. Noting this observation, I then explored how senior drama students could embody their written essays in their playbuilding performances, as well as writing with an individual kinaesthetic voice (Crumpler & Schneider, 2002; Grow 1990a & b); I called this type of playbuilding Performing an Essay.

Professor Gerald Grow (1990a & b), who researches journalistic kinaesthetic writing and connects his study to Howard Gardner’s theories on bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, argues that the relation of writing to kinesthetic intelligence is likely to be controversial but that:

If the kinesthetic intelligence is strong in a piece of writing, something beyond its thinking and verbal facility is likely to grab you at the gut level. It may affect you, move you, pace your responses. The writing may have a natural sense of movement (1990a, p.1).

I felt that drama students should be given the opportunity to write with their ‘natural sense of movement’, and this connected with Howard Gardner’s (1993b) concept that student assessment can be constructed so that it is an “intelligence-fair” (p.10) task.
8.2 Performing an Essay - kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies

*Performing an Essay* kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies initially included a variety of ‘whole class improvisation strategies’ that illuminate a drama topic area. From these whole class experimentations the smaller playbuilding groups were formed, and the participating groups were given an essay question to answer through performance so as to affect their audience as if they were the readers of an HSC drama written essay. The data indicates that through performing their essays the participating students embodied their HSC drama knowledge into their kinaesthetic domain, and they could call upon this embodied learning when transferring it to the written page when sitting for their written drama internal school assessment and external examination.

Figure 8.2 gives the reader an overview of the kinaesthetic teaching strategies involved in analysing the *Performing an Essay* data. It provides a visual map of the ensemble kinaesthetic learning that took place with the participating students; it also indicates the *Performing an Essay* processes analysed in this chapter which enable embodied learning to take place.
As my research study unfolded it demonstrated that the participating senior students’ *Performing an Essay* internal school assessment project was an intelligence-fair task (Gardner, 1993b, p.10). This interpretation emerged because each group’s internal school assessment was inextricably and actively linked to their kinaesthetic learning, and complemented by their affective, cognitive and physical domains. Furthermore, the open
and axial coding demonstrated that as the assessment was actively taught it enabled the participating students to embody their senior learning by becoming active group essayists as well as group kinaesthetic writers in their playbuilding logbooks. This meant that once the participating students had kinaesthetically explored a drama topic area in terms of its structure, its historical content, its linguistic form, its dramatic form, and its multiple levels of meaning, this was transformed by the senior playbuilders into a group kinaesthetic playbuilding essay on the classroom floor, as well as into individual written essays. I have included a participating student’s written essay (see Appendix 6.9) to give the reader a flavour of a student’s attempt at individual’s kinaesthetic writings; but this thesis is concerned with group playbuilding, and therefore only the participating group members’ playbuilding logbooks (see Appendices 6.6 & 6.7) have been analysed in relationship to the key questions.

The playbuilding form of Performing an Essay differs from the examples given in Chapters Four to Seven, as there is less flexibility in imagining what the content and issues of the playbuilding will be about. This means that the participating senior students, and their playbuilding groups, respond to the set HSC playscripts and associated research, such as identifying websites that would be relevant to their learning and exploring performance texts, theatre journals and reviews found in the school library. In this context they could employ their imaginative ideas but could not make up illusionary or fictitious ideas unless they were supported by the research. The topic studied by the participating senior students was Australian Women’s Theatre, and the students I analyse in this chapter were confined by the content of their set study on this topic. The mandated Board of Studies rubric for this topic area is given below:

*Australian Women’s Theatre*

This topic explores the plays of modern Australian female playwrights and the question of their distinctive treatment of female characters and issues. The performance styles, thematic concerns, dramatic forms and conventions, and the social and cultural context from which the plays emerged should be considered. (Board of Studies, KLA Stage 6 Creative Arts, November, 1997, p.70).

Playscripts studied by the participating students were:


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Examination of the data in the first phase of the ‘whole class learning strategies’ indicates that the initial release of the imagination came from all the students experimenting with imaginative activities through spontaneous improvisation about the themes and performance styles of the two plays. During this kinaesthetic teaching process the participating students engage in ‘playing with spontaneous improvisation strategies’. This teaching strategy corresponds to D. Winnicott’s (1971) notion that “it is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self” (p.54).

The axial coding stages of my research demonstrate that the senior secondary students discovered a depth of drama knowledge in their topic area when the whole class experimented with their own creative energies through play. In this type of play, metaxis occurs to give students the opportunity to use their kinaesthetic intelligences in a physical and fictitious learning environment. For instance, in their classroom work all the students had been learning experientially about the themes and issues in Dorothy Hewett’s The Chapel Perilous (1972), and Suzanne Spunner’s Running Up a Dress (1988). Theoretical saturation demonstrated that the category of whole class kinaesthetic learning had properties of:

- engagement in spontaneous physical activities that opened up new ways to look at theory in performance
- problem managing, problem solving and decision making activities that led to the whole class writing kinaesthetic words and sentences and transferring them to logbooks.

Emerging from the category of whole class kinaesthetic learning was the participating students’ engagement in experiential and embodied learning to understand drama theory.

Whole class kinaesthetic teaching and learning continued to occur as the senior secondary students discussed and debated the impact of contemporary Australian Women’s Theatre through varied spontaneous improvisations such as Viola Spolin’s “Character” (1983, chapt. XII) teaching strategies. Through these additional spontaneous improvisations they continually questioned ideas and produced dramatic images of how they thought these
plays helped to shape women’s theatre of yesterday, and whether they would shape future contemporary women’s theatre. They created small dramatic scenes that questioned whether plays written by women created a social and cultural pattern that was different from what they viewed as the traditional patriarchal plays of Shakespeare or Chekov. They argued and debated, and prepared improvisations to explore the extent to which these female plays were empowering theatrically. They wrote in pairs, in threes, in fours, and as a whole class about their active improvisations. This group writing was strung round the drama classroom on butcher’s paper and eventually transferred to their logbooks. The students continued to compare and contrast through role-play the theatrical structure of a lone questing female protagonist in the Chapel Perilous (Hewett, 1972) and the supposedly female-oriented dramatic forms that dramatised the biographies of mothers’ and daughters’ lives in Running Up a Dress (Spunner, 1988). They acted, they laughed, they re-wrote, they refined, and they shared their active and written imaginative ideas as a whole class.

Following these whole class kinaesthetic teaching and learning experiences the playbuilding groups were formed for the HSC Drama project, and the students were given a detailed written outline of how to prepare and create a 15 minute performance essay. The teacher chose the Performing an Essay groups so as to provide a diversity of skills and knowledge within each group. Each group had one or two students with exceptional analytical abilities, as well as one or two with outstanding stagecraft skills (as previously explained these students had been identified as gifted and/or talented by the St. Sistine School’s Gifted and Talented Coordinator). Each group was allocated students whose area of expertise was in voice and/or movement, and others who struggled in these expressive skills. All groups included students who could develop in-depth roles and one or two students who could develop in-depth characterisation. Each group had students with limited writing skills and some students who could write substantially. Furthermore, all the students understood the teaching and learning concepts of Performing an Essay, as Australian Women’s Theatre was their second Performing an Essay internal assessment project; in the previous year they had already undertaken a performance essay investigating Augusto Boal’s (1979, 1992, 1995) ideology. The playbuilding groups had five weeks to prepare this playbuilding project, and the final performance was scheduled three days before submission of the actual written essay. A key learning strategy required the students to use the individual written drafts of their essays as well as their logbooks during the group
process work. In this playbuilding phase of their learning the participating students had to realign the relevant information from their ‘whole class improvisation work’, and apply it to their individual Performing an Essay group assessable project. The essay question was generic in nature to help students explore the complexities of the texts and associated material in a non-threatening literary manner; it was phrased to enable students to start exploring deeper meanings in their set topic than they had previously experienced. The essay question is as follows:

Theatrically discuss the Australian Women playwrights and their plays you have studied. You, and your group should refer to their choice of material, theatrical techniques and performance styles as well as their impact upon Australian audiences.

A synthesis of all of the student data pertaining to Performing an Essay indicates that this question enabled the groups to explore role and characterisation techniques as well as the thematic concerns of the playscripts. There is further evidence that the question enabled the groups to apply strong stagecraft techniques that in turn enhanced the actor/audience (actor/reader) relationship. The question gave the students freedom to demonstrate appropriate voice and movement techniques and to respond to the performance styles, dramatic forms and conventions deployed in the playscripts. During theoretical saturation it became apparent that the way each playbuilding group engaged with the playscripts, associated research and the question facilitated a release of imagining and creating, as well as facilitating group imaginative divergence, group metaphoric thinking and creating, and group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties. This engagement is situated alongside metaxis, and links theory and practice in a dramatically powerful environment.

8.3 The teaching practice that optimises imagining and creating in Performing an Essay

During the theoretical saturation stage I applied my theory of a kinaesthetic teaching practice that optimises imagining and creating to the two participating playbuilding groups’ data. During the playbuilding phase of Performing an Essay it became apparent that the students learned through a group kinaesthetic experience which enabled each playbuilding
group to actively create their own meaning from the assessment task. The students achieved this because their bodies as well as their minds were integrated into this drama experience. Moreover, the participating senior secondary students' engagement with group kinaesthetic teaching depended to varying degrees on where each group was positioned in the learning phase of their playbuilding project. For example, during selective coding the complexity of group kinaesthetic teaching and learning was illuminated through an analysis of how the groups began building their performance essays. All groups explored the previous whole class improvisations around the topic of Australian Women's Theatre, and developed these into rehearsed improvisations that provided a deeper knowledge of the topic area. For example, each playbuilding group worked in their own particular way; some groups created an image of the question and then wrote down the group response to the image; others began improvising immediately and then recorded what they had done. One group divided up the project so that one pair of students researched the playwrights, another the characters in the plays, another the theatre reviews of the plays. Each group could become the moral high ground or the immoral low ground, depending on their cultural perspective, as both the set plays provided much thought provoking discussion on feminism and femininity, and hence the portrayal of the female characters. Thus the group dynamics challenged the notion that opinions are not always fixed, and there was a variety of learning styles in each group, as evident in the students' logbooks (see Appendix 6.6).

During selective coding the following properties arose from an analysis of the Performing an Essay logbooks. I created these properties as student playbuilding questions so as to elicit as much information from the analysis as possible. In both playbuilding groups the students continually asked:

- What do we know about this topic?
- Whose knowledge is it?
- What do we as a group mean by knowing?
- What do I as an individual know?
- How can we use this knowledge theatrically?

These questions were then analysed in light of the video and audiotape material, and this demonstrated that a process of learning occurred to enable the groups to develop a group imaginative divergence, and to explore their project in a group metaphorical manner. For
instance, Nina recorded in her logbook “After we received the project, we grouped up, and discussed our aims for the piece. We all decided that we wanted our piece to incorporate comedy, but still have a strong metaphoric message” (Nina, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000) (see Appendix 6.6). Nina and her group were beginning to create their own group imaginative dynamics in response to the project. They were starting to explore what they knew about the topic from their previous classroom improvisations and from the way they perceived they could integrate theatre conventions and techniques, as well as to determine whether group metaphoric creating could enhance their performance essay.

Both groups actively created dramatic meaning for the project through segregating and sequencing their kinaesthetic learning. This helped each group to demonstrate dramatically the role and purpose of the characters, taking special account of the distinctive treatment of the female characters. Through segregating and sequencing their learning they were able to attach meaning to the different phases of the project. For example, an analysis of the data demonstrated that one group segregated their rehearsed improvisations about the social context from the cultural context from which the plays emerged, until they were satisfied that they had achieved their dramatic intention of demonstrating how a woman’s culture impacts on her social context. The process of learning continued as they sequenced this rehearsed improvisation to incorporate the role of the modern Australian female playwright, as well as their chosen performance styles and dramatic forms. This process of learning enabled the students to embody their group kinaesthetic knowing and empathy, and provided a learning focus so that group imaginative divergence could be questioned. For instance, the group initially kept silent about their concerns with Nina’s idea to create a ‘Buck’s night’ scene. After one class situation where the group became sidetracked whilst experimenting with this idea they began to speak out about their concerns. Nina recorded this event “Today we started to workshop the Bucks night scene. It did not flow very well. It was very funny but it did not relate to the project. We have now started working on scenes to incorporate the answers to the actual requirements of the playbuilding project” (Nina, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000). Nina understood her idea was not valid and was not appropriate for the common good of the project. The group used other members’ ideas to continue to explore the metatexual process of metaphoric transformation.
A further analysis of Nina’s logbook indicates the manner in which metaphorical and imaginative thinking can open up ways for the group to engage in their metaxical process. Nina’s initial recordings in her logbook were a visual kinaesthetic representation of the two plays, with the caption “The marriage of women’s theatre – they’re just so right for each other” (Nina, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000) (see Appendix 6.6). This group wished to engage with their metaphoric idea but eventually they “all agreed to drop the metaphor of marriage as it was overriding our piece, (and) thus slowing our progression”. Nevertheless, the initial metaphor provided substance to their performance essay as they continued to incorporate their initial ideas of “discovery, freedom, religion, personal identity, and self discovery” in their work (Nina, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000). This helped them to interpret and shape their ideas that related to women playwrights, women performers, and how they perceived women in the world (Guberman, 1996).

An analysis of both groups’ Performing an Essay demonstrated that the way the groups reflected on metaphoric inquiry enhanced or detracted from the work. Claudia, a member of another playbuilding group, discussed that the ideas her group they came up with were very clever, but the group was focusing on “adapting the content to the metaphor rather than the metaphor to the content” (Claudia, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000) (see Appendix 6.6). Claudia did not voice this concern until it became apparent to all members of the group that the metaphor was not working. This group had to question its imaginative and metaphoric idea as it detracted from the dramatic meaning. Group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating were approached differently by each group, and each group accepted that challenge in its unique way, with both groups eventually finding a metaphor that enhanced the dramatic meaning of the performance essays.

At this point I wish to acknowledge both the Dorothy Hewett play, The Chapel Perilous (1972), and the play by Suzanne Spunner and the Home Cooking Company, Running Up a Dress (1988), in all the students’ quotes from their logbooks and/or the videotape of their playbuilding performances. As previously mentioned, the students were required to amalgamate their research evidence into their Performing an Essay project; this meant at
times directly quoting from the plays or associated material. They were not required to reference this in their performance essays. Hence, when I quote from the students’ Performing an Essay projects I will be using at times Dorothy Hewett’s and Suzanne Spunner’s dialogue or stage directions which are difficult to easily reference.

8.3.1 Analysis of Performing an Essay - Feminism versus Femininity

The group Feminism versus Femininity has been identified as such to underscore their argument that feminism and femininity could be thought of as opposing forces in theatre but could also be integrated concepts in Australian Women’s Theatre. Analysis of this group highlights the process they undertook, as well as the way the key ideas of the playbuilders emerged though group kinaesthetics. This group argued in their performance essay that there could be a synthesis of femininity and feminism in women’s theatre, and in their view, each play was a dynamic text. The group struck a delicate balance between understanding the content of the topic and freeing themselves to allow their group’s imagination to be open to as many relevant possibilities as made dramatic sense.

Claudia’s logbook provides an indication of how she allowed her imagination to create new possibilities for her group at the beginning of their process work:

Dear Journal,

I’m starting to really grasp the idea of both plays in a way, which I can actually get some structure to ... I know I don’t put as much into my journal as others do, but I only use it to the minimum so as I can clarify my thoughts. Once I understand I stop. Is that bad?

My ideas for an opening:
• Represent both playwrights
• Use frozen image
• Use soundscapes
• Incorporate ideologies of both playwrights

We need to make the difference clear between the plays by introducing the main themes and characters. (Claudia, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000) (see Appendix 6.6).
The theoretical saturation interpretation of Claudia’s thoughts indicates that she is a kinaesthetic thinker and learner, and she appears to work from an instinctive kinaesthetic knowing. She subsequently indicates the characters and roles that individuals in the group could embody, and which could function at a metaxical and metaphoric level as well. In Claudia’s work there is a perception of finding problems and suggesting ways to solve them, how her group might use the stage space, what they might say within the opening kinaesthetic paragraph of the essay, and how this dialogue could impact on the audience as readers of the essay.

The subsequent opening of this group’s performance essay demonstrates how Claudia’s ideas were tempered and expanded by the rest of the group and enhanced through the dramatic transformation process. Yvette’s logbook records their final opening dialogue and gives an indication of how the students used their diverse group imaginations in this introductory paragraph:

I write to make sense of the world - Femininity
I write to make sense of the world - Feminism
The head’s out. One more playwright push
I want to give birth to a:
- Confronting
- Sensual
- Controversial
- Spiritual
- Woman on a journey.

(Yvette, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000) (see Appendices 6.6, 6.7, 7.2 and videotape 7.11).

These students decided that it was important to let the audience know immediately, through a performed topic sentence, that in The Chapel Perilous (Hewett, 1972), the female protagonist continually uses her body to get what she desires, whereas in Running Up a Dress (Spunner, 1988) the young female body creates social tensions over appropriateness and expectations. An interpretation of the logbook is that the students’ voices and bodies were engaged with group kinaesthetic knowing and empathy in a dynamic and relational way.
A further analysis of the *Feminism versus Femininity* group’s opening kinaesthetic paragraph shows how the group tried to incorporate the elements of drama to highlight the varied dimensions of their playbuilding (Board of Studies, 2003a; Haseman & O’Toole, 1986; O’Toole, 1992). The dialogue in this following section is taken from Yvette’s *Performing an Essay* logbook and an analysis of this group’s videotape (May 2002).

The human context of the opening kinaesthetic paragraph concentrates on the roles of the respective playwrights and their different ideologies, and this is made apparent to the audience as readers of the performance essay through the use of ironic words that parallel the physical action of giving birth:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td><em>I write to make sense of the world - Femininity</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td><em>I write to make sense of the world - Feminism</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C, J, M, R</td>
<td><em>The head’s out. One more playwright push!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td><em>I want to give birth to a...</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The female characters, in the context of protagonists in the respective plays, are embodied in the opening kinaesthetic paragraph as it attempts to demonstrate that a female character is dynamic and interactive, and belongs to a world full of possibilities.

The dramatic tension is evident from the start when the symbols of a Christian blessing and women sewing are used in a provocative way to jolt the audience into thinking about women and religion and how, or if, they belong to women’s theatre. The dramatic tension rises as soon as the playwrights are born, with the words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td><em>Confronting</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td><em>Sensual</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td><em>Controversial</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td><em>Spiritual</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td><em>Woman on a journey</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The words are used to allow the audience to think and feel that Australian *Women’s Theatre* may not be ‘safe’ theatre after all.

The dramatic action was focused immediately through semi-circle staging that drew the audience’s eye to centre stage. The use of pieces of material as birth canals also created a focal point and was a significant group metaphoric device, as well as a group kinaesthetic
drama property, that linked the group’s movement-thinking, and thinking-words together. Thus the moving action was enhanced when the group spoke as a chorus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C, J, M, R</td>
<td>Sally Banner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, R</td>
<td>Citizen of the world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The notion of place and time was embedded in the group’s understanding of when the plays were written, and if the audience did not know this immediately it was clarified during the rest of the performance. Place and time related to the female characters in the plays and the playwrights’ relationships in twentieth century theatre. The students had a group empathic response to the difficulties they perceived the female protagonist from The Chapel Perilous (Hewett, 1972) encountered in her life, as well as having close connections to the mother/daughter relationships in Running Up a Dress (Spunner, 1988). They explored this through dramatic dialogue to heighten their empathic responses. The language was both verbal and non-verbal, and its pacing was fast and forthright:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J, C</td>
<td>Big frog in a small puddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>I want to give birth to an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Acknowledged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Hegemonic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Conventional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Mother/daughter relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C, J, M, R</td>
<td>Mother/daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C, J</td>
<td>You are the phoenix which rises through my ashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R, M</td>
<td>Inevitably, I will be more than she bargained for.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The undercurrent of empathy allowed the opening performance paragraph to be engaging rather than didactic. The dramatic dialogue also let the audience know succinctly that the group felt that the respective plays and associated literature positions were a juxtaposition of feminism and femininity.

The movement of the opening scene with features such as physical theatre, chorus, and symbolic movement expressed the students’ interpretation of the performance styles, the themes, and the conflicts within the two plays. The students used their personal and group kinespheres to travel around the drama studio space in a way that was provocative yet engaging. For example, the stage was used to separate the actors from the audience so that the group’s opening topic sentence was flung out to the audience; only when they came
forward with their metaphoric material transforming into female dresses, flirting with the audience, did the group intentionally break down the actor/audience separation to confront their audience, as readers, with an actual and fictitious metaxical world.

The *Feminism versus Femininity* group’s opening kinaesthetic paragraph embodied a mood of females exploring who they are and what they expect from society; it was energetic and it had a protesting voice. The mood indicated that Australian women were certainly included in theatre activities, whilst re-examining simultaneously how they were included and represented in Australian theatre. Aspects such as women as sexual objects, women as mothers and daughters, women as rebellious ideologues were all embedded in the frames of the students’ emotions. Furthermore, the physical symbol of giving birth allowed the audience to see this group’s concept that *Australian Women’s Theatre* was, in their opinion, in its infancy. The metaphor symbolised growth of women’s theatre through giving new life and mothering, and this was the reward for creating a unique female theatrical voice. The iconic physical symbols of sewing and a blessing were embodied by the students into a joint act of feminism and femininity which the group felt related to both plays, and that communicated as much to the audience as any words. This was an imaginative and creative opening kinaesthetic paragraph. Group empathy, and engagement with the group’s drama property through knowing how to embed it in the dramatic action, created a skilful and emotional involvement for the audience (Denzin, 1997).

The opening kinaesthetic paragraph indicated to the audience the approach of this performance essay. Its topic sentence related to feminism as a dynamic set of ideas in theatre, and to femininity as a way for women to interpret, perceive and live their experiences in theatre. These ideas were focused on throughout the performance essay and enabled the group to refer to the playwrights’ choices of material, theatrical techniques, and performance style, as well as their impact upon Australian audiences. The dramatic meaning was the ability of the group to answer the essay question as a group in performance, whilst envisaging the audience as both audience members and readers of their performance essay (see Appendices 6.6, 7.2 and videotape 7.11).

The group was engaged with group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties through their exploration of a metaxical world, while simultaneously demonstrating group
imaginative divergence, metaphoric thinking and creating. The analysis suggests that, through kinaesthetic learning, this group opened up their senses to let their whole bodies think, not just their brains (Boal, 1992, p.61). They understood and were conscious that they were using the language of theatre (pp.xxx-xxxi), and were able to turn this to their advantage so as to get their thoughts and ideas across to the audience of readers. This was an engagement of aesthetics and kinesics, as the group had been able to connect their body-mind-embodied learning within their artistic creation of the performance essay.

In the *Feminism versus Femininity* group’s concluding kinaesthetic paragraph the data demonstrated that the students created dramatic meaning through their group kinaesthetic language. This language focused on how mothers and daughters learn about their bodies, their taboos and celebrations, as well as how mothers’ and daughters’ lives can be inextricably shaped by the other, via the clothes that are sewn. The students elaborated upon Suzanne Spunner’s text by theatrically creating the streets of Melbourne where the mapping of the clothed female body takes place in the students’ fictitious society. The bodies of the students transformed into wordless metaphoric messages about female body image, and were situated side by side with the dialogue, which in turn created an emotional communication between the students as actors on the stage and the audience as readers of the action:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>You have a lovely figure! A lot of girls would envy you. (Stage direction - start walking around)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Hi. I’m from the Home Cooking Company searching the streets of Melbourne today for views on Motherhood from the daughters of our community. Excuse me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>What was the first thing your Mother made for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>A white ... viyella party dress with a blue sash. Excuse me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>What was your Mother’s catch phrase?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| M        | When you’re a Mother, You’ll understand. Excuse me? (April 2000 - Dialogue re-arranged *Running up a Dress* (Spunner, 1988) (see Appendices 7.2 and videotape 7.12)).

The above textual discourse is the students’ adaptation of the play *Running Up a Dress* (Spunner, 1988), which the students used as a device to put forward their idea that *Australian Women’s Theatre* explores mother and daughter relationships in an engaging
way. This last performance paragraph indicates how the students used group kinaesthetic knowing and empathy to try to heighten the emotional perceptions of their audience. The scene was intimate, and feeling and emotions were expressed through light physical touching and a ‘female joy’ about relating to other women. Each sentence and/or phrase was vocalised through the tone and timbre of a student’s voice and her use of body language; this heightened the essay’s discussion and debate about women and their bodies. At the same time the properties from the research data indicated that the students were combining their own actual and fictitious female worlds in their performance; they created opportunities to learn about themselves and others through this interaction. A deep metaxical process was taking place that engaged the group in embodied learning.

Yvette’s logbook indicates how she felt their group performance essay was received by the audience as the readers. “The performance itself was great. It went in a flash and I was extremely happy with it”. Heightened emotions reflected in her words. Her final thoughts demonstrate a discourse in which understanding and discovery occur simultaneously:

Overall, once again I am very pleased with the performance and I got really close to the group and discovered more about each individual than I had never known. The experience has widened my knowledge and given me insights into group work that I had not discovered previously (Yvette, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000).

Hence the playbuilding provided her with a new way of working with her group and expanded her learning acumen.

Further analysis of the Feminism versus Femininity group indicated that they had an interpretive approach to the playbuilding project. Dramatic action and discussion enabled a group kinaesthetic structure to emerge that created new insights and widened aesthetic spaces for these students. This is evidenced by Claudia’s reflections on the project; she writes “This whole process really has made me understand a lot more about Australian Women’s Theatre and how both plays really did make their own impact” (Claudia, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000). The group solved a myriad of problems imaginatively. Not every idea was used during the process but groupthink allowed them to become critical creators both in performance and in the written word.
Maxine Greene (1995) states that “aesthetic experiences require conscious participation in a work, a going out of energy, an ability to notice what there is to be noticed” (p.125). This Performing an Essay event enabled the group to problem-solve their work aesthetically; this can be exemplified by the group’s structural problems:

“I thought our group really did work well together despite some of the struggles for power between ... and ... what I’d call a SUCCESS !” (Claudia, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000) and “I really enjoyed the process, although I found it challenging it wasn’t that stressful. I would like to say that (names) ... are all leaders in drama, and I seemed to have to step back and let (names) ... take charge (Lesley, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000).

The logbooks demonstrate that the group power relationships were very complex (Foucault, 1983; Said, 1986). Through peer learning the groups struggled to find a personal structure; there was tension in the group, and they succeeded because of and in spite of the tensions. The members of the group worked interdependently as well as independently. During the coding of this discourse I discovered that the group created empathy because of the tension, they worked hard at being democratic. The debates, dramatic arguments and leadership problems helped them to create a vibrant performance, as evidenced by Lesley who reflected “we bounced ideas off each other and managed to present a good performance” (Lesley, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000). Kinaesthetic teaching and learning provided a space for the Feminism versus Femininity group to use their bodies individually and collectively. They solved problems, probed ideas, conveyed their ideas personally and theatrically, explored emotions, and intuitively became part of a metaxical transformation in their embodied playbuilding process and performance learning.

8.3.2 Analysis of Performing an Essay - The Female Protagonists

Analysis of another group, which I have called The Female Protagonists, indicates that the properties of problem-solving, probing ideas and exploring emotions are also part of a group’s learning strategies, but the way this group handled these problems during their rehearsals is in contrast to Feminism versus Femininity. I distinguish this group by identifying them as The Female Protagonists, as this indicates that their Performing an
*Essay* concept was that women should be the protagonists in their topic *Australian Women's Theatre*. The research data from this group indicates the emergence of patterns of learning that enabled them to tackle their project through experimentation. These patterns indicate that the students experimented with pertinent theatre conventions and techniques such as chorus and narrative, as well as comedy techniques. The group reflected on these theatre conventions and techniques by merging them together in rehearsed improvised situations, and they enjoyed playing with these techniques. This enabled an embodied and joyful drama problem-solving situation to emerge in the classroom.

The emerging theory of group kinaesthetics indicates that the way in which *The Female Protagonists* group initially viewed their HSC playbuilding project gave rise to some early creating problems because of:

- a lack of commitment to the project in the initial phase of their process work
- a joyful playing around with ideas without extending them.

The analysis indicates that one of the factors contributing towards the first condition was the friendship structure of the group (Forsyth, 1999; Foucault, 1983), but it was not clear why this created a lack of commitment to the project. The second condition contributed to the first, as the combination of personality types appeared to trigger off a love of joyful playing with one another. This playing gave the group permission to get side-tracked from the project and to disregard each other’s opinions about the project. In fact they were not listening to one another. Also as their teacher I was not noticing that some students wanted to succeed in this project but the others were overriding their voices. These problematic conditions are interpreted as an ‘overabundance of group kinaesthetics occurring’ so that the learning focus becomes hidden to the participants. This overabundance of kinaesthetics is evidenced by the group wishing continually to create physically, but not examining their physical responses.

These problems were solved towards the end of the process when the importance of the HSC Drama assessment task loomed at the forefront of their consciousness, and the group began to focus their kinaesthetic learning abilities. When this happened the group worked with commitment, quickly solving problems such as what conventions and techniques to include and how to include them. They explored Boal’s Image Theatre and dynamisation.
as drama strategies that allowed them to experiment with non-verbal language and the power of the body as a transmitter and receiver of messages within Australian Women’s Theatre. These experiments often finished up as a source of great laughter, as the students were using their bodies in a way that they enjoyed to deal with verbal and non-verbal playbuilding problems. They had experienced this type of verbal and non-verbal problem solving before, as in the previous year they examined Boal’s (1979, 1992, 1995) ideologies through the creation of a performance essay. The kinaesthetic memory of this embodied learning manifested itself on the classroom floor in this project. Laughter and enjoyment was always part of this group’s process work, with all members of the group believing that if they spent time laughing during the process it released tensions and opened up their imaginations to create (Senior secondary students, closed questionnaire, question 17, November 2000).

Group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating emerged as pivotal learning patterns for The Female Protagonists group to manage and solve dramatic problems. This is evidenced by the students who used their bodies as a form of dramatic representation; they wanted to become familiar with each other’s bodies and to feel relaxed and not intimidated by working with each other’s bodies. Anton Franks (1996) argues that “In drama classrooms the body is the pre-eminent form of representation” (p.105). He argues that the particular ways student bodies hold their social and cultural histories enable them to give insights into how to best select their roles, and this selection responds to their everyday experiences. The individuals in The Female Protagonists group instinctively explored ways in which their bodies made meaning of the topic, and took on the roles with which they felt most comfortable (van der Berg, 1996). For example, they wished to demonstrate metaphorically the value of feminine pursuits, so instead of actually sewing a dress on stage, as indicated in the Running up a Dress stage directions, the group skillfully used their bodies to embrace the process of sewing, while their individual bodies joined together to become a metaphoric dress (see Appendix videotape 7.13). This group’s female bodies were both the instruments and the sources of their text, which created representations of identity through the performative aesthetic of movement, dialogue and drama skills (Denzin, 1997; Tait, 1994, p.124).
Kinaesthetic divergence in theorising this phenomenon indicated that, because of the group's slow progress at the beginning and because of their wish to play, a strong group empathy occurred. From this group empathy the students were able to use their bodies as a group kinaesthetic drama property and as a metaphoric device. A synthesis of the last scene (Board of Studies, 2003a; Haseman & O'Toole, 1986; O'Toole, 1992), where the students make a dress on stage using their bodies, highlights the kinaesthetic learning that took place. The dialogue in this following section is taken from the videotape of The Female Protagonists group’s closing kinaesthetic paragraph (Senior secondary students, videotape analysis, Performing an Essay, April 2000) (see Appendix videotape 7.13).

The human context of the closing kinaesthetic paragraph scene was highly imaginative as the students took on the role of the dress. Continual transformation revealed each individual becoming part of the dress while using their bodies to demonstrate sexuality and femininity. The fourth wall was broken down with reporters and actors talking to one another and out to the audience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G, J, E, N</td>
<td><em>Did they really write these plays to make sense of the world?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G, J, E, N</td>
<td><em>Do you fit the pattern?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rhetorical question was posed to the audience, as readers of the performance essay, at the conclusion of their performance.

Dramatic tension was evident when the group started to make the dress from their own bodies, and from combining the costumes that they were wearing. The silver slivers on each of their bodies created a silver wedding dress. This was dynamic and joyful, with the audience laughing and exclaiming at the visual power of this creation. Immediately this beautiful dress contrasted with the sexuality of Sally Banner from the play The Chapel Perilous (Hewett, 1972). A student transformed the group’s ideas of sexual permissiveness by lying on the floor, legs wide open in the air, while the other characters used her as an object to make their statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td><em>Controversial (Leaning on open legs)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td><em>Rarely performed (Strong stance)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td><em>Shocked male critics (Stronger stance)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the concluding kinaesthetic paragraph about the role of female protagonists in Australian Women's Theatre the students tried to incorporate both plays' historical time periods
through jitterbug dancing, and through the students’ bodies physicalising a chapel. This provided theatrical evidence of the conventions and techniques from the two plays set for study, and of the varied female characters that they had examined in their performance. The group also explored female performance text as a ‘seams mistress’ and as a ‘sexual activity’, juxtaposing these concepts to current patriarchal journalistic environments. The kinaesthetic language was both verbal and non-verbal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>The dress made of ivory silk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Fitted bodice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Magnificent bow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scene’s body language united all members of the group together as a ‘dress’ with reference to *Running Up a Dress* (Spunner, 1988), and then contrasted this by making their bodies separate due to the controversial nature of *The Chapel Perilous* (Hewett, 1972). This group’s verbal and non-verbal language highlights my analysis of “conscious familiarity” (Abram, 1996, p.73) mentioned in Chapters Four to Seven. These students brought a depth and breath to their physical creating that truly engaged themselves and their audience with female social and cultural concepts with which they were all familiar. Therefore, the group’s language and movement indicated a complexity in their creative and metaphoric thinking. In representing the female protagonists in *Running Up a Dress* (Spunner, 1988) the students embodied many and varied types of mothers and daughters, although speaking to some degree with one female multi-vocal voice. This embodiment changed to one of female empowerment through sexuality when their verbal and non-verbal language physically explored the play *The Chapel Perilous* (Hewett, 1972), where there was only one isolated protagonist.

The closing kinaesthetic paragraph of the performance essay embodied an atmosphere of female celebration; it also explored problems associated with being a female character in a patriarchal theatre world. The mood was thought provoking, as well as allowing the audience time to laugh. Furthermore, the symbol of the wedding dress being made on stage was powerful, dynamic and metaphoric; it was a synthesis of group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and use of drama properties. It was imaginative and extraordinarily creative, and demonstrated an exploration of group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and exquisite manipulation of a kinaesthetic drama property to engage their audience as readers of a performance essay. The evolving theory demonstrating that it was this group’s female
concept of performance that conceptualised changing their physical bodies in a theatrical space to create their own performative identities (Tait, 1994).

The group had the ability to conclude their essay through creating a symbiosis of dramatic meaning in their last performance paragraph. They merged all their ideas, all their performance paragraphs, and their discussion and debate regarding females as protagonists in *Australian Women's Theatre*. They did this by working together, by solving their problems through their body language and group perceptions, by speaking with their own voices, and by playing with all their ideas in rehearsal and in the actual performance, as evidenced in the videotape analysis (see Appendix videotape 7.13).

A student from this group notes: “Well, after performing our piece two days ago I feel fabulous. I am happy with my performance and feel our group dynamics enabled a steady flow of ideas. I feel we performed a piece that not only addressed the criteria of the project but also presented an entertaining and informative piece of theatre” (Nina, senior secondary student, *Performing an Essay* logbook, April 2000). This contrasted to Ursula who said, “The overwhelming feeling of relief after the performance was indeed the greatest of feelings ... the process before the performance was most worthwhile as I truly did learn a lot” (Ursula, senior secondary student, *Performing an Essay* logbook, April 2000).

The synthesis of these two examples of *Performing an Essay* conveys a sense of the challenges the students faced because of their personal readiness and drama experiences. Brian Way (1967) states that “all people are fundamentally creative; the arts are an outlet for this creativity if - and only if - they are viewed from the standpoint of the doer and from that person’s personal level of readiness and experience” (p.3). The playbuilding project conveys the senior students’ actions and their thoughts through their process work, as well as their final performance; it gives an in-depth indication of each group’s developmental learning through a kinaesthetic experience. Both *Performing an Essay* groups were fundamentally creative, as the senior secondary students either took dramatic risks or worked at their own pace to explore the concept of *Performing an Essay*, which was the antithesis of the concept of conventional drama essay writing. Conventional drama essays were always in a written form on a blank page and were certainly not to be performed by a drama group in front of an audience whose function was to be metaphoric readers of the
essay. During *Performing an Essay* playbuilding the students' personal opinions, concepts, dramatic arguments, were arranged, scripted and staged for an audience of friends and family. *Performing an Essay* enhanced this audience's understanding of their daughters' and/or friends' educational lives in senior drama education (Denzin, 1997; Milling & Ley, 2001; Turner & Turner, 1988).

### 8.4 Imagining and creating enhanced by kinaesthetic teaching and learning

The dimension of enhancing imagining and creating through kinaesthetic teaching and learning in *Performing an Essay* ranged from teaching strategies that combined the group’s kinaesthetic classroom processes to explore previous drama skills and knowledge. The teaching strategies enabled the groups to make informed choices about the dramatic framework their playbuilding project would take. The properties of this dimension created a group kinaesthetic paradigm that enabled each of the groups to engage in drama theory learning through playbuilding. Each group had its own social drama that belonged to that particular group’s dynamics. Each group went about the playbuilding project in its distinctive way that released a sparked of ideas and action. Each group had their own ability to transfer their kinaesthetic mental images to improvisation scenes, and recorded this in their logbooks. The groups went beyond these mental images to create substantial group kinaesthetic experiences in their rehearsals and final playbuilt performance work about women’s theatre. Synthesis of these observations concludes that *Performing an Essay* has significant positive learning effects on playbuilding groups as it allows the group imagination to take many forms. For instance, group imagination opens up possibilities for new drama experiences not previously explored by the students. The senior secondary students explored their cognitive, affective and physical domains in a group kinaesthetic pattern that unlocked possibilities for new dramatic understanding about the HSC drama topics that they had not known to exist.

Synthesising the qualitative materials demonstrates that the participating senior secondary students who engaged in *Performing an Essay* had a greater depth of understanding of the drama topic, *Australian Women's Theatre*, than students I had previously taught without
using this method. This is evidenced in the depth of their performance knowledge, and the depth of their theoretical understanding about the topics set for study. One participating student reflected on the process saying, “I felt we performed a piece that not only addressed the (HSC) assessment criteria but also presented a metaphor with an entertaining and informative piece of theatre” (Nina, senior secondary students, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000). Another reflected that “I feel as though the essay will run much clearer in my mind now and hopefully make it easier to write” (Claudia, senior secondary student, Performing an Essay logbook, April 2000). Performing an essay is a teaching practice that optimises imagining and creating in secondary school playbuilding projects. Teachers who participated in this research, and who have also explored Performing an Essay teaching and learning strategies with their respective students, stated that:

Performing an Essay is a type of performance mode where students are being continually confronted and challenged to be precise, ... to back up what they say, ... to draw on the texts. It is imperative to get each individual student to write their draft essay whilst in the active mode of creating (Alice, teacher interview 18/04/2001).

However, Lucy reflected that:

I was disappointed that the students did not incorporate the evidence they demonstrated in the performance, into their written essay. However, I would have to say that the groups can still sing about all the conventions (and), because it is the first time I had (taught these students) I needed to do some refining with them ... with their writing (Lucy, teacher interview 18/04/2001).

These reflections mirror my own interpretations, as this Performing an Essay process does not mean to suggest that writing the individual essay was easy for the senior participating students. As evidenced in their logbooks they were just at the beginning stages of developing their own kinaesthetic writing skills (Grow 1990a & b) Gerald Grow (1990a) argues that “kinesthetic writing may be action oriented. It may also be tactile, motile, muscular”. He further says that “any writer who wants to affect the way readers feel must find a way to touch the kinesthetic intelligence with words” (p.1). The structure of Performing an Essay is an opportunity for students to affect an audience as readers of their playbuilding creations, which in turn produces a depth of thinking which may lead them to write an essay that touches the reader with the “kinesthetic intelligence with words” (p.1). Therefore, Performing an Essay creates an alternative performance text (Denzin, 1997;

As examined in this chapter, I have coded, analysed and synthesised the data for patterns of similarities and for instructive differences in the playbuilding group kinaesthetic paradigm. It is evident that each group created playbuilding differently because each group took kinaesthetic ownership of their work at different times in the process. It is also evident that, in the final few rehearsals of each group’s performance essay, the group itself became a kinaesthetic entity that responded and engaged in imagining and creating with their whole beings.

Further empirical observations that connect with this chapter’s synthesis were evidenced at the end of 2000 when the two senior groups revised for their external Drama HSC written examination on Australian Women’s Theatre. My teaching colleagues and I witnessed these students waiting outside the formal HSC exam room to go in and write about the topic. The participating senior secondary students sat on the grass discussing the possible written exam questions. A number of the students referred to their logbooks, and this began a kinaesthetic remembrance back to their Performing an Essay project six months previously. The students, in their Performing an Essay groups, instinctively got up and enacted the areas they wished to revise, such as making the dress, and the birth of the playwrights. This was a group kinaesthetic revision prior to their formal written HSC examination. I believe that this type of individual and group behavior has something to do with the wisdom of the body. This is a manifestation of Howard Gardner’s (1993b) ‘intelligence-fair’ assessment concept (pp.31-34), where teaching for understanding ensures that students successfully work through the complexity of their task. Through interpretation of the evidence I am encouraged to think that Performing an Essay creates a vibrant metaxical world, as being up and active in both the actual and fictitious worlds allows the groups members’ minds and bodies to explore and embody a powerful, creative, and imaginative release of dramatic possibilities. The playbuilding project enables the students to be excited by a sense of their personal and group achievements (Best, 2000, p.18).
This chapter has analysed new ways to engage drama students in their playbuilding learning through the medium of kinaesthetic teaching and learning (Lovesy, 2002). Kinaesthetic writing strategies are not the province of this thesis, and the individual senior students' written essays have not influenced the playbuilding findings, but their logbooks have. Kinaesthetic writing is an area for further research where more thought and exploration of its value could take place amongst secondary drama teachers (Crumpler & Schneider, 2002; Wagner, 1998a; Wilkinson, 2000). The data from my playbuilding research analysis suggests that the framework of Performing an Essay allows students' creativity to expand, and the drama work these young participating students produced is highly valued by themselves as a creative act. A dimension of sensorial and physical language radiates from the synthesis. The act of theorising indicates to me, as the researcher, that new playbuilding aesthetic spaces are opened up within a scaffolded learning environment. Although the participating junior secondary students did not undertake a Performing an Essay project, the concept of kinaesthetic teaching and learning to enhance students' understanding of drama theory could, I believe, be recontextualised to suit junior drama students so that all drama students can be given the opportunity to know the world they live in, and to change it through a variety of different playbuilding projects (Boal, 1992, p.xxxi).

Finally, this chapter synthesises all the key questions through a group kinaesthetic paradigm embodied through kinaesthetic teaching and learning practices that enhance imagination and creativity within groups of secondary school playbuilders.
Chapter 9
Enhancing playbuilding through kinaesthetic teaching and learning

"The imagination unites in a single point successive periods of time, and sees objects less as they shall be than as she desires them to be, since it depends on her to choose them (Jean Jacques Rousseau, 1896/ 2003, p.122).

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of my qualitative research into playbuilding and kinaesthetic teaching and learning (see Figure 9.1).

Figure 9.1: Flow of analyses in this thesis
This research process analysed the drama education form of playbuilding and, in particular, the imagining and creating that occurs through kinaesthetic teaching and learning with secondary students. The reader, the study participants, and I, as a researcher, are now in the final moments of this playbuilding journey. We have immersed ourselves in the imagination and creation of this thesis with a collaborative process connecting our ideas.

My conclusions are the results of research based theory building around the key questions outlined in Chapter One. This facilitated an interpretive approach to the research data so that the last question ‘What teaching practice would optimise imagining and creating in secondary school playbuilding?’ opened the way to theoretically constructing a group kinaesthetic paradigm. The basic tenet of the group kinaesthetic paradigm is that there are identifiable and overlapping elements present in the form of playbuilding (O’Toole, 1992, pp. 5-8), and these can be enhanced and released through kinaesthetic teaching and learning, as indicated in Figure 9.2.

Figure 9.2: Group kinaesthetic paradigm

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In Figure 9.2 the elements of playbuilding are simultaneously dependent and interdependent, and are contingent upon the imagining and creating phase of the playbuilding project. The research process that gave rise to this group kinaesthetic paradigm relied on the principles of grounded theory, which involved analysing and interpreting the views of the various study participants who had differing levels of knowledge of the subject. Furthermore, this qualitative research has drawn upon drama and theatre education practices, critical pedagogic theory, phenomenology, movement analysts and prominent educators, combined with my own secondary drama teaching experience. As argued in Chapter One, there is a perspective in drama education that drama research is shifting towards advocating a research process that trusts the participants’ voices, generating a flexible and transformative approach (Taylor, 1998, p.85). This process is the one that I have undertaken, and I have used grounded theory, which allows all the participants’ voices to emerge throughout the interpretative process. This research process and its inherent constraints shape the discoveries presented in this chapter.

The significant theoretical proposition arising from this study is a paradigm that identifies drama students as group kinaesthetic learners. Through kinaesthetic teaching and learning, creative spaces open up for secondary school playbuilders to devise their own group plays. This final chapter argues that teaching and learning in a kinaesthetic manner enhance playbuilding and, in the spirit of the metaphoric journey of playbuilding, I propose practical initiatives to incorporate these findings into secondary school drama education.

### 9.2 Research discoveries

My research discoveries have been derived from the key questions posed in Chapter One and analysed in Chapters Four to Eight. The key questions, and their focus in each chapter, are as follows:

- What are the links between imagining and creating in playbuilding? (Chapters Four, Seven and Eight)
- What impact do kinaesthetic teaching and learning practices have on imagining and creating in playbuilding groups? (Chapters Four, Five, Seven and Eight)
• How do phenomena such as group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating contribute to playbuilding success? (Chapters Five, Six and Eight)

• How do phenomena such as group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and the use of group kinaesthetic drama properties enhance the teaching and learning practices of playbuilding and the playbuilders’ potential to become group kinaesthetic learners? (Chapters, Five, Six and Eight)

• What teaching practice would optimise imagining and creating in secondary school playbuilding groups? (Chapters Seven and Eight).

Playbuilding deals with symbolic creativity, and as a qualitative researcher I looked with fresh eyes at the creative implications of the data as it came to hand. As analysed in Chapter Three, this meant understanding the playbuilders’ symbols and codes, and at other times examining ways in which a drama teacher could extend a playbuilding group’s imagining and creating within the context of the New South Wales Board of Studies Drama Syllabi (Board of Studies, 1999b, 2003a).

There are three major discoveries from my research; they embrace the group kinaesthetic paradigm:

• a group kinaesthetic paradigm is present in playbuilding projects and can be enhanced through scaffolded learning

• playbuilding groups are a complex kinaesthetic learning structure

• drama teachers who engage in empathic kinaesthetic teaching strategies enhance learning in playbuilding.

9.2.1 A group kinaesthetic paradigm is present in playbuilding projects and can be enhanced through scaffolded learning

My first major discovery from the research is that in playbuilding, secondary drama students learn from a group kinaesthetic perspective. This kinaesthetic learning is enhanced when a drama teacher understands the significance of embodied learning, and scaffolds teaching practice to take into account the multiplicity of factors that make up a
playbuilding group. This multiplicity of interrelated factors enhances the group kinaesthetic paradigm. At times the factors can operate separately, at other times they function together to enable group embodied learning to take place. Figure 9.3 is a visual representation of the various factors that comprise the group kinaesthetic paradigm.

Figure 9.3: Factors in the paradigm that identify students as group kinaesthetic learners

In Figure 9.3, the identified factors belong to the complex environment of students’ imagining and creating throughout a playbuilding project. The figure demonstrates that embodied kinaesthetic learning occurs within this multiplicity of teaching and learning factors because it operates within the group kinaesthetic paradigm (see Figure 9.2). My research thus indicates that a group kinaesthetic paradigm progresses under certain conditions in the playbuilding classroom. These conditions occur when playbuilding students are given opportunities to create their group devised projects in a way that values them as kinaesthetic learners.
The consequence of identifying secondary drama students as kinaesthetic learners is central to secondary drama classroom praxis, but a multiplicity of other learning styles are also present, and are valued and fostered in the classroom. This discovery concurs with Howard Gardner’s (1993b) theories that students draw on a combination of different intelligences at different times, and in a playbuilding project they may favour one intelligence over another in their learning process. This suggests that group kinaesthetic bodily intelligence is not singular but is multiple in its components, comprising such intelligences as musical, spatial, linguistic, intrapersonal and interpersonal, but with a dominance in the kinaesthetic field (1993b).

Moreover, the research demonstrates that drama students can learn more effectively about their expressive skills as key instruments in their process and performance projects, through a scaffolding teaching environment within a group kinaesthetic paradigm. Within this scaffolding environment, the groups require teacher support for their initial exploration into finding problems, managing problems and solving problems through their bodily senses, and this learning takes place as a playbuilding group explores kinaesthetically its verbal and non-verbal domains (Abram, 1996; Gardner, 1993b). Through the emergence of the group kinaesthetic paradigm, pedagogic spaces appear which enable participating playbuilders to build creative relationships with each other with little or no teacher assistance, but through their group’s ongoing collaborative experiences in which the playbuilders rely upon and trust their collective drama wisdom. Within this scaffolded learning students have a kinaesthetic interdependence with each other which affects how they identify their playbuilding problems and how they solve their playbuilding problems, and which gives each group permission to shift its thinking and physicalising to reach their desired dramatic outcome of creating dramatic meaning.

Another interpretation of my first discovery is that playing and improvising are pivotal to the learning that takes place in playbuilding. This is evident especially in the initial stages of devising, but is always a valuable strategy for teachers and students to return to in times of seeking creative solutions to drama problems. I have concluded that playing and improvising are in themselves transformational kinaesthetic objects that engage the students with their creativity. This discovery is supported by Donald Winnicott’s notion that:
... playing was a very special experience of trust that had its origins in the 'potential space' between baby and mother. This space is both an actual playground and the conceptual arena where human culture originates. ... Almost any object, space, or span of time can be used 'in play'. And within this liminal play world, for the playing child, anything can become something else (D. Winnicott, 1957 & 1971, cited in Schechner, 2002, p.89).

When the playbuilders encountered playing and improvising in their playbuilding project, play and improvisation became tangible kinaesthetic transformational objects that helped the group to solve problems and fashion new creative experiences. These transformational kinaesthetic objects, playing and improvising, opened up spaces for the playbuilders to engage physically with each other in the safety of their learning environment, and to stimulate diverse imaginings that helped the group to move on to the next phase of the project. The research demonstrates that playbuilders organise the information from playing and improvising through the tensions and uncertainties of this spontaneous group kinaesthetic learning. These tensions and uncertainties paradoxically enabled the groups to trust each other, and to respond to the notion that 'anything can become something else' in a group kinaesthetic learning environment. This gives the playbuilders learning space to consider diverse alternative approaches to their projects (Grohnick et al., 1978; D. Winnicott, 1971). Playing and improvising are thus transformational kinaesthetic objects that enhance the discovery that playbuilders fundamentally distinguish themselves as 'group imaginative creators'.

9.2.2 Playbuilding groups are a complex kinaesthetic learning structure

My second major research discovery is that playbuilding involves complex kinaesthetic learning structures because of its 'group' nature. This thesis does not discount the teaching of individual drama students, as playbuilding groups are made up of individual drama students. These individual students' actions, thoughts and emotions are understood by "taking into consideration the groups they belong to and the groups that surround them" (Forsyth, 1999, p.xi). Therefore, the manner in which playbuilders construct complex relationships within their group learning environment emerges as a major discovery of this research.
An analogy to this complex kinaesthetic learning structure is the argument put forward by Bert O. States (1985) that a playwright (in this case playbuilders) writing his/her own plays shifts “the ground and conditions of our perception of the world” (p.48). The student playbuilders participating in this research shifted their dramatic grounds, the learning conditions, and their group perception of their playbuilding world every time they created. This was evidenced by the junior secondary students’ Experimental Playbuilding groups, Television versus Reality, Sameness versus Differences, and the Dominant Masks, and the senior students’ Group Devised Performances, The Wives, The White Nothing, and The Three Eves. In both the junior and the senior secondary playbuilding projects, each group explored their imaginative ideas through their physical senses, thereby altering their initial perceptions of the playbuilding project. In other words, the group’s kinaesthetic variations and transformations deepened and extended the dramatic meaning for the playbuilders.

In Performing an Essay both groups, Feminism versus Femininity and The Female Protagonists, also shifted their perception of the place and function of Australian Women’s Theatre. Each group’s primary relationship to the HSC project was as cognitive, affective and physical females. Through this primary relationship the groups examined female theatre practitioners, involving themselves as active female beings (Tait, 1994). As active dramatic beings the female students responded emotionally and imaginatively to the topic, and acted upon and within the topic as students capable of being conscious of their actions in their drama learning (Matthews, 2002, pp.45-53).

Complex kinaesthetic learning structures are apparent in the phenomena of group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and the use of group kinaesthetic drama properties. These complex kinaesthetic learning structures are intertwined in the drama learning that takes place, and often enhance it, but sometimes hamper it. Integrating the above phenomena challenges the playbuilders to transform and to construct meaning out of divergent ideas that were at first beyond the group’s known world. An interpretation of this discovery is that a group can form its unique imaginative and metaphoric capacities. When the kinaesthetic learning becomes perplexing, as when The Wives found difficulty in imagining a metaphor that would allow their narrative to go forward, or when The Female
Protagonists created a metaphor that did not initially enhance their Performing an Essay project, the groups required encouragement to continue to explore imaginatively their metaphoric ideas. This was achieved through the teacher simplifying how they approached their group learning by encouraging empathic responses to one another, and through helping them to experiment with tangible or imagined drama properties. The teacher's role is therefore to encourage and facilitate playbuilders to become peer learners in their own kinaesthetic learning.

The experienced drama teachers who participated in this research had similar experiences with their playbuilding groups. Some of their playbuilding groups developed an innate awareness of the impact of their bodies in learning, while others had little perception of how their bodies functioned in a playbuilding project. Scaffold learning occurred through extending or simplifying the teaching approaches, and through providing spaces for the students to value co-facilitation and peer learning strategies that enhance embodiment. Furthermore, as argued in Chapter Four, teaching in a kinaesthetic scaffolding mode enables a teacher to be aware of how complex kinaesthetic languages function for a particular group, and how to enhance these complex kinaesthetic languages so that the group achieves a dynamic, affective, cognitive and physical interaction that illuminates their embodied learning.

One of my discoveries is that in spite of group difficulties, playbuilders solve problems through engaging with group kinaesthetic empathy. Group kinaesthetic empathy emerged at different times for all the different groups studied. When it emerged it enabled the playbuilders to continue to explore their group kinaesthetic knowing and group kinaesthetic drama properties. Group kinaesthetic empathy helped the students to find, manage and solve playbuilding problems, as evidenced by The Wives and The Three Eves groups’ solutions to their playbuilding problems. Furthermore, a subsidiary interpretation of group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties was that the senior Group Devised Performances used complex playbuilding structures to explore consciously or subconsciously theatre practitioners such as Augusto Boal, Bertolt Brecht, and Konstantin Stanislavski. The research demonstrates that all the playbuilders enjoyed the fact that their playbuilding could be a hybrid multifarious activity if they so chose. Moreover, all the playbuilding groups analysed had curriculum, assessment and/or examination restrictions
and requirements; these restrictions and requirements opened up learning spaces for the
playbuilders to push the boundaries of their mandated criteria as they were “intelligence-
fair” (Gardner, 1993b, p.xv). The playbuilding groups did this by exploring as many of the
possibilities of their given drama and theatre conventions and techniques as they saw fit. In
all cases eclectic ideas arose within the group members’ imaginations, and the ideas were
transferred to the classroom floor through drama problem-solving techniques.

A further interpretation of the data is that metaxis is integrated into group structures;
metaxis, with all its complexities, is a powerful mechanism for teachers and groups to
explore a kinaesthetic teaching and learning frame. Metaxis enables the students and the
teachers to step in and out of their imaginary worlds; it provides a vibrant framework for
the body-mind-embodiment cyclic experiences as it facilitates metaxical playing,
improvising, refining and performing. Metaxis is also present in the actor/audience
relationship, and within assessment for and of learning.

Metaxis thus is a creative and exciting pendulum that swings between the actual and
fictitious worlds, helping playbuilders and drama teachers to engage in the imagining and
creating that takes place. Metaxis is also part of the deep reflection and evaluation that
occurs among students and teachers during the playbuilding process, as it crosses back and
forth from the physical creating into the students’ and teachers’ verbal and written
discourses, and back again into practical activities. In all of the above situations, metaxis
engages with kinaesthetic teaching and learning to extend and strengthen playbuilding
projects.

9.2.3 Drama teachers who engage in empathic kinaesthetic
teaching strategies enhance learning in playbuilding

My third major discovery is that teaching in an empathic kinaesthetic mode enables
playbuilders to create their own unique diverse imaginations, thereby opening up a myriad
of creative possibilities in the drama learning space. A playbuilding group’s imagination is
being tried, tested, re-arranged and shifted through the teaching that occurs, and the groups
and individual students within them continue to advance their learning process when teaching is attuned to their needs (Arnold, 1993, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2000).

Kinaesthetic teaching in a sensitive, constructive and empathic manner is therefore an effective way of helping the playbuilding groups to release their imaginations to engage in embodied learning. Kinaesthetic teaching in an empathic mode means that the drama teacher creates vibrant playbuilding learning within the drama syllabus framework. When the drama teacher facilitates the dynamic between affect, cognition and physicality in the playbuilding learning context, she/he is engaging in empathic attunement and developing an awareness of the group’s kinaesthetic learning styles (Arnold, 1998, pp.126-127).

Empathic kinaesthetic teaching strategies enable playbuilders to take risks in exploring their group kinaesthetic knowing, thereby examining what drama and theatre conventions and techniques they can explore in their devising, while simultaneously working through their playbuilding problems. This creates the conditions for group kinaesthetic empathy to emerge in the phase of the project where the group is willing to take risks, listen to one another, disagree, and yet go forward; this occurred at different times with the participating student groups. Related to these concepts is the way that playbuilders use a tangible or imagined kinaesthetic drama property to achieve another creative approach to their problem finding, managing and solving, and hence the creative building of the group devised play.

Through kinaesthetic teaching in an empathic mode the playbuilders gain licence to become excited and exhilarated, as well as to understand that trepidation and confusion are part of the drama learning process. This process is a continuous one of testing and trying, and belongs to the metaxical world of playbuilding. Kinaesthetic empathic teaching and metaxis enable students to operate in both worlds singularly or simultaneously. Teaching within a metaxical frame provides a dimension for the students to cross between the actual and their fictitious worlds using their group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and a group kinaesthetic drama property when examining ideas from a different perspective.
Finally, empathy in kinaesthetic drama teaching and learning enables playbuilders to experience body-mind-embodied learning through a dynamic exploration of varied kinaesthetic languages working in harmony.

9.3 Framework for implementing kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies in playbuilding.

My framework for implementing kinaesthetic teaching and learning in playbuilding acknowledges the complexities involved in teaching in this manner. The framework is discussed in the spirit of shared learning ideas that can provide heightened imaginative and dramatic experiences for secondary school playbuilders.

Drama educators such as David Wright (1998) and Anton Franks (1996) have argued for greater discussion of the experiences of embodied learning in drama education, as they perceive that there is a lack of investigation in this area. This thesis addresses the kinaesthetic aspect of embodied learning that opens up possibilities and spaces for dynamic imaginative playbuilding to occur. The three key components of my framework for implementing kinaesthetic teaching and learning in playbuilding are:

- strategies to enable drama teachers to scaffold embodied kinaesthetic teaching and learning practices within a group kinaesthetic paradigm
- strategies to enable drama teachers to understand playbuilding groups as complex kinaesthetic learning structures
- strategies to enable drama teachers to engage in empathic kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies in playbuilding.

9.3.1 Strategies to enable drama teachers to scaffold embodied kinaesthetic teaching and learning practices within a group kinaesthetic paradigm

This component of my implementation framework proposes a way to enhance playbuilding projects through the conscious use of kinaesthetic teaching strategies that scaffold
embodied learning situations within a group kinaesthetic paradigm. A playbuilding group explores kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties, by whatever label the teacher or students use to describe them in a learning space that can give rise to a variety of possibilities that stimulate diverse imagining and metaphoric thinking and creating for the playbuilders.

Howard Gardner (1993b) believes that teaching could be sculpted so that teachers are responsive to the “potency of an intelligence” (p.72). He suggests that for students with a particular intelligence profile the teacher develops appropriate teaching techniques that suit the “developmental level in the particular domain of knowledge at issue” (p.72). Hence, I propose that kinaesthetic teaching and learning be modelled on this notion, as well as being continually informed by scaffolded learning and evolving critical pedagogic theory. Although I have contributed ideas for kinaesthetic teaching strategies and practices throughout this thesis, it is secondary drama teachers’ individual knowledge of their cohort of playbuilders that will allow kinaesthetic teaching and learning to succeed.

An important aspect of my implementation framework is a sophisticated interpretation of the group kinaesthetic paradigm so that the drama classroom promotes fluent and flexible teaching practices where kinaesthetic teaching and learning are multiple in their pedagogic components. The framework takes into account the diversity of learning styles and intelligences of playbuilders. For instance, a drama teacher may wish to investigate Moni Yakin’s and Muriel Broadman’s (1990) physical approach to creating a character, or Augusto Boal’s (1992) games and activities that explore power structures in society through the senses of the body, or focus their playbuilding strategies on John O’Toole’s (1992) analysis of the processes involved in teaching drama, or perhaps strategies that will connect these practitioners as well as any other relevant practitioners to the drama learning that is taking place. They may also investigate how assessment for and of learning impacts on a playbuilding performance. Kinaesthetic teaching strategies involve teachers continuously understanding and being aware of how their groups of students, and the individuals within the groups, embody active physical learning from a variety of sources.

Finally, the framework proposes that, by the very act of thinking about kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies and then acting upon this thinking, a dynamic space for
teachers is opened up to enable successful playbuilding to occur, involving playbuilders gaining greater ownership of their learning.

9.3.2 Strategies to enable drama teachers to explore playbuilding groups as complex kinaesthetic learning structures

This component of my implementation framework proposes that drama teachers focus on the group as a living entity in the classroom, understanding that the group is made up of various individuals who learn in different ways. From this perspective, drama teaching involves strategies that entail consciousness of how the playbuilders interact as a group throughout the learning process.

Donelson R. Forsyth (1999) discusses the processes that unfold in groups that interact. He says:

Through membership in groups you define and confirm your values and beliefs and take on or refine a social identity. When you face uncertain situations, in groups you gain reassuring information about your problems and security in companionship. In groups you learn about relations with others (p.xi).

The important aspect of Donelson Forsyth’s (1999) thinking on group processes is that they are similar to a playbuilding group’s process. The framework suggests that by drama teachers valuing group membership as a unique identity, greater possibilities are opened up for drama learning to be embodied by the students. Each group’s imagination defines and strengthens its ideas, and when a group has to solve its playbuilding problems, as they all have to do, the group will often have an embodied security in the rapport that has developed. If this does not happen, or if it breaks down, the drama teacher’s understanding of how a group relates kinaesthetically enables embodied learning to continue to take place; this is metaxis working to enhance the learning, and is important in the students’ process of creativity.

A secondary school drama teacher in New South Wales may have between one and six groups devising at any one time in any one classroom, and these strategies for managing
complex group structures are based on this premise. The majority of playbuilding groups will be physically active, and at different metaxical stages of their group devising on the classroom floor. This means that the teacher must become conscious of the way each group:

- forms its physical playbuilding identity
- finds, manages and solves the problems in its active kinaesthetic learning
- explores and discovers its group relationships, from the initial playing to the improvising, and on to the final refinement and performance of their projects
- embodies the group’s playbuilding ideas.

Complex group structures function in a classroom environment where the students are “surrounded and embedded in groups” (Forsyth, 1999, p.xi), and the challenge for the teacher is that each group has a different membership structure. A drama teacher values the fact that no group reacts in the same way to any given movement problem (Blom & Chaplin, 1988, p.54). This is because of the different ways students use, understand and perceive their bodies, and this will enable a drama teacher to further examine the complex learning structures that are taking place in this diverse embodied group environment.

Thus when drama teachers explore playbuilding groups as complex kinaesthetic learning structures they become aware of and attuned to the differences in their groups. They explore this through classroom observation, discussion and debate with colleagues, and through literature on group dynamics. It is from the teacher’s awareness and attunement to each group’s diverse learning structure that a group’s imagining and creating are merged, which provides heightened opportunities for the group to think, create and act as one.
9.3.3 Strategies to enable drama teachers to engage in empathic kinaesthetic teaching and learning in playbuilding

This component of my implementation framework encourages drama teachers to engage in empathic kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies to enable embodied learning to occur simultaneously or at different times for different playbuilding groups. This means that drama teachers must create or use diverse strategies, such as the ones employed in the playbuilding project *Performing an Essay*. Teaching in a kinaesthetic empathic mode encourages playbuilders to enjoy their kinaesthetic collaborative learning and to respect each group’s uniqueness. As analysed in Chapters Four to Eight, empathic drama teaching creates spaces on the classroom floor for the playbuilders to respect and appreciate the commitment required in the collaborative process, yet acknowledges each group as having a unique identity.

Empathic kinaesthetic teaching strategies enable flexible learning to occur. In any playbuilding project there is exploration and discovery, conflict and resolution; this is because groups must by their very nature find their drama problems, continuously solve their drama problems, and manage drama problems as they emerge. Through this continuous problem-solving cycle there is mutual teacher and student discovery of their imaginative transformation abilities. A teacher with varied playbuilding experience may have some idea of what problems will occur, but cannot know the extent or range of the problems beforehand. This was evidenced by the plethora of apples that at times hindered the creating in *The Three Eves*, or by Lucy, a participating teacher whose playbuilding group wanted to sit and script, and not to experiment with improvisation techniques to release their imaginative ideas (Lucy, teacher interview 18/04/2001). My interpretation which emerged from the theory building is that kinaesthetic teaching in an empathic mode will help playbuilders, regardless of any problems that may develop, to explore their group kinaesthetic patterns so that the teachers’ and playbuilders’ imagining and creating inform each other’s worlds. A further interpretation is that this type of teaching enables groups to explore their kinaesthetic awareness safely in an environment that engenders trust and openness (Moore & Yamamoto, 1988a & b). This in turn fosters creative achievements
whilst acknowledging the constraints and problems that are always part of the playbuilding process.

The concept of empathic (Arnold, 1993, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2000) kinaesthetic teaching that has emerged from this research work includes teaching strategies to help drama teachers to explore empathic teaching in their classrooms, so that the teacher does not try to control the students' human insight (Taylor, 1998, p.86). Thus playbuilding requires reciprocal empathic engagement with the students.

The framework therefore has three significant strategies for successful implementation in the playbuilding classroom. Figure 9.4 summarises the implementation of kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies in playbuilding and highlights the key strategies required for exploring and facilitating implementation.

![Diagram: Framework for implementation]

Figure 9.4: Framework for implementing kinaesthetic teaching and learning in playbuilding groups
9.4 Pedagogical support for implementation of kinaesthetic teaching and learning in playbuilding groups

The following pedagogical initiatives for my emergent theory on kinaesthetic teaching and learning playbuilding strategies could be implemented if drama students’ preferences for kinaesthetic learning are placed at the centre of playbuilding curriculum development. The research suggests that the participating students knew and understood their particular learning styles, and when this knowledge was heard and acted upon, they developed into an effective playbuilding group. From listening and responding to playbuilders an active voice can be given to their drama education learning. This would enable drama teachers and students to continue to explore passionately the dynamic potency of playbuilding in secondary drama education, and its lifelong ramifications for community creativity. Kinaesthetic playbuilding strategies can come to fruition with the following pedagogic support.

Professional drama associations could provide opportunities for secondary drama teachers to explore kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies in playbuilding. This suggests that associations such as IDEA (International Drama Education Association), Drama Australia, the New South Wales Educational Drama Association, the Association of Independent Schools of NSW Limited, and the Catholic Education Office and Commission’s professional development programs, could organise a number of their conferences to focus explicitly on kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies in secondary education playbuilding. This educational focus would create meaningful drama education conditions where playbuilders are acknowledged and valued as group kinaesthetic learners. A drama education conference could therefore be dedicated to valuing the group kinaesthetic paradigm in playbuilding. Furthermore, the qualities and techniques of this emergent practice could be demonstrated in conferences for non-drama-educators. This would demonstrate the importance of kinaesthetic and embodied learning through drama to varying diverse groups. Applications could be demonstrated in teaching and learning, learning innovation, interdisciplinary learning, literacy and multi-literacies conferences.
Tertiary teacher programs could provide opportunities for tertiary student drama teachers to develop kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies in playbuilding. In this way, those who facilitate the learning of tertiary student drama teachers could employ principles and practices that structure a variety of kinaesthetic drama learning experiences that encompass practical and theoretical activities and reflections on:

- the form of playbuilding in secondary schools
- secondary drama students' kinaesthetic learning styles
- teaching in a kinaesthetic manner
- embodied learning relationships.

From this basis they would be given the opportunity to discover, understand, and broaden the nature of kinaesthetic teaching and learning in secondary school playbuilding groups. Furthermore, tertiary student drama teachers could be given learning opportunities to create their own playbuilding work in their undergraduate and postgraduate courses so that they bring this embodied experience into their future secondary drama teaching praxis.

In both the junior and senior secondary drama syllabi, playbuilding is a mandated content area (Board of Studies 1999a, 2003a). Pedagogical support for this drama education premise is imperative so that a framework can be developed that acknowledges and instigates evolving kinaesthetic teaching and learning opportunities for drama teachers. Thus school-based educational institutions in New South Wales could provide practical and theoretical support for secondary drama teachers in playbuilding, to enable them to engage in empathic kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies. These educational governing bodies could also achieve this support through:

- sustaining the positions of drama curriculum officers whose role is to provide continuing assistance to drama teachers regarding the form of playbuilding and associated drama education praxis
- facilitating professional development experiences, for drama teachers with an emphasis on the form of kinaesthetic teaching and learning in playbuilding.
• providing publications, such as written support documents, DVDs, and videos that encourage drama teachers to reflect on and to refine their own kinaesthetic playbuilding practices and associated drama education praxis.

This study has demonstrated that drama students know and value their kinaesthetic learning experiences. Drama students’ pedagogic understanding of their learning could be given a voice in New South Wales schools so that the students are empowered to make a difference to their playbuilding experience. As a group kinaesthetic paradigm is a new and innovative method to facilitate kinaesthetic learning in schools, and as this research has revealed that drama students benefit from this group approach to learning, New South Wales secondary schools could give drama students the opportunity to explore group kinaesthetics as a dynamic drama pedagogy in their classrooms. Simultaneously, these schools could give their drama teachers opportunities to attend professional drama workshops in kinaesthetic teaching and learning, providing genuine educational support to underpin drama learning in the school’s pedagogic values.

9.5 Further research

David Best (1996) argues that “artistic experience is immensely varied in character, and it leads to distortion and a diminution of the potentialities of the arts to suppose that its character can be located by concentrating exclusively on intense, ‘memorable’ examples”. (p.47). I agree with David Best’s inferences because playbuilding is an immensely varied art form and I have interpreted only one part, but one very important and memorable part, of its nature, that of group kinaesthetics.

Arising from my study, further drama research could also add to the emerging areas of playbuilding, girls’ drama education (Gallagher, 2000; Hatton 2001, 2002, 2003; Lee, 1997; O’Mara 2001) and group kinaesthetic learning. Examples include:

• playbuilding’s kinaesthetic function and place in other curriculum areas, such as Music, Art, Dance, English, History, Maths, Physics
• playbuilding’s kinaesthetic function and place in an all boys’(Sallis, 2003) and/or co-educational secondary school setting
- kinaesthetic writing in secondary drama education
- the function and benefits of embodied learning in drama education
- how knowledge is created through playing and improvising in drama education
- the relationship between gender (Sanders, 1997) and group kinaesthetic learning in drama education.

Further research could also foster a climate which questions and challenges preconceived ideas about playbuilding and group kinaesthetic learning, and one in which the theory that emerges can be embodied in a drama education teaching and learning environment.

Enhancing imagination and creativity in playbuilding can go beyond a drama school environment and extend into such areas as “Theatre for Young People”, “Theatre for Development” (Somers, 2003, p.133) or intercultural group devised performances. This research could impact on such communities as the stories from playbuilding can have a profound effect upon the playbuilders and their audiences as playbuilding creates the conditions for valuing diverse thoughts and differences, and “allows us to contemplate other than who we are” (p.136).

9.6 Concluding thoughts

This thesis began by describing my personal journey as a researcher and the influences on my playbuilding pedagogy that led me to research imagining and creating in playbuilding. My concluding thoughts from this research suggest that group kinaesthetics has the potential to enhance the form of playbuilding as it transforms group devised learning. Transformation occurs because a playbuilding group releases its kinaesthetic potential through the multiple layers of group kinaesthetic teaching and learning. The challenge is for drama educators to be aware of how empathic kinaesthetic teaching and learning constitute a mode of knowing, a means of making group devised performances that shape the metaxical experiences of the playbuilders. In my research it was evident that the participating students knew intuitively that in the main they learnt from a kinaesthetic intelligence and that they valued this learning capacity, but it was also evident that the
students did not always understand the creative power of group kinaesthetics. The key to group kinaesthetic learning is that it requires more emphasis on the depth of learning and understanding that occurs in playbuilding than on skills oriented drama learning. Kinaesthetic teaching and learning is not a fixed pedagogy, but one that acknowledges that the group interacts with the playbuilding environment in a multiplicity of ways. Playbuilders come to an understanding of their drama experiences through the acquisition of group knowledge and through the capacity to apply what they have learnt to new playbuilding contexts, thereby responding to future challenges.

The research interpretations reflect that the contemporary literature on drama and theatre pedagogy impacts on playbuilding learning in a cognitive, affective and physical way to enhance the collective dramatic wisdom of the playbuilders. The theory demonstrates an acknowledgment of the importance of interrelating drama and theatre praxis in the experiential process of playbuilding. The group kinaesthetic paradigm enables each playbuilding group to explore its work with a dynamic kinaesthetic voice. This kinaesthetic voice enables students to generate their own stories and to take ownership of their process and performances. The group kinaesthetic paradigm opens up spaces for the playbuilders to create meaningful pedagogic and artistic playbuilding where embodied learning occurs. Embodied learning deepens the range and quality of the learning whilst reflecting and encouraging the diverse capabilities of the group.

From my research I have also realised that drama educators and student playbuilders are working from the premise that “intuitive understanding through the body is stimulated and developed in many different ways” (Brook, 1993, p.108). This has been the experience with my research project, where I have discovered an intuitive understanding of group kinaesthetic playbuilding as a form of knowledge and growth. In Augusto Boal’s (1992) words, “theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it” (p.xxxi). I have great affinity with Augusto Boal’s (1992) and Peter Brook’s (1993) ideas, as it has been my intuition that has allowed me to gain insight into the key questions posed in Chapter One. It has been my intuition that continually fuels my curiosity of what happens in that space that link between imagination and creativity in playbuilding. Furthermore, this research has empowered me to say passionately that the imagination, with all “her” varied nuances does
unite in a single point of desire (Rousseau, 1896/2003 p.122) in playbuilding. A drama education form that exists in a boundless group kinaesthetic imaginative and creative world of possibilities is so truly exciting and transformational to me and to the participants in this research, that I am delighted to critically share it with my drama education community.
Drama Education
Secondary School Playbuilding

Enhancing imagination and creativity in group playbuilding through kinaesthetic teaching and learning

by

Sarah Lovesy

Thesis submitted for
Doctor of Philosophy
October 2003

University of Western Sydney

Volume 2 of 2
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   **Time: 14 minutes & 35 seconds**

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Ethics
1.1 Letter of approval from UWS Nepean Human Ethics Review Committee
2 March 2000

Sarah Lovesy
Unit 7
2-6 Rokeby Road
Abbotsford 2046

Dear Sarah

Re: Releasing the Imagination in secondary drama students
Registration No. HE 99/100

Your revised application has been reviewed and it has now been agreed
to grant your ethics protocol an approval.

You are advised that the Committee should be notified of any further
change/s to the research methodology should there be any in the future.
You will be required to provide reports on the ethical aspects of your
project.

The Protocol No. HE 2000/100 should be quoted in all future
correspondence about this project. Your approval will expire 30
December 2001. Please contact the Research Ethics Co-ordinator, Kay
Buckley on tel: 47 360 169 if you require any further information.

The Committee wishes you well with your project.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]
Associate Professor Elizabeth Deane
Chairperson
UWS Nepean Human Ethics Review Committee

cc: Mary Mooney (Supervisor)
1.2 Year 12 student’s consent letter

3rd March 2000

Dear Student,

I am currently undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Western Sydney Nepean. The research project is titled Releasing the Imagination in Secondary Drama Education.

I ask your permission to be a participant in this project in 2000. If you agree, your participation in my research would involve:

(a) One class audiotaped interview of approximately sixty minutes in length in 2000. This interview would be based on your ideas of how your imagination functions during the process and product work of your Performance Essay and Group Performance

(b) Two audiotaped recordings of classroom workshops

(c) Submitting your logbook for analysis of your personal and dramatic ideas

(d) Allowing photographs to be taken of your process and product work in your Performance Essay and Group Performance

(e) Allowing videotaping of the process and product work in your Performance Essay and Group Presentation

(f) Completing a questionnaire.

Please discuss this proposal with your parents/guardians. If you agree to participate I would ask that you sign the permission slip. This can be returned during school hours to a marked box outside XXXXXX within two weeks of receiving this letter. If you have any queries you can contact me at work on XXXXXXX or home on 9713 6267.
This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Nepean Human Ethics Review Committee and by the school. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Committee Officer (tel: 02 47 360 169). Any issue you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

SARAH LOVESY

---

Research Agreement Form  - Year 12-

I ___________________________ Student Name/ Year Group ___________________________
Will/will not be participating in Ms. Lovesy’s drama research project
Releasing the Imagination in Secondary Drama Education
Signatures

Student ___________________________
Date ___________________________

Parent/Guardian ___________________________
Date ___________________________

This slip is to be returned during school hours to a marked box outside XXXXXX within two weeks of receiving this letter.

Thank You

Sarah Lovesy
1.3 Year 9 student’s consent letter

1st April 2000

Dear Student,

I am currently undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Western Sydney Nepean. The research project is titled Releasing the Imagination in Secondary Drama Education.

I ask your permission to be a participant in this project in Terms 3 and 4 of 2000. If you agree, your participation in my research would involve:

(a) One class audiotaped interview of approximately sixty minutes in length in 2000. This interview would be based on your ideas of how your imagination functions during the process and product work of your playbuilding project

(b) Submitting your journal for analysis of your personal and dramatic ideas

(c) Allowing photographs to be taken of your process and product work in your playbuilding project

(d) Allowing videotaping of the process and product work in your playbuilding project

(f) Completing a questionnaire.

Please discuss this proposal with your parents/guardians. If you agree to participate I would ask that you sign the permission slip. This can be returned during school hours to a marked box outside XXXXXXX within two weeks of receiving this letter. If you have any queries you can contact me at work on XXXXXXX or home on 9713 6267.

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Nepean Human Ethics Review Committee and by the school. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Committee Officer (tel: 02 47 360 169). Any issue you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

SARAH LOVESY
Research Agreement Form - Year 9

I __________________________ Student Name/ Year Group _________
Will/will not be participating in Ms. Lovesy’s drama research project Releasing the
Imagination in Secondary Drama Education

Signatures

Student __________________________ Date____________________

Parent/Guardian __________________________ Date____________________

This slip is to be returned during school hours to a marked box outside XXXXXX
within two weeks of receiving this letter.

Thank You

Sarah Lovesy
1.4 Year 12 parent's consent letter

3rd March 2000

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am currently undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Western Sydney Nepean. The research project is titled Releasing the Imagination in Secondary Drama Education. I ask permission for your daughter to be a participant in this project in 2000. If you agree, her participation in my research would involve:

(a) One audiotaped interview of approximately sixty minutes in length in 2000. This interview would be based on her ideas of how her, and the class’s, imagination functions during the process and product work of the Performance Essay and Group Presentation

(b) Submitting her logbook for analysis of her personal and dramatic ideas

(c) Allowing photographs to be taken of the process and product work in her Performance Essay and Group Performance

(a) Allowing videotaping of the process and product work in her Performance Essay and Group Performance

(e) Two audiotaped recordings of classroom workshops

(f) Completing a questionnaire.

If your daughter agrees to participate I would ask that you sign her permission slip. This can be returned during school hours to a marked box outside XXXXXXX within two weeks of receiving this letter. If you have any queries you can contact me at work on XXXXXXX or home on 9713 6267. This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Nepean Human Ethics Review Committee and the school. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Committee Officer (Tel: 02 47 360 169). Any issue you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

SARAH LOVESY
1.5 Year 9 parent's consent letter

1st April 2000

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am currently undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Western Sydney Nepean. The research project is titled Releasing the Imagination in Secondary Drama Education.

I ask permission for your daughter to be a participant in this project in Terms 3 and 4 of 2000. If you agree, her participation in my research would involve:

(a) One audiotaped interview of approximately sixty minutes in length in 2000. This interview would be based on her ideas of how her, and the class's, imagination functions during the playbuilding project

(b) Submitting her journal for analysis of her personal and dramatic ideas

(c) Allowing photographs to be taken of the process and product work in her playbuilding project

(e) Allowing videotaping of the process and product work in her playbuilding project.

(f) Completing a questionnaire.

If your daughter agrees to participate I would ask that you sign her permission slip. This can be returned during school hours to a marked box outside XXXXX within two weeks of receiving this letter. If you have any queries you can contact me at work on XXXXXXX or home on 9713 6267.

The University of Western Sydney Nepean Human Ethics Review Committee and the school have approved this study. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Committee Officer (Tel: 02 47 360 169). Any issue you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

SARAH LOVESY
1.6 Information statement

Ref: HE 99 100 3rd March 2000

INFORMATION STATEMENT

I am undertaking a doctoral research project at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean. I am being supervised by two Drama Lecturers, Ms. _______ and Ms. _____. The title of my research project is Releasing the Imagination in Secondary Drama Education.

Potential participants in the project will be:

(a) My years 9/10 and 11/12 drama classes from St. Sistine School
(b) Other Drama Teachers from diverse background.

All potential participants will be invited to join and therefore the project will be self selecting.

Please be assured that you have personal autonomy. If you do not wish to participate there are no disadvantages/penalties or adverse consequences. You are also free to withdraw at any time through the process.

Students who do not wish to take part in the research project will still be situated as part of the class activities but data will not be collected from them. I would also:

(a) Respect their decision by acknowledging their right to refuse in a letter
(b) Respect their decision by verbally acknowledging their right to refuse
(c) Arrange for The Director of Studies at St. Sistine School to reaffirm to the potential participants their right to participate or not, and
(d) Ensure that all their data is deleted from the project if participants wish to withdraw.

Data will be coded so that the anonymity of each participant is guaranteed. Data will be stored on safe and secure premises in order that the confidentiality of the information about the participants is continually maintained. Data will be destroyed five years after the Doctorate has been completed.

Other diverse drama teachers will be interviewed. All interviews will be audiotaped with permission of the interviewee.

All potential participating class students will be photographed, videotaped and audiotaped in their self devised work to provide varied data material for analysis.
The value of the study is dependent on obtaining frank and detailed appraisals. The discussions/visual material will seek evidence of the links between imagination, creativity and self devised drama work. The information provided by students, teachers and academics will be the essence of the study.

The work under investigation will come from the existing St. Sistine School’s Drama Department’s Course and Class Programs. Normal Assessment, Reporting and Evaluation procedures will be practiced. Please be advised that the Principal has given her approval for all students to be involved, if they so wish.

The completed Doctorate of Philosophy will be housed in the library at the University of Western Sydney Nepean. I will have my own personal copies and give a copy to St. Sistine School. You may have access to the final product through any of these sources. If you have any queries you can contact me at work on XXXXXXXX or home on 9713 6267.

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Nepean Human Ethics Review Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Committee Officer (Tel: 02 47 360 169). Any issue you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Sarah Lovesy

3rd March 2000
1.7 Principal’s consent letter

3rd March 200

Dear Principal,

I am undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Western Sydney Nepean. The research project is titled Releasing the Imagination in Secondary Drama Education. I ask your permission to invite student participants to be selected from the school’s Year 11/12 and Year 9/10 Drama students undertaking playbuilding units. If they agree to participate in my research this would involve:

One audiotaped interviews of approximately sixty minutes in length in 2000

Submitting journals/and logbooks for analysis

Allowing photographs to be taken of process and product work

Allowing videotaping of the process and final products

Allowing audiotaping of two class workshops

Completing a questionnaire.

The information provided, the opinions given and suggestions made will be the essence of the study and hence I would greatly value your permission to undertake this research project. Letters to the individual students and their parents are enclosed. Please contact me at home on 9713 6267 or at work if you agree to the school participating in this doctoral research.

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Nepean Human Ethics Review Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Committee Officer (Tel: 02 47 360 169). Any issue you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Lovesy
1.8 Drama teacher's consent letter

2nd December 2000

Dear Drama Teacher,

I am currently undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean. The research project is titled Releasing the Imagination in Secondary Drama Education.

I ask your permission to be a participant in this project in 2000/1. If you agree, your participation in my research would involve one audiotaped interview of approximately sixty minutes in length. The discussion/interview will seek evidence of the links between imagination, creativity and playbuilding within a drama praxis. The information provided and the opinions given will be the essence of the study and hence I would greatly value your participation in this research project.

Please contact me at home on 9973 2112 if you agree to participate in this doctoral research.

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Nepean Human Ethics Review Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Committee Officer (tel: 02 47 360 169). Any issue you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Lovesy
Appendix 2.

Example of sharing concepts at a University of Western Sydney colloquial

2.1 The pedagogy of group work in playbuilding
2.1 The pedagogy of group work in playbuilding
Sarah Lovesy

Releasing the Imagination in Drama Education

The pedagogy of group work in playbuilding

February 2002
1. Drama Group Work as Pedagogy

- 100% of students surveyed believe group work is essential to drama education
- Group work enhances imagining and creating in drama education
- Groups employ an integrated structure comprising tasks and relationships
- In the group, bodies and minds work together
2. Group Decision Making in Drama

- Students continuously use their physicality in their learning

- The majority of students surveyed believe they learn to communicate through their bodies (80-100%)

- It is a challenge for the teacher to transform intra-group diversity into a cohesive learning environment

- Hence, bodily kinaesthetic methodologies are a key pedagogy in scaffolding learning
3. Drama Group Dynamics

- "Groups shape actions, thoughts and feelings" (Forsyth)
- Interdependence within the group is critical to success
- A leader always emerges within the group to facilitate collaboration (80-100%)
- The best leaders inspire and merge into the group dynamics
4. Playbuilding Culture

- Effective playbuilding means no "big star" system

- The teacher must encourage the group to act as an ensemble, working together creatively, emotionally, constructively

- The group needs to be its own audience and own critics

- It must imagine and create about the human condition within the context of social and cultural norms
5. Drama Theatre Continuum

- Many students believe they hold the real and imaginary worlds in their heads while performing (liminal)

- All performances have a core ritual action (Turner)
- Such rites are part of the drama social fabric and transition into playbuilding
- Theatrical elements appear wherever the drama process occurs (Burton)
6. Evolution of Groups in Drama Education

- Traditional Drama education has taken place in a formal western pedagogy

- Way believed in the individuality of the child but valued the notion of integral group work in drama class

- Group work will reflect the social and cultural dynamics (Bolton)

- Groups need to be highly motivated before education can happen in drama (O’Toole)
7. **Playbuilding Groups are a Microcosm of Society**

- As with society, playbuilding groups need rules and discipline

- The rules governing social communication include (Aston & Savona):
  - protocols
  - rituals
  - fashion
  - games

- Some group members, the “super dramatists”, may bring innate talents to the group (Wagner)

- Playbuilding is informed by the broad range of students’ social and cultural experiences

- Playbuilders need to continually ask what they want to communicate to audiences and how they will do this
8. Summary

- The complexities of group work are enhanced by a scaffolding pedagogy
- The group has a core ritual/liminal action
- Groups reflect society’s mores
- The group becomes a kinaesthetic entity in itself
Appendix 3.

Analysis of teacher interviews
3.1 Questions for drama teachers on playbuilding teaching and learning.

(Created on 8th January 2001)

- What is the essence of collaboration in playbuilding?
- Can one gifted drama student ensure the success of playbuilding?
- What role do you think a school’s culture plays in drama groups’ playbuilding creative efforts?
- Do you think playing is important in whole drama class warm-ups?
- Do you think playing is important in playbuilding groups’ decision making?
- Is there a difference between playfulness and creating and what are the different frameworks?
- Can play stimulate the basis of genuine insight and creativity?
- What drama teaching methodologies can stimulate metaphoric imagining?
- Does teacher empathy allow the imagination to be released?
- What have been your observations on the role of group kinaesthetics in playbuilding?
- What ways could there be to link kinaesthetic learning and writing with students?
- Does an internal and/or external threat of assessment pull a playbuilding group together?
- Have you ever used Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory in playbuilding your drama teaching strategies?
- How do you assess a playbuilding group’s imaginative and creative outcomes?
- What is the inspiration to get students motivated in group work?
3.2 Analysis of audiotape. Sam, teacher interview.

(Recorded on 10th May 2001)

Example of an analytical memo, October 2001. Reviewed February 2002

What is the essence of collaboration in playbuilding?

The essence of collaboration, I suppose there will be many theories, the essence, one of the essences of collaboration is the ability to be inspired and to communicate that inspiration to others. Now that inspiration can come from some other form of catalyst, some visual signal, some emotional stimulus that excites you into creative thought and you express that creative thought in dramatic terms. I think the essence of collaboration in playbuilding is to be able to communicate with you all inspired ideas and to be able to be inspired by the ideas of others, that’s the essence of collaborative skill.

Memo: Is Sam talking about how he perceives the essence of collaboration or actually what he observes, as a drama teacher, in the classroom? Does the notion of inspiration belong to this sensorial quality that Abram’s talks about? How does inspiration and learning in one’s own intelligence work? Is a drama student just inspired through their dramatic ideas, and therefore inspired by the ideas of others. Even if other students in the group devised work have an inspired idea, how do all the group recognise it? Is one person’s inspiration always well received by the rest? I think not. Think back to S’s group. Her idea, on this mathematical formula, was in some senses inspirational, but other members of the group could not perceive the concept in intellectual or dramatic terms.

Group creativity, if playbuilding is any good, group creativity will be improved while you are doing it, it is the skills you are going to put into practice. Each time you get together you may be studying different performance styles, different elements of drama, or using production, but group creativity has to be improved with each session of playbuilding in one way or another.
Memo: Why does Sam think that creativity will be improved one way or another? All my interviewees believe that creating has to be taught. It is how it is taught that is now a critical question to me.

I suppose the question do you think creativity has to be learnt whilst playbuilding implies whether you have to have the skills before you go into playbuilding or whether you are going to learn while you are doing it. Memo: Is Sam implying that creating is a learnt skill, and does it then follow that from this skill comes the capacity to create at a level that might not previously have been the case? Is this something to do with teenage maturity? What happens in the group with students of different skills and of different skill levels?

I think improvisation skills before playbuilding whether spontaneous or rehearsed improvisation skills background is obviously going to enhance what you are learning from group creativity while you are playbuilding. Memo: This is an important point. To engage in improvisation could be classified as a habitual human act. Keith Johnson says Page 121 Impro for Storytellers: “Through our daily routines and rituals we are constantly processing information, engaging in discourse, navigating our lives improvisational in a precariously fragile and causal orbit with many people, places things etc.” So, with group devised drama students may just instinctively put these above habitual moments into play. This may mean that through improvisation techniques, risk taking and option making are allowed to occur at an imaginative and creating level.

Can one gifted drama student ensure the success of playbuilding? I don’t think so, but then again it depends on how you’d define success. If the definition of playbuilding success is to create a performance piece that entertains or engages an audience, then one person can ensure the success of playbuilding in a small group. Memo: This is an important point, as to some degree On Stage is about engaging an audience in a large Theatre venue rather than the pedagogical aspect of playbuilding. How does one ever get away from the ties that link all this together?
We had one HSC group, I’ll exaggerate a little bit to make the point that one of them went home and wrote scripts and brought those scripts in and the other two helped workshop those scripts and bring them to life dramatically. Now that person was quite gifted in ideas and script work but I don’t think he was a very gifted playbuilder. The actual result was quite engaging and I think it did OK, but the actual success as a playbuilding piece wasn’t really there because the other two hadn’t learnt that essence of collaboration in playbuilding which is to be able to be inspired by your own ideas as well as the ideas of other people, so that you have a stake in the playbuilding and so the playbuilding reflects a depth that is more than one person’s view of the universe and that is one of the glories of playbuilding; that is, more than one person’s view of the world around them. So one gifted drama student can ensure a theatrical success but not necessarily the success of playbuilding if it is by its very nature.

Memo: This leads on to the thought, where do the students use these skills of playbuilding after they have left school? If this one student Sam is talking about was a gifted writer, then he or she was working in their preferred intelligence, whereas the others in the group might have found this student’s approach difficult. How does a teacher deal with this? Is it still imagining and creating collaboratively, as when the script comes back it is shared by the group and there might be some inspirational moment there for all the students to go with it?

*What role do you think a school’s culture plays in drama groups’ playbuilding creative efforts?*

I think it is hugely important that the teacher works within the culture of the school, and the students pick up on what the teacher is giving out as to what are the priorities of the school and what is valued, and drama can sometimes of course be in some backyard corner shed hobby type of activity, or it can be the big star system of who’s starring in what musical this year that we are going to sweat over for six months despite what the curriculum is on about, so playbuilding doesn’t really come into any of those situations. I’ll just give two examples of how a school’s culture plays a huge role in the creative efforts of playbuilding. We did a year 10 show playbuilding piece with a group of students who were mainly inexperienced; inexperienced in all forms of creating your own drama.
Memo: Could I make the connection here that these students have little empirical analytical or technical knowing, and therefore their kinaesthetic knowing was only firing at a low level in the taxonomy levels?

Some of them had had experience of scripted musical work, and some of them had been in Year 9 and learnt for the first time about improvising, but two-thirds of them were new to the course, and not only that, they did not have much theatrical culture from visits to the Theatre or from any other experience. So it was all new to them the idea of improvising and refining to the stage where you could present an exciting piece of Theatre to a live audience. We worked on the theme of love, which was chosen by them, and we had to look at different nature of love, and they came up with a very disjointed but enthusiastic group of scenes that were strongly linked by the theme, but not much else except that its style had a rough and tumble, there was lots of, I suppose, spontaneous humour and it was quite successful with the audience, but the headmaster said to me in an official letter and a letter that he wanted the drama department to note at their meeting, he said that the glory of the piece was not that it will become part of the Australian dramatic cannon, it won’t be scripted and typed and looked on as a piece of dramatic work to pull out again in years, the glory of it was that through the playbuilding process these students, 20 or 30 students, had engaged with each other creatively, emotionally, constructively and energetically, and that engagement, that ensemble, was the pinnacle of playbuilding outcomes and that made the headmaster very proud and educationally he thought it was hugely valuable.

Memo: This is such a wonderful educational moment. I need to record this in my next colloquia. These words can be inspirational to other teachers and other Principals.

Then again in another school, in a school that has drama students that are experienced in playbuilding and experienced in creating their own art, their own cultural expression, I think, I mean the school respects that to the extent that for instance the executive always turn up to performances to the extent that the budget is large enough that the spatial requirements are there.

Memo: I wonder how much the spatial requirements allow the imagining and creating to flow at a higher skills level? Peter Brook and his empty stage is all very
well, but from my experience, even just the environment in a school allows a certain type of culture to emerge, for instance my son’s school was rather poorly resourced and not grounds to speak of, when he and his mates came to SS they could hardly believe the spatial areas, the care of the environment.

In a school like that when the playbuilding projects reach a standard of excellence in performance, it sort of carries on within the culture of the school that drama is a subject like any other like mathematics or modern history, but there is a wonderful sense of excellence at the top end, that many students can join in and achieve this excellence in playbuilding that is educationally highly valued, and that filters down into all drama classes and into the way that the staff treat their students I think.

Memo: The words ‘staff and students think’ I believe are important. How does a school think? What does it think about the humanities let alone the Performing Arts? How does it think as a whole? What are a school’s main Mission Statements? How do they fulfil this? Do they see value in this group work, and more importantly the playbuilding that comes from the students ideas and then is shaped and refined through methodologies that enhances young people’s learning? There is debate going on in society in regard to the humanities in University, so this must flow into School? Do I need a chapter on attitude and culture?

Some schools too, in a school’s culture where drama is considered something extra, something you do to help the students personal development, but not his or her educational development, and this culture might permeate to the business office where people who control the purse strings have, give no leeway to the nature of live performance, selling tickets, budgeting, getting money before an event, and it may permeate to the other academic side with drama is not considered educationally viable, and sometimes it is because they see examples of drama group playbuilding products and they judge them from their own aesthetics of what they expect good finished performances to be as if it was a bunch of mathematics students and they were all Albert Einstein’s. It is a funny group of standards some schools apply to the performance arts when those performance arts are studied by the ordinary student, just like the study of
history or maths, obviously you will also get some wonderful students who take it beyond the realms of a normal adolescent educational standard.

Memo: Does this mean that drama educators still need to find their own voice to promote their own subject, or is it that drama will always be controversial as it deals with the human beings their emotions, wants and desires? Perhaps somehow adults find this difficult to perceive, especially when it is their 15 year old delving into this. I should relate some of this to the Year 9 Experimental Playbuilding.

**Do you think playing is important in whole drama class warm-ups?**

Playing is hugely important in whole drama class warm-ups. Playing creates a new energy from where the students have come from. It realigns the students with their creative centre, often more like a child because it is more enthusiastic, open to both receiving and expressing ideas. It’s whole drama class warm-ups so you might have 10, 20 or 30 people working together, once again that means leaving whatever social structures in the playground in their social lives, in their other classes, leaving those behind so you can find new things every time you work together. New things from each other, and you stop pigeon holing each other into whatever social roles you have in the classroom. This is what whole class drama warm-ups can do, the sense of playing, refinding you and you is the child. That’s the best you get from creativity, you is the child informed by your maturity and your reflective and enquiring skills that you get when you grow to teenage.

Memo: Why is it that drama educators understand the nature and importance of play, regardless whether they have done any research or not? In my own experiences when a class can play it can create fully. To play, sometimes in Year 8 and 9, is difficult, as teenagers want to be cool, or be seen to be cool. If a drama educator can help students break through this barrier then students can find new things. What new things are we talking about? New ways of dealing with their ideas. Yes for sure. New ways of relating to others in the class? Thought - Through play/warm-ups can one, as the teacher, start to create this group empathy. I think it is very clear that you do create a kinaesthetic knowing, as the play and warm-ups always have a purpose; sometimes this purpose relates to conventions and techniques. Through play and warm-ups how often do we introduce a drama prop for the students to work with. Think back to Year 8 and
their Dream unit, and how much the material helped them to create their drama worlds.

Do you think playing is important in playbuilding groups’ decision making?
I think so, I think it really is an important element in making decisions, I think in a pressure cooker of group performance it is really important. Playbuilding groups’ decision making is not seen as the sitting of two houses of parliament of a meeting of conquest before declaring war, nuclear war.

Memo: Perhaps it is not for us but I wonder, when things are not going well in an HSC group, how they look upon it?

An example, the other day a year 12 group had been, had come to a dead halt because there were five of them, and two of them thought of themselves as thinkers and wanted to do research and discuss everything for several days, find a strong through line mentally so that every improvisation or experimentation of dramatic elements would be linked directly to what they are on about, (Kinaesthetic knowing) which is a great idea of course, and three of the other group were not that sort of thinker and they needed to be up and moving, and up and doing, and exciting the imagination before referring that imaginative excitement back to dramatic elements, and back to the theme or the character of the situation (Does this help prove my point that without the kinaesthetic empathy in play, it is hard to create at a high level. Sam is saying here that they had different intelligences in their learning style) that they’re researching and exploring so they were stuck because their ideas were becoming very structured and very stale, and no longer gripping most of the group, so we decided to choose three key phrases from what they’d been talking about and those three key phrases were worked out totally physically in a slightly acrobatic clowning style with very short time limits for improvisation and looking at physical experimentation, different sorts of group stands, group somersaults, group insects, group monsters, exaggeration, grotesquely. They weren’t allowed to think too much but to get up and do, and after that session it got them enthused again, playing again, around the basic theme so it was an academic exercise as well. Out of that they had to make decisions as to what was particularly good to maybe hang a scene on or to get a dramatic image to start a show on
or to link into a sequence and they did that by playing. They played the rough and tumble of the things they enjoyed from that 40 minutes work in a five minute sequence and just put it all together. It was like a cross between ballet and football match but it was a sense of play.

**Memo:** This recall of a group’s process work has resonance with Victor Turners words on Theatre. On page 12 *By Means of Performance*, he states “Theatre... embraces ideas and images of cosmos and chaos, interdigitates clowns and their foolery with gods and their solemnity, and uses all the sensory codes to produce symphonies in more than music etc.” Do Sam’s word’s then relate to this notion of the liminal, the liminal as a source of possibilities, the liminal as a (Group/Community) looking for new forms and structures? How do Turner’s ideas on the social drama of life connected to the Stage Drama or metaxis performance relate to the Group Devising work? What actually is the difference between Metaxis and the Liminal? How are they interconnected? What are the definite characteristics or attributes of each word in their context?

So I think playing is really important in playbuilding at groups’ decision making, and also after decision making. When you are finishing a session, if you get the chance you get them to reflect in their logs and then it is good to finish a session on the high of playing if those playing, if that playing, of course is important to what they had been studying.

**Memo:** Is the experience of play so engrossing to the students that they are practising imagery, language skills, problem solving and creating, within this ‘play’? Aristotle said that pleasure is of different kinds: “Intellect, sound movement, emotion, perception, smell and touch.” Does this mean that in completing the play and warm ups the students fulfil their desires to release and create as play is a partly an unconditioned experience?
Is there a difference between playfulness and creating, and what are the different frameworks?

There is. If you come into class and we do a basic warm-up, that warm-up could be a simple game that is not intrinsically linked to the knowledge and skills outcome, but it could always be linked to the values and outcomes of collaborative ensemble but there is a different structure. In creating, you may be, in creating you have got a framework that has a, you have a goal in view, even if you don’t use what you’ve done, what you’ve created, you’ve got a goal that you are definitely exploring to put something plastic, something tangible, something structured on, even metaphoric, in a performance. Now the playfulness has to be modified through those expectations and you can sometimes, of course if you go back to the child and getting rid of inhibitions, getting up the enthusiasm, you can release an energy that becomes detrimental to proper creativity under a structured framework if it is not channelled and if its rhythms aren’t varied.

Memo: What does Sam mean by creating? Is it simply the notion of putting the group ideas into a dramatic framework? I need to go back over my notion of creating and give this more substance and more thought? In my work I have talked about metaphoric thinking. I wonder now is this is the right term? Would I be better to discuss metaphor creating? Drama is about “doing” the thinking is there, but the doing is paramount. The Metaphor in Drama can be the whole play as metaphoric, or just meant as metaphoric or just lines from characters as metaphoric? Need to re-look at Beyond Words and this notion of the metaphoric as dialectical? Does metaphor necessary mean dialectical action? Have to clarify all of these concepts.

Does teacher empathy allow the imagination to be released?

Yes it does, it does.

Memo: Why does it? I think there is still much uncertainty about what truly influences effective teaching and learning? How actually are students enlightened? When does the teacher and students know that something significant has happened? Does this relate to empathy? Is empathy a link between the cognitive,
affective and physical in Drama? Does this mean that both parties need to some how be responsive?

You have got to be careful too, that your teacher empathy doesn’t go overboard and you start, the teacher starts to use his imagination which, you have got to hold yourself back because sometimes the students will suddenly think number one that’s a fantastic idea, jeez I wish I could have thought of that, or what’s even worse, would be I wish he’d shut up this is my show and this is my moment but empathy doesn’t mean that the teacher has to actually be doing what you are doing. Teacher empathy. I think that teacher empathy means that a teacher finds something to like or to respect within a student that is possibly not always respected or liked. Also, teacher empathy can be when a teacher gets excited about a dramatic idea that a student or a bunch of students has come up with and then might ask a few questions to help them extend.

Memo: What is excitement? Ros Arnold in her paper The Theory and Practice of Psychodynamic Pedagogy, Mexico City says “powerful feeling of excitement, curiosity, mastery and even awe that such moments are inspired by.” What has curiosity got to do with empathy? Is this a reciprocal curiosity between the individuals in the group, the group and the teacher? A curiosity about the topic the group has chosen? A curiosity about the actor audience relationship? Is curiosity, like excitement a feeling that gives life to thinking?

I find that the hardest thing with teacher empathy is when you start to try to ask them questions or to make points to extend a scene or an idea in a certain way because you have a strong vision of it, and you suddenly realise you are trying to impose your vision on their vision because you think it will be better theatre, and sometimes with the pressures of the HSC you have really got to stop yourself doing that, not that you are directing, but you are, you keep trying to hint and hint and hint or try to question, question, question so that they’ll fall over the cliff on your into you, your artistic concept and the teacher has to remember to empathise with the process and the people. Doing the process by realising there are a hundred million better ways of doing it than you’d ever thought of, and that your students are going to come up with at least a dozen of them, but teacher empathy does allow the imagination to be released for sure, and reading the class in the playbuilding process so once they are far in you continue in that direction, that needs a lot of empathy too and the hardest thing is to continue empathy
when they are not working very hard or they get discouraged or when their imagination isn’t firing and you haven’t given them something, enough catalyst or enough warm-up, or enough urgency or enough relaxation, it always depends on the mood and that of the moment.  

Memo: I do think there is something in the psychodynamic way a teacher relates to students. Passion and love of the subject are very important. Roslyn Arnold discusses the importance of interaction between the student’s self, both intrasubjectively (between one’s feeling states), and intra cognitively (between one’s thinking states). She thinks that to experience (psychodynamics) involves second by second shifts in thinking and feeling. Could this be true for the teacher as well? How does this second by second relate in Drama? In the actual performance the students often report, as do actors, that time flew by, second by second they were aware, yet time travelled quickly, on the other hand when things go wrong and the actor audience relationship is lacking, students can report that time went slowly? Perhaps this empathy in the group, is kinaesthetic empathy is stimulated by students group perception?
3.3 Analysis of audiotape. Group teacher interview with Alice and Lucy.

(Recorded on 18th April 2001)


Memo: It has been enlightening interviewing a group of teachers, as both these teachers’ ideas were springing back and forth from one another. Compared to the individual interviews where there was just the one teacher responding, this interview had another dynamic, which is group interaction. This interview with two teachers has been worth doing as I am, in part, examining the nature of groups.

I am now coding axially. This means that I am looking for answers to questions such as why, how come, where, when, how and with what result. I hope I will start to uncover the relationship between the categories that have already emerged from the Performance Essay, Group Performance, Experimental Playbuilding, as well as the Nodes from NVivo.

I am trying to start relating structure with process in this analytical memo. Structure creates the circumstances in which the problems, issues, happenings and events of the playbuilding work arise. The process, on the other hand, denotes the action/interaction over time of the educators and participants in response to the playbuilding issues. Therefore, combining structure with process should help me to get at the complexity of the issues in this interview. Process and structure are inextricably linked. I am coding to gain an understanding of the phenomena of my main categories of:

a) Kinaesthetics knowledge
b) Bodily kinaesthetic intelligence
c) Group knowing
d) Empathy
e) Drama properties
f) Metaxis
g) Group dynamics and structures
h) Metaphorical creating
i) Imaginative divergence
j) Assessment
k) Teaching and learning methodologies
l) Devising
m) Imagining
n) Creating.

There are other categories, such as Play, Improvisation, Liminality; Psychodynamics, Aesthetics, Theatre Conventions and Techniques, Actor/Audience, Culture, Religion, Curriculum, that are also inherent in the emerging phenomena

Sarah: What do you think about the notion of collaboration in playbuilding?

Alice: Interacting

Lucy: I think that it actually involves people taking responsibility, rather than sitting back and just allowing everybody else to create and lead. Eventually each person needs to have some contribution to collaborate.

Memo: Lucy is providing a philosophy for action. She has interacted with Alice’s words and thoughts. Of course interacting is also a philosophy for collaborating. The notion of collaborating needs to be further analysed in relationship to a drama group’s structure. What happens when students have to come back into the class, from the playground where they may have operated as individuals, they then form the playbuilding group again and begin the whole dramatic process. Collaboration is one part of this dynamic group merging and remerging. Sometimes young students just do not feel like collaborating. There are many variables to interacting and to each student contributing at their level.
Sarah: What methodologies might you use to make that happen?

Lucy: Sometimes, even though in the past I might have given every person a role in the group, I don’t do that any more, like I don’t get one person to scribe and all that sort of thing, but I do constantly remind them that they should start by going around and everyone offering one initial idea and brainstorming, and then listen to each idea before they go off and try the one that they think is the strongest, so that no matter what idea, it can be left field, it can be right on the topic, but everybody has made some contribution to get started, and then try to encourage the listening, and me actually stopping the lesson as everybody offered and tried or something like that.

Memo: Lucy’s answer discussed why and how to go about collaborating but then goes on to point out how she has begun to understand how students act/interact, and why it has been necessary for her as a drama teacher to change her manner of creating. This teacher and her students are collaborating together; it is an indication of co-facilitating, and demonstrates the dynamics in a drama teacher’s kinaesthetic teaching and learning structure.

Alice: With the interaction in playbuilding, if everyone is, as Lucy said, really in tune with what each other is saying and responding, you are interacting, and that’s what you do when you are acting, so it is all connected. The other thing is that is so important is that not only do the kids just listen to each other’s ideas but they also try everyones ideas, so it’s the process. They are actually willing to risk trying anything and not to be dismiss anything without actually actively trying it. That’s my thing in the initial stages of playbuilding; don’t dismiss an idea until you explore.

Memo: Alice brings the discussion back to the interacting. She talks about students being in tune with what people are saying, and she demonstrates that she is in tune, listening to what this other drama teacher has to say and then building upon it. This is similar to spontaneous improvisation techniques that drama teachers use in class. Alice’s ideas are along the lines of kinaesthetic intelligence, as she discusses that it is in the doing that the risk taking occurs. Now risk taking is a substantial way of explaining some of the process that happens kinaesthetically in a group. Why is risk taking behaviour important in the work? How does it relate to metaxis, group structures, the kinaesthetic paradigm?
Sarah: So the next question is do you think that group creativity has to be learnt?

Lucy: Before this, one other point about collaboration. I rarely let kids choose their own groups and there are therefore two types of collaboration. The co-operative type where I can listen to you and be kind to you and not put you down, and then there is the creative collaboration on top of that. I think there are two types and you really can’t have one without the other. They have to respect each other and come to that point so they understand that risk taking and creativity is another step up the scale. What is the second part? Creativity, well, there are some students where it is innate. They are creative and they will often be the people who spontaneously create ideas that other people work off.

Memo: Creating and creativity belong to the notion of discovery, identification transference, reflection and action. The group make up is important. This belongs to my emerging idea of merging identity in the group and merging group creativity.

Alice: but if you look at it that playbuilding groups are a microcosm of society, then in society we need rules and guidelines to help us to coexist peacefully, and something can led to chaos. I think in playbuilding it is the same thing. There needs to be a discipline and certain rules in place for it to be effective and that is why I think that kids, like in society, learn how to behave, you learn how to become productive member of society, it is just not an innate thing.

Memo: A major point is being made here that the groups are definitely a micro or macrocosm of society, and in some sense behave as such (needs elaboration), but these drama groups, sharing the same purpose, need rules, but rules that belong to creating. NB; What are these rules?

Sarah: But what about one student who might break those rules?

Alice: Good point, and that can be a positive thing or a negative thing.

Lucy: That’s true. I agree with Alice. I have learnt this year working with kids who haven’t had experience, you have to model and teach the skills for them to then be able to emulate and go beyond this.

Memo: Is this interviewee saying that part of the rules for creating are modelling. So again this leads me back to liminality (Modell, Wincicott, Arnold etc). This also
relates to teachers who teach within their own intelligences or style. A point to think about as a chapter for my thesis.

Lucy: Yes I did, in front of them. I gave them and I asked for suggestions, and then I gave examples from my experience that I knew had worked.

Sarah: Were these practical examples when you as the Drama teacher got up to model?

Lucy: Yes. For example, when I taught them metaphor I said I have to teach you what everyone else in the State is doing; we have to start on a more advanced level, we can’t go back to Year 9; we are starting here. I started with narrative and I gave them the example of the ‘lift’ narrative, and I asked them to do a piece set in a confined space. A lift, or another confined space and to create a narrative and then when they where stuck I would go to groups and I would make suggestions so that they could see the narrative through line. Then I went on to metaphor the one that they understand so easily is the Fun Park of Life, so I explained that one I did with Luna Park, the clowns of babyhood, the midlife crisis roller coaster, the tunnel of love, love and marriage, and the ghost train as old age.

Memo: Rich ideas for understanding part of the dramatic metaphoric process. Do playbuilding groups create together metaphorically or do they rely on just one student or just the teacher? How do students learn about metaphoric creating? When students are little, aged 5 or 6, they often play in a metaphoric way. When they reach their teens they put this aside. Through active, physical teaching, I believe a teacher can reintroduce the power of a dramatic metaphor to their students.

Sarah: Did they go off and workshop this?

Lucy: Then I said to them ‘you do this’, this group of the clowns of babyhood, this group you do the roller coast; and some still got stuck in understanding it; but the ones that worked, they then learnt and they all told me they could at least understand what a metaphor was, and then they tried their own. So they had an example and then they workshoped it, I still had to give input, and then they knew what kind of thing was expected. Then they could break the rules. It’s like music, once you know what to do that you can break them within the confines.
Memo: This idea corresponds to some concepts of Prof. Gerald Grow and the Performance Essay and I think it might be worthwhile following this up with him. He speaks of the intelligences for writing, but I also think he speaks about musical intelligences. The intelligence of a dramatic metaphoric! This is why this axial coding is enlightening. I must really work in more depth on what I mean by Metaphoric Divergence. I need to quote from Carole Lynne Moore and Kaoru Yamamoto who says on page 105 Beyond Words “Human beings live in two worlds – the small, unique and time bound world of personal experience and the much larger, timeless-bound world and symbolic world of shared experiences distilled in cultural extensions”. This appears to correspond with what Alice is saying in that the Metaphor belongs to this symbolic world and helps these students create a deeper meaning
3.4 Analysis of audiotape. Paul, teacher interview.

(Recorded on 30th March 2001)


Paul: The students drama work relies heavily upon physicality. The most successful stuff that they have done has been physically generated.

Memo: Physicality can be described as one of the bodily kinaesthetic intelligences. The physicality of drama most belongs to the sensoria, and therefore perhaps Paul is remarking that the students carry this sensorial intuitive into their drama work.

Paul: In drama last year, when I gave them an option to create in a particular style, two of the dancers were in a group and they did Physical Theatre. From that, it brought all the other ones along. The other kids were able to see or belong to this whole stylistic approach, because one of the things that I worked on with my Year11’s at the beginning of the 2 Unit Drama Course, was movement work. I gave them a song, they had to bring the song to life, not literally, but when this music be would playing, what would the action be. It was like background but also the conflict.

Memo: Whilst Paul is talking about the “stylistic approach” this in some ways concurs with my ideas on the kinaesthetic knowing – empirical/analytical and or technical. The students understand the stylistic approach through their cognitive world; this is then informed by song, movement background and conflict.

Sarah: Did members of the group have to be physically touching?

Paul: No, but then some touched and some didn’t. I thought that was a really interesting question because some of those kids would think nothing about touching each other, and a couple who would, and when they were put into a structure like the project on The Crucible, where the implication was it had to be there from time to time,
and some of the ways I dealt with it, were for example, through movement was there was one scene where we, add in emotions, when they were saying goodbye, and what it feels like to say good bye, when all these couples were formed to say good bye for the last time, to your husband, girlfriend, etc, and the fact they had to hug and pull away from each other, was one of those really amazing ones because all kids got it, as the image was more important than their inhibitions.

**Memo:** It appears from Paul’s response that my notion of kinaesthetic empathy can just be inherent in some students who have no fear of relating through their bodies, but as he rightly points out, the teacher, through dramatic methodologies, ie knowing, can allow students the freedom to work within this touch perception and to feel or to grow to feel they are in a safe environment.

*Sarah:* That’s interesting, as another area I am interested in is the interplay between the fictitious and the real?

Paul: We did a whole lot of workshopping before we got to that point, because when I first took them on, the majority of what they had done was comedy, and so I went right away from that and I went into really heavy sort of stuff.

**Memo:** Could I say that without this empirical analytical or technical knowing, the students find it hard to create at a high degree? This type of knowing allows the imagining to be released and therefore creating can occur. This is in fact process methodologies work so that a deeper learning can take place.

Paul. They loved the challenge, they were frustrated by it, they get upset and angry, they got all those things. They needed some teacher directed learning.

**Memo:** Does this notion of metaxis also belong to the world of teacher centred learning. The challenge to create beyond their world can allow students to begin to identify with small segments of their Drama, this means that they are then able to enter into the transformation process, imagining and creating. A challenge allows students to reflect. (Research Vygostky and ZPD)
Sarah: Now what about the connection between imagining and creating in playbuilding?

Paul: How do we really know which bit is real and which bit isn’t. Where a kid gains the experience from if it, it is something they have seen happened, or it is something that has happened in them. I suppose really the answer is that the better, higher order candidate is going to be able to do both, imagine and create and blur the lines between.

Memo: I have to agree with Paul, because I think from my research that the students who could really answer on their thoughts about Metaxis, were the higher order students. This does not mean that the others don’t encounter this interplay between the real and the actual, only that to some extent they are not aware of it. As a methodology perhaps the area of discovery is very important to students. This discovery could be intensely personal to the students as well as have an area of total exploration of the Drama, the group and the conventions and techniques being explored.

Sarah: Is the teaching framework you put in the essence of how they imagine and create?

Paul: Well I think creating is part learned, I don’t think that everyone has the natural ability to create, I think that some people do, and they are the ones who are the 10 pluses and that is the indefinable X-factor, but you can teach somebody else how to do it. The same as I can teach, I suppose you can teach anybody to sing, but then who is that has the ability to touch an audience and bring them into their voice, it is somebody who has naturally got that ability to create an atmosphere, interaction, or whatever; the same in dance.

Memo: Paul’s thoughts concur to some degree with mine. Not everybody can create at the same level. In fact, in the Drama class room creating has to be learnt. How far the creating can go is of course another matter. Page 58 from Bruce Burton’s text The Act of Learning quotes Heathcote who says “To dramatise is instinctive” This perhaps relates to this notion of the liminal - this is the in between. To dramatise is instinctive in many young children, their play is to dramatise, it is ephemeral, but when we are talking about learning through Drama
or groups creating their own stories the notion of ‘dramatise’ takes a giant leap from ‘play’ into the group’s dynamic and sometimes how they can touch their given audience.

Paul: The other questions that I thought through was group kinaesthetics. I thought that the Year 11 kids that you asked gave more, when I said, what don’t you want in a group. That almost defined what they do want. They don’t want someone who isn’t committed; they don’t want somebody who is shy, they don’t want something who want somebody that won’t give. So what they are really saying is what they do want.

**Memo:** This is important information as it relates to group structures and how groups can be made up, the problem that groups can find themselves in when it is not working.

Paul: We understand it, but that does not necessarily mean the kids understand it. The other one I think is really interesting is I can’t let go of an idea. I started with this idea, it’s a good idea, you don’t understand it fully enough. Whereas the rest of the group might not have contributed. I think that is important and try to emphasis, to say its an idea, not that big a deal, throw it away; it doesn’t work. If it does work it might come back again. You might use it another time, whatever, but you know there are kids who just won’t let it go, because it is something they have got ownership of. It is something they need, whereas the rest of the group feel it is moving somewhere else. One person stagnant.

**Memo:** Paul’s ideas here are excellent to synthesise and discuss when I talk about Groups and how to structure them. This type of information is needed for Prac teachers as well as all teachers. It is often hard in the classroom to discuss with a student why they should let go. I could relate some of this to my Year 9 experimental playbuilding
Appendix 4.

Closed questionnaire - junior and senior secondary student participants
4.1 Copy of original questionnaire given to junior and senior secondary students

(Closed Questionnaire 2000 Years 12 and 9 - 8th September 2000)

This is a study on imagination and creativity in playbuilding. Please complete this form by circling the answer that you feel is closest to your thoughts and experiences in playbuilding.

1. Is it desirable to have group work in drama?  
   - YES  
   - NO

2. At the beginning of playbuilding do you prefer to?  
   Please number these in order  
   - Do and learn  
   - Discuss and learn  
   - Read and learn

3. Do you learn better when physical activity is involved?  
   - YES  
   - NO

4. Do you like to work with people with different drama skills?  
   - YES  
   - NO

5. Do you like to work with people you don’t normally have a friendship with outside of class?  
   - YES  
   - NO

6. Do you enjoy improvising when starting a project?  
   - YES  
   - NO

7. Do you like to script your playbuilding at the beginning of the project?  
   - YES  
   - NO

8. Do you like to script your playbuilding towards the end of the project?  
   - YES  
   - NO

9. Does the group usually take a couple of peoples’ ideas to make the main part of the playbuilding?  
   - YES  
   - NO
10. Does the group create its own unique imagination during process work?  YES  NO

11. Does a group usually have a leader?  YES  NO

12. In the last group work you were involved in, did your group generally solve problems through:
   (Pls number in order of preference)
   Doing
   Discussing

13. Do you generally communicate your ideas through gesture?  YES  NO

14. Does being up and active help a group create powerful drama?  YES  NO

15. Do you think brainstorming helps the group think imaginatively?  YES  NO

16. Do you think you need a person outside the group to help refine the drama?  YES  NO

17. If the group spends a lot of time laughing in the process, does this help create the drama?  YES  NO

18. Do you like the group to explore movement activities to help create the drama?  YES  NO

19. Do you enjoy the final rehearsal process?  YES  NO

20. Do you prefer to:
   A) sit and go over lines or
   B) get up and act out the drama?

21. Do you prefer to learn by getting up and improvising?  YES  NO
21. Do you prefer to learn by getting up and improvising?  YES  NO
22. Do you believe you can hold the real and imaginary worlds in your head at the same time?  YES  NO
24. Do you believe you hold the real and imaginary world in your head when you are performing?  YES  NO
25. Do you believe you learn how to communicate through your body?  YES  NO
26. Does your heart leap, or your stomach turn, when you present your final playbuilding scene?  YES  NO
27. Does your breathing quicken before a performance?  YES  NO
28. Do you know when a final performance feels right?  YES  NO

29. How do you “know” when your group has performed well? PLEASE NUMBER THESE IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE
Your group just ‘knows’
You know
The audience tells you
The teacher tells you
Friends in the audience tell you

30. How many years have you studied Drama?

31. How old are you?

32. Do you think you will be involved in Drama after you have left school?  YES  NO

33. Do you think you will go to the theatre after school?  YES  NO
35. Do you think you will play build after you have left school?  YES  NO
36. Do you think you will use any of your drama learning outside of school?  YES  NO
37. Do you think you will work in any types of group situation once you have finished school?  YES  NO
38. Do you think you will have the opportunity to be imaginative once you have left school?  YES  NO
39. Do you think you will use your creativity once you have left school?  YES  NO

39. ANY COMMENTS YOU MIGHT WISH TO MAKE
4.2 Summary of questionnaire responses

1. Is it desirable to have group work in drama?

2. At the beginning of a playbuilding project to you prefer to solve problems through:

3. Do you learn better when physical activity is involved in playbuilding and improvisation?
4. Do you like to work with people with different drama skills from you?

5. Do you like to work with people you don’t normally have a friendship with outside the class?

6. Do you enjoy improvising when starting a group project?
7. Do you like to script your playbuilding at the beginning of the project?

8. Do you like to script your playbuilding towards the end of the project?

9. Does the group usually take a couple of people’s ideas to make the main part of the playbuilding?
10. Does the group create its own unique imagining during process work?

11. Does a group usually have a leader?

12. In the last group work you were involved in, did your group generally solve problems through?
13. Do you generally communicate your ideas through gestures?

14. Does being up and active help a group create powerful drama?

15. Do you think brainstorming helps the group think imaginatively?
16. Do you think you need a person outside the group to help refine the drama?

17. If the group spends a lot of time laughing in the process, does this help create the drama? (NB The students in the Female Protagonists group all indicated YES to this question.)

18. Do you like the group to explore movement activities to help create the drama?
19. Do you enjoy the final rehearsal process?

20. Do you prefer to?

21. Do you prefer to learn by getting up and improvising?
22. Do you believe you can hold the real and imaginary world in your head at the same time?

23. Do you believe you hold the real and imaginary world in your head when you are performing?

24. Do you believe you learn to communicate through your body?
25. Does your heart leap, or your stomach turn, when you present your final playbuilding scene?

26. Does your breathing quicken before a performance?

27. Do you know when a final performance feels right?
28. How do you know when your group has performed well?

29. How many years have you studied drama? 30. How old are you?

31. Do you think you will be involved in drama after you have left school?

32. Do you think you will go to the theatre after school?
33. Do you think you will make drama part of your career?

34. Do you think you will playbuild after you have left school?

35. Do you think you will use any of your drama learning outside of school?
36. Do you think you will work in any types of group situation once you have finished school?

37. Do you think you will have the opportunity to be imaginative once you have left school?

38. Do you think you will use your creativity once you have left school?
4.3 Example of responses from a junior student participant and a senior student participant
ANDSAVED: closed questionnaire

THIS IS A STUDY IN IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY IN GROUP DEvised DRAMA WORK.

I WISH TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU AND OTHER STUDENTS THINK ABOUT GROUP WORK

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM BY CIRCLING THE ANSWER THAT YOU FEEL IS CLOSEST TO YOUR THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES IN GROUP DEVISED DRAMA

Name: [redacted]  Junior Student

1. Is it desirable to have group work in drama?  YES NO

2. At the beginning of playbuilding do you prefer to:
   (i) Do and learn  
   (ii) Discuss and learn  
   (iii) Read and learn  

   Please number these in order of preference.

3. Do you learn better when physical activity is involved?  YES NO

4. Do you like to work with people with different drama skills?  YES NO

5. Do you like to work with people you don’t normally have a friendship with outside of class?  YES NO

6. Do you enjoy improvising when starting a group project?  YES NO

7. Do you like to script your playbuilding at the beginning of the project?  YES NO

8. Do you like to script your playbuilding towards the end of the project?  YES NO

9. Does the group usually take a couple of people’s ideas to make the main part of the playbuilding?  YES NO

10. Does the group create its own unique imagination during process work?  YES NO

11. Does a group usually have a leader?  YES NO
12. In the last group work you were involved in, did your group generally solve problems through:
   (i) Doing
   (ii) Discussing
   Please number these in order of preference.

13. Do you generally communicate your ideas through gestures
    YES NO

14. Does being up and active help a group create powerful drama?
    YES NO

15. Do you think brainstorming helps the group think imaginatively?
    YES NO

16. Do you think you need a person outside the group to help refine the drama?
    YES NO

17. If the group spends a lot of time laughing in the process, does this help create the drama?
    YES NO

18. Do you like the group to explore movement activities to help create the drama?
    YES NO

19. Do you enjoy the final rehearsal process?
    YES NO

20. Do you prefer to:
   (i) sit and go over lines
   (ii) or get up and act out the drama?
   Please number these in order of preference

21. Do you prefer to learn by getting up and improvising?
    YES NO

22. Do you believe you can hold the real and imaginary world in your head at the same time?
    YES NO

24. Do you believe you hold the real and imaginary world in your head when you are performing?
    YES NO
25. Do you believe you learn how to communicate through your body? YES NO

26. Does your heart leap, or your stomach turn, when you present your final playbuilding scene? YES NO

27. Does your breathing quicken before a performance? YES NO

28. Do you know when a final performance feels right? YES NO

28. How do you “know” when your group has performed well?
   (i) Your group just “knows”
   (ii) You “know”
   (iii) The audience tells you
   (iv) The teacher tells you
   (v) Friends in the audience tell you

   Please number these in order of preference.

29. How many years have you studied Drama? 

30. How old are you? yrs mths

31. Do you think you will be involved in Drama after you have left school? YES NO

32. Do you think you will go to the theatre after school? YES NO

33. Do you think you will make drama part of your career? YES NO

34. Do you think you will playbuild after you have left school? YES NO

35. Do you think you will use any of your drama learning outside of school? YES NO

36. Do you think you will work in any types of group situation? YES NO
37. Do you think you will have the opportunity to be imaginative once you have left school?  YES  NO

38. Do you think you will use your creativity once you have left school?  YES  NO

THANK YOU VERY MUCH [signature]..... MS LOVESY  2000

ANY COMMENTS YOU MIGHT WISH TO MAKE.  (Please write or draw below)
THIS IS A STUDY IN IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY IN GROUP DEVISED DRAMA WORK.

I WISH TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU AND OTHER STUDENTS THINK ABOUT GROUP WORK

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM BY CIRCLING THE ANSWER THAT YOU FEEL IS CLOSEST TO YOUR THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES IN GROUP DEVISED DRAMA

Name: [Redacted]  

Senior student

1. Is it desirable or undesirable to have group work in drama?  
   - [ ] YES  
   - [ ] NO

2. At the beginning of playbuilding do you prefer to:
   - (i) Do and learn  
   - (ii) Discuss and learn  
   - (iii) Read and learn  
   - Please number these in order of preference.

3. Do you learn better when physical activity is involved?  
   - [ ] YES  
   - [ ] NO

4. Do you like to work with people with different drama skills?  
   - [ ] YES  
   - [ ] NO

5. Do you like to work with people you don’t normally have a friendship with outside of class?  
   - [ ] YES  
   - [ ] NO

6. Do you enjoy improvising when starting a group project?  
   - [ ] YES  
   - [ ] NO

7. Do you like to script your playbuilding at the beginning of the project?  
   - [ ] YES  
   - [ ] NO

8. Do you like to script your playbuilding towards the end of the project?  
   - [ ] YES  
   - [ ] NO

9. Does the group usually take a couple of people’s ideas to make the main part of the playbuilding?  
   - [ ] YES  
   - [ ] NO

10. Does the group create its own unique imagination during process work?  
    - [ ] YES  
    - [ ] NO

11. Does a group usually have a leader?  
    - [ ] YES  
    - [ ] NO
12. In the last group work you were involved in, did your group generally solve problems through:
   (i) Doing  
   (ii) Discussing
   Please number these in order of preference.

13. Do you generally communicate your ideas through gestures

14. Does being up and active help a group create powerful drama?

15. Do you think brainstorming helps the group think imaginatively?

16. Do you think you need a person outside the group to help refine the drama?

17. If the group spends a lot of time laughing in the process, does this help create the drama?

18. Do you like the group to explore movement activities to Help create the drama?

19. Do you enjoy the final rehearsal process?

20. Do you prefer to:
   (i) sit and go over lines
   (ii) or get up and act out the drama?
   Please number these in order of preference

21. Do you prefer to learn by getting up and improvising?

22. Do you believe you can hold the real and imaginary world in your head at the same time?

24. Do you believe you hold the real and imaginary world in your head when you are performing?
25. Do you believe you learn how to communicate through your body?  
   YES  
   NO

26. Does your heart leap, or your stomach turn, when you present your final playbuilding scene?  
   YES  
   NO

27. Does your breathing quicken before a performance?  
   YES  
   NO

28. Do you know when a final performance feels right?  
   YES  
   NO

28. How do you "know" when your group has performed well?  
   (i) Your group just "knows"  
   (ii) You "know"  
   (iii) The audience tells you  
   (iv) The teacher tells you  
   (v) Friends in the audience tell you  
Please number these in order of preference.  

29. How many years have you studied Drama?  
   2 years in school  
   2 years music  
   ... yrs ... mths

30. How old are you?  

31. Do you think you will be involved in Drama after you have left school?  
   YES  
   NO

32. Do you think you will go to the theatre after school?  
   YES  
   NO

33. Do you think you will make drama part of your career?  
   YES  
   NO

34. Do you think you will playbuild after you have left school?  
   YES  
   NO

35. Do you think you will use any of your drama learning outside of school?  
   YES  
   NO

36. Do you think you will work in any types of group situation once you have finished school?  
   YES  
   NO
37. Do you think you will have the opportunity to be imaginative once you have left school?

38. Do you think you will use your creativity once you have left school?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH .................. MS LOVESY 2000

ANY COMMENTS YOU MIGHT WISH TO MAKE. (Please write or draw below)

The imagination is a weapon each individual has as their own. No one can match that. It makes you understand yourself and your style.
Appendix 5.

Junior secondary students - examples of data analysis
5.1 Analysis of audiotape from junior secondary students’ focus group discussion.

(Recorded on 7th November 2000)

Analytical memo, October 2001: Reviewed August 2002

Teacher: To begin with let’s go round the circle and discuss your feelings about the playbuilding and script project at the Starlight Room, some of the things you enjoyed, some of the things you found difficult? A general evaluation. OK.

Student: I thought it went well, and sometimes it got hard with the practices as sometimes you got tired of it. I think the dress rehearsal made it better cause we all got to see each others’ costumes and it gave us more … umph. You know. (Laughter)

Memo: The student is confirming that when they were tired, even bored with the project, the injection of something new, a new prop, costumes, lifted their spirits. This prop or costume was an imaginative stimulus for the group as it helped them to change their image and enhance their character. Perhaps the props and costumes were like playing with a “dress up box” as a child, (a transformational object). Donald Winnicott again comes to mind in this respect, also Howard Gardner and kinaesthetic problem solving through bodily intelligence.

Teacher: That’s right, the costume helped, especially with the Melodrama, as the costumes were a really important part of the narrative.

Student: The rehearsals went on for ages and got boring, boring, but the end product (a script) was really good.

Memo: The student reiterates the word boring. Does that mean that without a product that had meaning for them they would have not produced such interesting work? Perhaps this relates to Howard Gardner’s notion that the meaning of a task must have relevance for students. These students wanted to perform at the Hospital for the sick children so perhaps this gave them the encouragement to go on when things got boring. What might I have done differently in the process work to make it more stimulating? I need to think about such teaching areas as discovery learning, kinaesthetic learning, creating metaphors that promote diverse
imaginings etc. The group had a shared purpose but the group decision making became muddled. Was this because of the length of the script unit? Most probably.

_Teacher_: **Student L, Your group went through a different process. A playbuilding process?**

_School L_: With ours we started really not knowing what we were doing. At one stage we just said we have got to do this and we picked a subject, no matter what it was, and just built and built and built and then and gradually just started getting somewhere.

_Memo_: The group did not know where they were going, but they did have a common shared purpose, i.e. to perform for the children at the Starlight Room (Westmead Hospital). How did they just build and build? She does not articulate, but from empirical observation it was through varied improvisation activities. On reflection I had not given them clear enough guidelines at the beginning of the playbuilding project. Perhaps this was why it was so difficult for them to start to creating. When we did a variety of spontaneous improvisation activities this appeared to release the group ideas, and group imagination and from this they began to create metaphorically.

_Teacher_: _It was good and appropriate_

_Student_: I thought it was good.

_Teacher_: _Why did you think it was good?_

_Student_: For the age group.

_Memo_: This student is aware of how age makes an enormous difference in drama education. Student ideas come, in part, from their maturity; more importantly as they progress in age, knowledge and skills they understand how to use and manipulate conventions and techniques such as chorus, mime, narrator, and plot line structures. These junior students did understand all these techniques, and sometimes to put them into the playbuilding project proved difficult. The group had diverse imaginings but lacked a depth of kinesthetic knowing.

_Teacher_: _What did you do when it became repetitive?_
Student: You just had to try and keep focused. (Laughter)

Memo: This is an ironic statement. From my empirical observation they started to play, chat, gossip, go off track when they lost interest, or when they felt it the rehearsing became too hard. This meant they could not see any results during a lesson. This reminds me of N’s group in *Performing an Essay*. Similarities in the way they loved to play, laugh and joke around, and then suddenly to see that the task really does have a purpose. Play and laughter appear to be a release of tension in group playbuilding. From the release of tension the group can then go forward.

*Teacher:* That’s hard for all age groups, even in Year 11 and 12, they can’t always do that.

Student: I thought our playbuilding was really good. Even though we kept changing all the time.

Memo: The tone of voice in this section indicates how much this student enjoyed the playbuilding project. What does she mean by ‘good’. Is it good because it was the group’s own ideas, whereas the other group chose to do a script. Does she mean it is ‘really good’ because they had the freedom to choose what they thought were the appropriate theatre conventions and techniques?

*Teacher:* How did you solve that problem?

Student: Talk with you (General laughter)

*Teacher:* What else did you do?

Student: Wrote out a playbuilding script.

Memo: The student demonstrates that kinaesthetics can belong to the muscularity of words. The group chose to write down what is essentially a physical embodied activity. This appeared to help them to focus on what they needed to do, as well as to give them another kinaesthetic language to work with i.e. the kinaesthetic language of words.
Teacher: Sometimes it does help to write the script out with playbuilding, especially if you can’t focus. Sometimes, not all the time (general discussion) you can add to it and see where you are going. E, what were some of the things you found interesting about the (melodrama) project?

Student E: Ah, mmm with the blocking. We didn’t always know what to do and we needed help.

Memo: This student is saying that teacher modeling is important. The teacher needs to tap into what area needs help. Particularly to help them to solve the problems in the fashion that they best learn through, i.e. physicality. From empirical observation the group would undertake an improvisation, discuss its merits, but unless I was there to help them take the concepts from the improvisation into the script work they could lose their way. When this happened the group may have lacked a group kinaesthetic empathy. It appears to me that even when a group lacks empathy the playbuilding or script work comes to a halt.

Teacher: What happened after we did all the blocking together? How did we, you refine the blocking?

Student E. We just kept repeating it.

Memo: How does ‘just repeating it’ release imagination in playbuilding? There is a point in playbuilding when continual refinement produces the most outstanding work, but these students obviously got bored with the process. What can I as a teacher do to help that process? What active, physical, i.e. kinaesthetic teaching can I engage in? How do you think about a group in drama education? They have a shared common goal, a shared imagination. They become a community that has transformation powers. The group should embody the learning. Where does metaxis fit into all this?

Student C: The thing I found the hardest was blocking (melodrama), and the thing I found most enjoyable was performing, and how we all worked so well together as a group, as we are such a fabulous group.

Memo: It is worth noting how Student C discusses the group. The group became a small community that had shared its decision making to do a script, that had
5.2 Analysis of audiotape of student M’s comments from the focus group discussion.

(Recorded on 7th November 2000)

Example of an analytical memo of one student’s conversation about playbuilding.  August 2002

Student M: I think half our ideas came together by just mucking around, and just playing around, and saying that’s really funny let’s have it.

Memo: (N. Fairclough, 1995) Ideas belong to the imagination, and this student is articulating that their ideas were group ideas. This demonstrates a group imaginative divergence, This group imaginative divergence sprang into life because of playing, because of not worrying too much about the task, but playing with ideas in games and activities. This relates to Winnicott and Turner’s concepts of play, and is also in the realm of metaxis. It also has relevance to N’s group from Performing an Essay where they just loved to play, and muck around; but interestingly Student M’s playbuilding group really thought about the task, and what its purpose was; both groups wanted to achieve to their potential and the playing became purposeful.

Student M: In the love scene (laughter), that was just playing around with Student L. It was funny, it was good.

Memo: Students are demonstrating that they enjoy the active kinaesthetic nature of playbuilding; funny, joy happiness, laughter; all these concepts appear to release the group’s imaginative capacities so that they can create with a group empathy.
Student M: I had a bit of a, I don't know if you noticed when I walked on stage, I thought I did not have my wig on and I put my hand to my head and I thought thank god, cause I was going to go back inside and start the play again (laughter), and I blacked out... did anyone see the audience, cause I couldn't see the audience, I, I, I, this always happens to me, I don't remember that I am performing, I go into my own little world, and I become that person.

Memo: Actor/audience relationship occurring at a deep level. Student is discussing the act of transformation; she is discussing the mind-body cycle of embodied learned. Student M's tone of voice is sensitive reflection on the joys and hardships of performing. Student M subtext is all about a kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and use of drama property to make the best playbuilding scene for the hospital kids at the Starlight Room. The audience were only 5 or 6 year olds, and yet she takes this seriously and with humour. The wig was of metaphoric significance to her, and the group, as it was the only actual drama property, the rest were imagined. This had importance, as it was a visual kinaesthetic symbol for the group and the audience. What does she mean 'she goes into her own little world', is this a metaxical situation where a student is performing and watching all at the same time? Where both the real and the imagined worlds collide? The student is reflecting on the essence of metaxis whilst performing. Gardner's theory where a task is seen to be relevant by the students comes in to mind again. This student is articulating how important the playbuilding task was to her. Spolin who advocates that when a student reaches inside themselves they release their imagination so that a high level of performing (improvising) occurs. Both these concepts are occurring in the subtext of this student's words. During this students discussion the rest of the class where listening intently. Her particular group where nodding and gesturing and smiling and having a tangible empathic response to M's words.

Student M: In rehearsals it's nothing, I see the audience, but when I am on stage, and when I am performing I become that person.

Memo: Imagination, creativity, transformation, bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence.
5.3 Analysis of junior secondary students
Experimental Playbuilding journals.

(Collected on 6th December 2000)

Example of an analytical memo, June 2001: Reviewed July and September 2002

The students have a structure to following in their journal evaluation.

Student D

What did you find the most challenging about Experimental Theatre?

Trying to get the message across without talking.

Memo: This student is articulating the difficulty of creating a clear dynamic message when they are challenged to use only their bodies. She is also indicating that, although kinaesthetics are a way to communicate, it is hard, as a thirteen year old student, to achieve without that muscular kinaesthetic of words.

How did your group decide on dramatic structure?

We thought what would be interesting and different roles/characters: we put people in because they would suit the character.

Memo: Group decision making, and the group having a shared purpose are evident here. The group is also using its diverse imagination to select which student should have which character. D’s group wanted to be different. Different to what? Maybe just different to any of the other work they had ever done before, and different to the approach other groups were taking. Why did they want to be different? D explains that they wanted to be interesting. I believe that this means that they wanted to be theatrically interesting, and would have to explore and problem solves all the new drama techniques to become interesting and different.

What worked well for your group and why?

The masks and the material worked really well, and the way that W kept on getting further away (from each other on stage).
Memo: This student indicates that she understood the power of the dramatic kinaesthetic property (the material the group used), and that it enhanced the meaning and the dramatic intention of their work. She also demonstrates that she has understood the power of using the stage area to create dramatic tension. I believe that she is demonstrating a kinaesthetic knowing from a technical point of view, and from this flowed an empathy; this empathy enhanced the group dynamics. The analysis also demonstrates that the kinaesthetic drama property helped this group to create metaphorically.

*What would you change in the group work and why?*

The Movie (scene). So it could be clearer that there were two people watching it.

Memo. The student is working in the realms of kinaesthetic knowing and empathy, and manipulation of a drama property. She understands that to reframe their work they needed to make clearer the intent of their movie scene.

Student Ca.

*What did you find the most challenging about Experimental Theatre?*

I personally found it hard to come up with a play which had no story line.

Memo: What I find interesting is that she writes that the playbuilding project had no story line, yet her group’s playbuilding was the one with the most in-depth story line. Maybe this notion of story line is also tied to words, as when you are a 13 year old, a drama must have words. Ca is indicating that trying to create through your playbuilding group’s bodies is a challenge that supersedes any of her previous learning.

*How did your group decided on:*

a) **dramatic structure**

We wanted to do something different to everyone else, and we also felt that it would be interesting.

b) **roles/characters?**

We discussed between the group about the personality and characteristics of each character, and then decided who would suit each character.
Memo: This student and her group were experimenting with many of the elements of drama such as characterisation, tension, and atmosphere. Student Ca's reflection indicates that she and her group wanted to create dramatic meaning through being different, through creating strong characters and roles that enhanced the dramatic meaning and intent of their playbuilding project. The reflection indicates how her group used their group imaginative divergence to help them to create a metaphoric story. I wonder how much of this comes from the scaffold learning that our Drama Department has put into place? (That is St. Sistine Drama Curriculum programs)

What worked well for your group and why?
I thought the masks and material worked really well because they helped to add something to the play and how W and I moved away from each other was effective.

What would you change in the group work and why?
Well, I would have preferred if it had gone a bit longer. It would have been different if we made the television people fall in love with reality or get the real people to fall in love with reality instead of the television characters. Overall I thought it was a great experience.

Memo: This student is exploring the world of metaxis; the real and imaginary meeting in the dialectical play. The student understands the world of television as both imaginary and yet real, and in some sense that is what she is trying to describe here. It is also pertinent to note that metaphoric creating and thinking is happening as indicated in her written reflection.

Student K

What did you find the most challenging about Experimental Theatre?
Trying to get our message across to the audience in a simple yet scary way, and by using a range of experimental theatre dramatic techniques. Costume, movement, music and lighting all played its part, and even the simplest movements made the audience react.

Memo: Interestingly this student demonstrates that through her kinaesthetic abilities, her knowing, empathy and use of drama properties she understood how an audience reacted. She appears to also elicit an understanding that moving
around in the kinesphere will help the group create meaning for their audience; meaning that is simple and scary. What does she mean by simple? Is this the simplicity of kinaesthetic knowing, the simplicity of choosing the right dramatic techniques to get the message across? Is this simplicity part of her embodied learning? This student is not only a very perceptive drama student, she also has a wonderful ‘stage presence’.

How did your group decided on:

a) dramatic structure and

We all just brainstormed ideas about TV versus reality, and we playbuilt around certain ideas and then structured them to see how well they worked in certain ways.

Memo: This indicates that her group used everyone’s imaginative capacities to help create their scene. They merged and shared ideas. They transformed.

b) roles/characters?

We just assigned ourselves who we would be. J and G wanted to be the killers, and J and I wanted to be killed.

What worked well for your group and why?

We all brainstormed well and we had good ideas, which helped us create a good structure. We also had deadlines to follow upon, so that made us work faster.

Memo: K used the word brainstorm. I can say from empirical observation that her group used many improvisation strategies that we had explored earlier on in the playbuilding process, she and her group extended and elaborated upon them in the actual playbuilding process. She also indicates here that the deadlines, i.e. Assessment structures, were of benefit to the group. Perhaps these structures helped to keep them on track (Johnstone and Spolin).

What would you change in the group work and why?

I would have extended it, and probably have tried to make it clearer and used many different dramatic techniques.

Memo: Indication of a group kinaesthetic knowing, tempered by the reality of the time given for the task, and that it was at the end of the school year. It seems to me that playbuilding can be very fulfilling for students, if they have a clear purpose
for the learning. Despite difficulties this student indicates what she would like to have refined and/or developed if she and her group had had the time.

Student ER

*What did you find the most challenging about Experimental Theatre?*

Well, there was no storyline and by having no storyline it made it more difficult because they/we used different techniques that we didn’t know about.

**Memo:** The concept of no storyline has proved challenging for many of these junior students. Embodied learning at age 13 may rely to some extent on verbal language. This verbal language gives the playbuilders a way to create dramatic meaning and hence engage their given audience. The fact that the Experimental playbuilding groups were given a number of new drama techniques meant that they had to problem solve continually; problem solve through body language, and through the physicality of meaning.

*How did your group decided on:*

*a) dramatic structure*

We chose topics that they could do and they just elaborated on it and brainstormed different ideas.

*b) roles/characters?*

We each had a different characteristic and you can tell by their movement, which was quite obvious. The roles we placed were decided by picking the topic first and again elaborating on that.

**Memo:** This group may have had a subconscious drama inventory of what they wanted to achieve, and how they were going to achieve it. There appears to be little dissent as they thought about topics that interested them and then chose them. This points to the importance of empathy in the group; the group needs to discuss and debate but should also listen to one another. Student ER does not say how they brainstormed, perhaps this was through words and visual imagery to allow ideas to be opened up, but she does say that not only did her group think of different characteristics for characters, but they gave them different beats and impulses as she inferred the audience could tell by their movement. The group
found dramatic intention and maybe even meaning first, and then elaborated upon that. How they did this is evidenced in the video. This student belonged to the Red Masked group. I will name them the Dominant Masks.

What worked well for your group and why?
The actions we had and the way we moved, especially to the music.
Memo: In some senses the music was a drama property as it created extra atmosphere for the group, and enhanced or distanced the mood of the piece from the action of the characters.

What would you change in the group work and why?
I would change the actions and make them more secure so the audience understand
Memo: Because of the way I structured the students to evaluate (which actually helped the class focus back into the task) has meant that their responses are tailored and not free. This is fine so far as it helped with assessment for learning for the class, and where I needed to focus other drama learning outcomes, but for the research it has elicited a similarity of response. Actually this is also beneficial because it highlights such areas as when the group really used their collective imaginations, or when they thought in metaphoric terms, and it is also an indication of how the students enjoyed, and were challenged by an extension of their kinaesthetic learning abilities, into kineasthetic learning abilities that had no spoken words attached.

Student Ma
What did you find the most challenging about Experimental Theatre?
What we found most challenging about experimental theatre was to try and portray the point or story in a clear and understandable way without making it too obvious, and not giving away the whole idea. Also we found making the storyline more abstract was a challenge, however, we found that once we applied music to our ideas it was much easier to make it flow.
Memo: Student Ma clearly articulates the challenges of the task for her group and what their intention was; that is even though they had the challenge of just physically creating narrative, this group did not want to make the narrative too
obvious. This student demonstrates a strong kinaesthetic knowing. She understands that a narrative must not give away everything at once, and that they wanted to take their audience on a journey. The music played a pivotal role, the music perhaps also created an empathy in the group as it allowed ideas to flow. It was also a kinaesthetic property as evidenced in the Dominant Mask group video. Student Mar words underpins the importance of a place to experiment and explore in playbuilding and a place where the group could become an organic unity.

*How did your group decided on:*

*a) dramatic structure*

Our group decided on the dramatic structure by deciding on which one would be more abstract and allow us to come up with more ideas. Also we initially sat down with the handout and thought of ideas for each structure. However, we had more effective ideas about the topic ‘similarities Vs differences’.

**Memo:** In this process of discussion, debate, and thinking about dramatic ideas the students were able to see what obstacles were in their way, such as the new drama technique of creating narrative only through their physicality; by discussion and debate the group formed shared goals about the topic; these shared goals allowed the group, and their own individual imaginations, to work at a high level where many possibilities came to mind.

*b) roles/characters?*

We decided on the roles and the characters by just playing around and improvising first, then we ended up just sticking with those roles and working on them to make them clear.

**Memo:** Playing and improvising. The foundations of playbuilding, and the foundations in drama education, allow students the structured freedom to release their ideas in a safe and secure environment. Students in this group went back to the improvisation techniques explored in the first few lessons of this unit of work. They managed, with my assistance, and then by their own explorations, to expand some of the spontaneous improvisations and insert them into their playbuilding project. (Winicott, Spolin, Johnstone, Gardner, Blom and Chaplin, Moore and Yamamoto)
What worked well for your group and why?
The things that worked well for our group were the number of people we had since it suited our structure well and it gave us theatrical time to develop our idea; also the efficiency and motivation of each person helped to create a good piece of work that everyone was proud of.

Memo: Student Ma articulates the reason why she feels the group worked well. She says the number of people suited their structure, but also implicit in this statement is that the group made the structure fit the number of people in their ideas. She talks about theatrical time, this theatrical time could belong to how the the group went about progressing their work; from playing and improvising, to structuring, refining, and performing. Student Ma articulates that motivation helped them to create a work everyone was proud of. All the groups in this class were motivated. Why then did this groups process and final performance work shine out? Maybe it was because of all the elements of drama and the way the group used their varied Kinaesthetic intelligence and knowledge to deliver the highest degree of playbuilding achievement (at the age of 13!). Again, playing and improvising, and kinaesthetics, are some of the main nodes/domains/properties that I am exploring and this Year 9 Experimental Theatre analysis has the essence of ideas beginning to take shape. (NB Think I should call it Experimental Playbuilding, as the title Experimental Theatre belonged to the classroom situation not my research concepts.)

What would you change in the group work and why?
There are really no things I would change in our group work because I think we worked quite well and how we were supposed to. Because it was abstract it all worked fantastically.

Memo: Student Ma’s evaluation is excellent. Her group had a variety of choices to make for theme, character, relationships, time, place, symbol, atmosphere, and the chose well. The group used their physicality, they took on the challenge of they abstract, and they embodied their learning in a meaningful manner. Ma has demonstrated strong kinaesthetic awareness in her playbuilding learning. This awareness may enable embodied learning to occur continually. Is this a mind and body embodiment that is cyclic because of the drama learning that takes place?
Student La

What did you find the most challenging about Experimental Theatre?
The things that I found most difficult about this sort of theatre was actually coming up with an idea. We did change a few times but in the end we got something and put it together.

Memo: Student La found the challenge in the ideas. The concept of creating opposing ideas was a complex one for her and her group. Student La’s group was a friendship group, they had strong interpersonal relationships. Maybe, because of this, they could not initially come up with ideas.

How did your group decided on:
a) dramatic structure and

well, we wanted material and a lot of movement so we figured we could use different coloured material for “Sameness versus Differences”.

Memo: The student evaluates as a group, rather than an individual. This supports the notion of the strong interpersonal relationships. She also talks in a kinaesthetie language. They wanted a lot of movement. Why did they want this? Perhaps to get their message across. The material was a property that flowed and empowered the group with ideas enabling them to find a way forward.

b) characters and roles?

We wanted two characters the same and one to be different.

Memo: Even though student La does not say why they chose the structure of two characters being the same and one being different, it might have been because this gave them the freedom to explore their ideas. Perhaps it also gave them room to experiment. From my empirical classroom observations, this group worked with such purpose and with great commitment. I think the drama conventions and techniques proved very hard for them to come to terms with, although the final performance was delicate and interesting.
What worked well for your group and why, and what would you change?
The material worked well because we practiced with it a lot. I would have changed the
way the mask was put down at the end.

Memo: The words indicate a joy in the process and the final performance, and an
observant eyes of hoe the group could have clarified dramatic intent. Group
decision making and the group did become a transformative society.
5.4 Example from one junior secondary student’s *Experimental Playbuilding* journal
0: What we found most challenging about experimential theatre was to try and portray the point of view of the film in a clear & understandable way without making it too obvious & not give away the whole idea. Also we found making the storyline more abstract was a challenge however we found that once we applied music to our ideas it much easier to make it flow.

1: Our group decided on the dramatic structure by deciding on which one would be more abstract & allow us to come up with more ideas. Also we initially sat down with the handout & thought of ideas for each structure however we had more effective ideas for similarities vs. differences.

   We decided on the roles of the characters by just playing around & improving it then we ended up just sticking with those roles & working on them to make them clear.

2: The thing that worked well for our group was the number of people we had since it suited our structure well & it gave us theatrical time to develop our idea. Also the efficiency & motivation of each person helped to create a good piece of work that everyone was proud of.

Junior Student
Appendix 6.

Senior secondary students - Examples of data analysis
6.1 Analysis of senior secondary students' Group Devised Performance logbooks

(Collected on 25th August, 2000)

Example of analytical memos, May 2001. (Open coding)

Marissa's logbook
Today the performance is looking and feeling much better. We have fixed up the beginning and it now goes in this order.

Memo: Language belongs to group and problem solving activities. Connection between real and fictitious. Metaxis at work in logbook.

Soundscape - 123 huh - oh my god - scream - I have to get out - communications - oh, each fly from hand, are drawn to the boxes - really to the top - circle one another - discoveries - flashback - plane - disappearance.

Memo: Reference to kinaesthetic drama learning and embodiment of ideas.

I think this way is much better way. (Individual satisfaction of problem solving). I introduce the narrative and develop our characters. We figured out the place, flashback and it is a real story from a Bermuda experience. We are also going to use a ship example. It is the stories that intrigue us. The whole mystery story. (Group identification with mystery). We realised that this is what engaged us so this is what should capture the audience as well. Together we make a really good group because everyone has an equal say most of the time now. (Identification empowers her and the group to kinaesthetically create with empathy). When we began, I know, I was a little timid to share my ideas but I always open up when we get going and get everything out. (Self esteem emerging as group continues to have a common shared purpose.) I think it is because I can then see where everything should go and ideas keep on rolling in. Everything is good and we are pretty much prepared for our monitoring on Monday. (HSC monitoring/level of anxiety seems to be low). We tried
monitoring on Monday. (HSC monitoring/level of anxiety seems to be low). We tried the plane ideas with the table and it didn’t work but now we have built a plane by using our bodies. It works a lot better. (Improvised problem solving that has visual and physical results). Wish us luck.

Memo and node: Ties in with group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating. A body-mind-embodiment experience.

Things to fix up after monitoring. J’s character needs to have more substance. e.g. Not just a stubborn movie star. C. nearly there but more of a story. Repetition scene didn’t work fully. We don’t have to go through the same track again. Turn around or something, and at the end we should be going back to original positions. More connection between characters, and look for commonalties, merge the stories. e.g. J on the plane perhaps to finish my story.

Memo: This section is a fine line between plot development and problem solving, but ultimately M’s logbook is a kinaesthetic “written rehearsal” that provides a continuum of imagining into the creating. Assessment for learning provides active problem solving.

Sketched a picture of her pilot/flight scene

Memo: Connects physical activities drawing to fictitious world (Metaxis/Liminal) visual kinaesthetic to help her and the group solve problems. What strikes me about the whole of her written discourse is that she has enormous individual satisfaction as well as group satisfaction on the manner in which they were solving the problems thrown up by the HSC task. Identification with the project empowered her, and in her opinion, her group. She indicates how this process built up her self esteem. Self esteem being a positive step in her capacity to imagine, then create. “When we began, I know, I was a little timid to share my ideas but I always open when we get going and get everything out”. (She seems to take on board the group kinaesthetic empathy with no problems. “We tried the plane idea
with the table and it didn't work but now we have built a plane by using our bodies. It works a lot better". Improvised problem solving through embodiment.

Another thing that strikes me is the way in which the group copes with the HSC monitoring. "I think it is because I can then see where everything should go and ideas keep on rolling in. Everything is good and we are pretty much prepared for our monitoring on Monday". Is this because in Gardner's terms the assessment strategies are actually based in their kinaesthetic intelligence, and it is also a project that enhances their intelligences rather than is a punitive way to assess their learning?

Jacquelina's logbook
Today's rehearsal was very productive and we finally 'unstuck' ourselves and are traveling with the piece. (Satisfied problem solving; reflection on the exploration of the range of experiences; Identification that led to the enactment of their piece of drama as an art form).

German sayings. German accent and sayings progressing:
I've had enough ich bin satt
to put a stop to something einen sach ein Ende Machen
love letter der liebesbrief
rival in love der nebenbutler
sisterly love schnesterhibe
to fall in love with sich rerhibenin

Memo and nodes: Kinaesthetic awareness of the importance of words and action.
We decided to forget the plane idea because it was so restricting and unoriginal and although it was difficult to let go of it, we are now pleased with the decision and are all for once enjoying doing the piece. (Threshold of dramatic behavior). We have about 2-3 minutes to perform at the monitoring, so we will just have to see how it goes. I am glad we got stuck out at the beginning rather than at the end though because at least we
wont be sick of the piece. I am looking forward to seeing how the piece turns out.
Overall I am pleased with the bit we currently have.

**Memo and nodes: Group working together, solving problems and using improvisation techniques to help them to go forwards.**

For the first time during the group process I am happy and not feeling unconfident with the piece. I think the material idea has allowed us to travel with the plot and we have gotten up more, as well as sitting down and working out exactly what we want our plot to be.

**Memo and nodes: Group kinaesthetic drama property has allowed ideas to expand and flow freely hence satisfaction with progress. Group empathy emerging.**

We actually know what we want to do at the end and have choreographed the final scene which we are happy with, we just need to link the last scene we have to the end without making it too abrupt. (**Group kinaesthetic imaginings**). I am unsure of how long the piece is as yet, however I would assume that it is over the time because it seems to go longer than 12 minutes. We still need to tightly block most of the scenes, because, at times, we are still improvising the blocking. (**Generate sense of dramatic experience through the rehearsal process**). We are having some trouble, at the moment, creating the baby scene because we are unsure of how to fit it into the piece. We also need to shorten it, yet being a poignant moment in the piece, it is difficult to figure out what exactly needs to be taken out.

**Memo: Group kinaesthetic empathy to help solve the problems of the playbuilding task combine with a technical knowing of how to engage the audience and tell the narrative. Student demonstrates an awareness of the HSC criteria that must be adhered to.**

Well I am a lot more positive about the piece and I am feeling motivated to continue working on it. I feel confident that it will come together and hopefully we will keep
traveling. It’s difficult to accept that all of the research and rehearsals will be over in 12 mins. Hopefully we don’t go over time.

Memo and nodes: Emotional attachment to the work. She has put much of herself into this piece and has worked with the group to share ideas and creativity.

Well it has been a long and difficult process, that I admit. There have been moments where we just could not see the light at the end of the tunnel, the piece just hadn’t been traveling. (Self reflective) Fortunately we ‘unstuck’ ourselves and persisted. We were determined to have a good piece of Theatre in the end. I think back on the original ideas and I love to try and relive the process just to see how it went from nothing to something. (Self esteem. Contemplation of process and product). I was glad that we went with these ideas for several reasons. I learnt a lot from researching the period in time; I realised that there is so much more to Henry than just his wives; I am also glad we chose to go on a journey in the piece because that period in time had a journey in itself which all of the characters experienced.

Memo and nodes: Imagining to creating to transformation, this created dramatic meaning. Characterisation exploration. Love of work reflected in the dramatic piece. Group empathy. Kinaesthetic teaching and learning has been the bedrock of the classroom environment.

Well I am proud of this piece, we have worked really hard and have loved it! I can honestly say I enjoy every minute I perform it. (Kinaesthetic empathy and knowing.)

I’m proud of the intellect and the theatrical ideas in this piece; it was a true ensemble effort and I could just hope this shows in the performance. (Self initiated learning belong to cognitive and affective states).

Signed

Anne of Cleves (Jacquelina) (Threshold of the real and fictitious)

Memo: Psychological satisfaction that enables the student to experience the world and her group at a high level. There has been a layering of complex dramatic ideas and identification with a positive group process.
Lesley’s logbook
I have enjoyed the preparation and rehearsal for our HSC Drama group performance. (personal satisfaction with group and task). I found it immensely challenging and a reflection of much research, development and effort. (Personal understanding of how the problems were solved). Our group was slow to move forward with our idea initially and I was afraid that we would not be able to work effectively. (Self reflection and contemplation on process) However, this was not the case and despite numerous dramatic problems we encountered throughout the process. We worked as a group to overcome them. Everyone seemed to contribute enthusiastically to the piece and make suggestions.

Memo and nodes: Again this student is indicating that the group created their own diverse imagination and a group metaphor. These concepts enabled, or worked in parallel with a group kinaesthetic knowing and harmony, and the capacity to explore their chiffon material in a dynamic way.

A major factor in the successful completion of the group performance was the fact that we all got along. We were able to give, as well as to take, constructive criticism and advice and did not let petty things blow out of proportion. (Is this Aristotle’s Golden Mean? - Happiness along the continuum line) I hope that tomorrow’s performance goes off without any major problems, as that will reflect our hard work and commitment to the piece.

Memo and node: Group harmony, group identity and group transforming. Kinaesthetic learning. (Means to the end - How the group went about it justified their imagininginss). Group as a transformative society. Group working with previous embodied experiences to enhance this playbuilding task. Group aware of HSC requirements and thinking along those lines so that it does not detract from their work. (Knowledge and senses) (Again this ties in with Abram’s and Turner). Actor/audience relationship is important to be able to reflect with a critical eye. Audience integral in a playbuilding experience. Group performance challenged
her to see the world she was in — enable the audience to learn as well. Purpose of audience - look at Edwin Scholssberg.

Further improvisation needed.

Memo and nodes: The problem solving helped with the creation of the group’s imagination. This stems from improvisation. The student does not say how these improvisations lead on to other ideas, but from past analysis, and my own observation of these students’ work, I would suggest that it did so. Her logbook is interesting because the word I is hardly mentioned. Her written discourse incorporates the notion of the group. Is this just a subliminal response because the group is working so well and therefore the individual thought is submerged into group thought, even in her own logbook?

Ursula’s logbook
J and L came up with a very good idea. (Affirmation of other people’s imaging). We all come together to find Henry’s Y chromosome so he can have his male heir. I love the idea because it gets us out of a realistic time frame; the idea is humorous in itself, on a mission; an objective to reach for and it enables conflict to be aroused — over all of us wanting the chromosome for one specific reason, be it to have the son, confiscate the chromosome so Henry is further punished etc. Can really see the Y chromosome idea working though. I love it!

Memo and node: Complex understanding of the metaphoric level of high drama. Critical Attitude. Cause and effect. Student working out theory of drama, then builds on the foundation.

Our rehearsal today was laughable really, we were there for about 4 hours and we were just so unfocussed, we couldn’t get motivated to really do anything. (Socialising overpowering task) We just ate junk food, and hung out for lunch which was so disappointing because everything was closed. Not that we walked down, we got L to drive down, which just indicates our degree of energy and initiative! But it was fun. (Fun and creativity). Barring drama as we actually get along as friends really well which makes it easy to get off track, but means theatre we don’t have domestics over drama or anything else. So I am really glad for that. But at about 3ish, we came up with the ideas of using strips of material hung from the bars on the ceiling, either hung
in a line or in a V shape, well more like this (draws a reverse V), one piece of material located to each character. We though of different ways we could use the material.

**Memo and nodes:** Group imaginative divergence has visual qualities. Group kinaesthetic drama property that enables diverse imagination and a variety of theatrical conventions and techniques to be explored. There is a linking of the students' social, physical, fun and playing world in the drama task. All these concepts produced great ideas. The group is developmental but has a desire to achieve. Problem solving ideas through kinaesthetic intelligence.

* babies
* dancing partners
* horses
* scarves
* dancing apparel – dresses etc.
* masks
* to hide behind when spying

and so the rehearsal was not a total waste of time! (Student feels happy - Look at Aristotle's *The Golden Mean and his three categories*) I really think this idea could work because not only does it give us objects to work with on the stage – a bare stage is very intimidating, but it also can become a powerful symbol, well a number of symbols, depending on how it's used in each scene.

**Memo and nodes:** Student using cognitive, affective and physical domains to transform narrative. Exploration of elements of drama from physical domain.

We wondered if not all of us having one piece of material each might be successful in 'separating' us, breaking up the whole untied ensemble feeling that is so important if we want the piece to be successful. We all know how absolutely important that factor is.

**Memo and node:** Meta cognitive and reflection – this reflection is the work in action with all its nuances.
But I seriously don’t think it could do that – the material could be intertwined, bunched together etc. I really feel good about this idea, after 4 hours of ‘contemplation’. We better have something good to show for it at the end!

**Memo and node: Visualizing end product. Pressure of the HSC internal assessment and external examination requirements.**

But it is all right, especially compared to all my other drama performances for Year 11 and 12 – I was so stressed and rushed, this is heaven compared to that. *(Understanding pressure from previous HSC projects).* Anyway we have a more detailed basic plot line and we finally know where we are headed. The material is just brilliant – everyone had their own symbolic colour. *(Ursula continually challenges ideas and framework).*

Jane Seymour - Blue (for boys – male heir)
Anne Boleyn - Green (jealousy – envy/temper)
Anne of Cleves - Yellow (happiness/not regal)
Katherine of Aragon - Purple (royal colour)
Catherine Howard - Red (sexy, temptress, sultry)

L’s sister is making us skirts as well, so we have spent about $30.00 each just on material alone. L. and G. and I have made friends with the people at the material shop now – they gave us discounts! (not much though about $2). Anyway the material just keeps getting better and better at dynamising further everything we construct together!

**Memo and node: The power of a group kinaesthetic drama property. It has empowered the group with exploring their technical and interpretative knowing. It has enabled strong group empathy to appear. Student using Boalian terminology and his acting techniques to create narrative and dramatic meaning.**

Basic plot line:
- Hiding
- Original beginning
- Screen scene
• Snoring/house - Y dialogue

• Toasting - mask/chandeliers

• Dress - bitchy - Henry Y - Jane Seymour

• Dancing scene

• All using material as Henry snoring

• Back into looking at Henry - 2 snores - Catherine

• Benevolent Katherine Parr scene

• Babies scenes - Y Chromosome Idea

It is really scary to know that this is the final evaluation that I will ever have to do for drama. **(Hard to let go of group’s and drama identity that has built up)** It’s scarier to realize that tomorrow will be the day that just never seemed to come for me, years of seeing other people go through the same thing, knowing one day it would be my turn, never believing however, that it would actually come. **(Act of final discovery of the dramatic moment - a drama within a drama)** It hasn’t hit me yet, it’s almost 11:30pm and I had planned to be in bed by 9.00pm at the latest. It’s not that I can’t sleep, it just hasn’t realistically sunk in that it’s on tomorrow. This experience had just been amazing, it is something that will never leave me. **(U feels this framework will be tied to her personal identity for ever)** I am absolutely in love with the piece. I could have never asked for a better one. Although we went off on a really bad footing, the beginning of this process was torture for me, once we for the Henry idea and the material idea side by side. However, we never looked back and it was smooth and enjoyable sailing from then on. The group, something I was unsure of in the beginning, I hadn’t worked with two of the girls before. But I have had such an experience with them all, I have sincerely made friends with the ones that I merely smiled at before and for others, closer and stronger links have been made. If friends can get through working on a very important, stressful group performance together, the group can get through anything.

**Memo and nodes:** Personal self reflection and self esteem and group self reflection and group self esteem-. Need to go back to Aristotle and The Golden Mean and his
categories of body mind and society. Group have gone through a process that enabled group shared decision making and hence transforming to occur.

I can’t wait to drape my blue material all over my room when I get home actually. I am so proud of how far we have come, I’m so happy with out final product and in a way I wish we could perform it more than once because I want people to see it. The wives – reading about them – lets just say there has never been a dull moment. How hard is it to find characters that are so completely different, yet so strongly linked together, ohh I just couldn’t have asked for more. (Strong identification with whole process.) I mean we have comedy, rivalry, sadness, unity, action, stillness, artyness, symbolism, ohh it sound like I am so up myself about it but I am just so proud. (dramatic experiment or could I say meta-dramatic - metaxis) After this – no more performing. I wonder will I get withdrawal symptoms. I am really glad though that we were on the first day; you could be afraid of the piece going stale, from just going over it again and again. While its fresh it remains very dynamic, if it got stale we’d get paranoid that it wasn’t working anymore. Anyway I’ll stop writing now, I’ll write abut more tomorrow though especially if it has sunk in!! (probably be shaking to much to be able to write) (High Self esteem ) (Student had developed an understanding of drama as an art form through high level of practice, observation analysis and synthesis of imagining, creating, transforming, and just doing)

Memo: Perhaps what strikes me about Ursula’s writing is that it is filled with dramatic empathy for the actual creation of the piece, for the problems encountered along the way, and for the solutions that she and her group have reached. She and her group have not only used Boalin techniques to help with the process but have also explored Stanislavski techniques to help develop their characters. I think it would be a good idea to further analyse Stanislavski’s work in relationship to these students’ capacities to find and work within and outside of the threshold of the fictitious and the real – metaxis.
Yvette's logbook

_Drawing of set._ This set works for us although we have to make sure to have cotton (as opposed to silk) because we do not want to slip. The white backdrop – parachute material – is very effective, especially when we make it flow and resemble waves.

**Memo and node:** Group kinesthetic property. Yvette understood its value and potential.

I really like the way that we start in darkness with a soundscape to get the audience’s attention. (_Personal satisfaction of needs._) _Drawing of character._ I feel that I have finally developed my character to a whole. I hope the physicalisation is going well.

Physical. Chest and burn out (like an ape) head tilted, bottom lip relaxed, arms swing sideways. Voice. Soft, in tune with nature, although when panicked, strong, urgent, understandable. I use my own voice. Overall. The character is fun and needs a lot of energy to perform. I need to do a physical warm up before I go on because the character needs to be flexible.

**Memo:** Stanislavski techniques. She is creating through Stanislavski’s ‘Magic if, objectives and tactics’. In this sense her process work is metaxical. Stanislavski is worth re-looking at in context to kinesthetic imagining and creating. Perhaps this is something to do with the power of transformation.

_Drawing /diagram of the flight scene._ _Drawing/diagram of the ship scene._ (Real and fictitious interplay. Perhaps this is a key to embodiment?)

From this scene (myself and C) go into our flashback scene on the boats. The Group Performance has been completed and like we said, we have based it on Physical Theatre and to accomplish that, we spent a lot of time together to become comfortable with each other.

**Memo and node:** This group made a conscious decision to become a kinesthetic group that led into group kinaesthetic empathy.

We have explored the Bermuda Triangle through time slots and put them into our piece. We added in all the elements of the occurring phenomena and tried to explore the Bermuda Triangle though our own interpretations. Our piece is not about providing answers, it is about raising questions and we have done this successfully.
Memo and nodes: Synthesis of dramatic reasoning and type of identification for group and actor/audience relationship. Identifies with dramatic meaning and how the group created this.

I feel that our group has worked really well together, and unlike others, have not really had any argument. (Group satisfaction of needs) We have disagreed a lot, however, these arguments have been sorted out easily and we have usually agreed on a solution all together.

Memo and nodes: Democratic principles at work as group becomes a transformative community, notwithstanding, and perhaps because of, differences of imaginative opinions.

I think the process has been extremely challenging and we have finally made it not only as an ensemble but as individuals in our own characters. (Interplay between the fictitious and the real - metaxis.) Myself, I finally have my character an am happy with it. All I need to do now is keep up the physical and energy on the stage. I hope all goes well for us on stage (and back). I have typed up the script for everybody so that we can know that something has definitely been finalized. (Group leader in crystallising the work) It is not so much to lean the lines, because our lines are triggered by movement (kinesphere and language working together) and so it is more a clarification of exactly what and who says something. (Solid understanding of the actual act of transformation and what needs to lead up to this whilst actually performing) The script on the previous three pages is only a portion of the complete thing because the dialogue in the Cave scene still needs to be reworked, especially since my dialogue needs to be more primitive and C’s more English old style.

Memo: The notion of group kinaesthetics comes into play with this student and her group. They had a kinaesthetic empathy. Physical identification with their actions. (Carol Lynne Moore and Kaora Yamamoto and Blom and Chaplin). Somehow the group were able to perceive their group body in this fictitious Bermuda Triangle environment. What is the relationship between movement and meaning? This student’s logbook indicates that it was one of identification with playbuilding creating.
6.2 Example of a senior secondary student’s Group Devised Performance logbook
SUNDAY 2nd July

Our rehearsal today was laughable really, we were there for about 4 hours and we were just so unfocused, we couldn't get motivated to really do anything. We just ate junk food and hung out for lunch which was so disappointing because everything was closed. Not that we walked down, we got to drive down, which just indicates our degree of energy and initiative! But it was fun! Banning drama, we actually get along as friends really well, which makes it easy to get off the track, but means that we don't have dramas over drama or anything else and can't work due to others. So I am really glad for that. But at about 3'ish, we came up with the idea of using strips of material hung from the bars on the ceiling either hung in a line or in a V shape, well more like this — \_\_\_, one piece of material allocated to each character.

We thought of different ways we could use the material —

* babies
* dancing partners
* horses
* scarves
* dancing apparel - dare dresses etc
* masks
* to hide behind when spying

and so the rehearsal was not a total waste of time! So I really think this idea could work, because not only does it give us objects to work with on the stage - a bare space is very intimidating! But it also
6.3 Analysis of a senior secondary student’s evaluation of her Group Devised Performance process for the Literature Review

Analysis coded for Literature Review. December 2001 and January 2002

Claudia

*Have any warm-ups triggered the development of ideas, or dramatic structures, for you and your group? If yes, how have you incorporated them?*

Vocal warm-ups helped our soundscapes. The untying of arms exercises helped our movement piece. The movement workshop where we all followed one person helped us with our movement to fall in the Bermuda. *(Theorists that connect to C’s thoughts: Spolin, Jonstone, Boal, Linklater, Blom and Chaplin, Moore and Yamamoto).*

*Have you transferred any specific acting techniques into your Group Performance eg? Stanislavski, Brecht, Chorus, Expressionism, Greek, Burlesque, Mime, Movement etc. If you have been incorporating learnt acting techniques how did you go about it. Eg Experimentation, going back over your Drama notes, visually imagining them etc. Movement; through visually imagining it to express things such as a plane or ship moving. Brecht; we want to feed the audience the info and allow them to make their own minds up; make them think. *(Theorists that connect to C’s thoughts: Meyerhold, Brecht, Yakim, Brook, Laban, Moore and Yamamoto and Blom and Chaplin, Habermas, Smith and Lovat).*

*Do you believe it is possible to hold the real and imaginary world in your head at the same time? If you do, have you ever been able to use this in your Group Performance work? If so when?*

If I interpret this right, yes you are able to, it is similar to a metaphysical poet. We want to speak the facts of the odd disappearance but the answers we find or contemplate may come entirely from imagination. Our presentation will be both realistic and far far
fetched. (Theorists that connect to C's thoughts: Boal, Turner, Julianna Saxton, Burton, O'Toole, Winnicott).

*In what ways have your feelings and experiences helped create the Group Performance to this point in time?*

When we were speaking of fear I told some ghost stories and gave some of the most magnificent and chilling images I could recall from the many horror movies I've seen. After seeing the witches in Macbeth it also gave me an image for my character. (Theorists that connect to C's thoughts: Arnold, Stanislavski, Greene, Arheim, Abram's, Merleu Ponty, Linklater).

*What part did your imagination play in the process of developing your Group Performance? Give an example.*

I often imagine exterior forces overtaking my mind and body, do demons exist? Can evil evoke itself upon you? I see a scene where something supernatural comes over everyone on stage where our bodies are out of control and our minds have been claimed by something else. (Theorists that connect to C's thoughts: O'Toole, Boal, Winnicott, Burton, O'States, Merleu Ponty, Abram).

*Can you describe the moment(s) when your group began to go forward in the process? Why do you think this happened at this particular point of time?*

It happened firstly when we thought of the Bermuda triangle itself. It opened up the mystery we wanted to create for the audience in our own minds. I also think when we decided upon awakening in the – triangle together. It gives a direction for discovery. (Theorists that connect to C's thoughts: Burton, O'Toole, Bolton, Boal, Brecht, Meyerhold, Stanislavski, Brook, Abram, Turner).

*What strategies will you use to continue to create ideas in the group?*

Let our imagination's run free to all the possibilities of the "drawing of a triangle" and remember anything is possible. (Theorists that connect to C's thoughts: Greene, Gardner, Arnold, Winnicott, Forsyth).
6.4 Analysis of the audiotape of *The Wives Group Devised Performance* classroom learning activities.

(Recorded on 1\textsuperscript{st} May 2000)

Example of an analytical memo, May and June 2001

Memo: The group had worked for a couple of lessons on the idea of taking Dictator’s wives and creating a drama form this point. The first thing that strikes me about this meeting was that they were very organised and they used their journals as a reference point. One student is looking back over the journals and relating to all others what they had decided in their last lesson. From this point the students were exploring their previously discovered knowledge, breaking the information into parts, and towards the end putting it together in a new way. The conversation goes from characters such as William Wallace, to Pol Pot, to a debate on how to define Dictators and what they need to say theatrically. Eventually one student conceptualising all ideas into “What they haven’t done for society”. The group’s eventual product was on Henry VIII’s wives, but the concept “what he hadn’t done for society” was followed through. Henry VIII was unable to leave a male heir therefore caused strife politically, socially and in a religious sense.

Student: Focus on something they have in common. Let’s choose political men. *(Problem solving discussion).*

Student: How about William Wallace. A mover and shaker ohhhhhhhhh. *(Using past knowledge, and all students responded with laughter).*

Student: The movers and shakers, you know what I mean. *(Judgment of historical figures) (General laughter).*

Student: Who knows anything about … remember what about the guy down the road. Anybody could be a dictator. *(Meta-cognitive thought – stepping outside the frame).*

Students: That’s a good idea.
Memo: This small segment of discourse, at the beginning of their group meeting, is significant because they are working at a reasonably high level of cognitive and affective taxonomy. There is problem solving, linking of past knowledge, trying to explore relationships, and comparing and contrasting concepts until all the group were able to imagine together in a new way. They developed a new theatrical concept. They identified with the concept and hence began the creating process. Perhaps one could say that this type of imagining was this particular group’s way of creating their own particular paradigm/pattern for discussion and solving the imaginative problems. Further to this, the students were really speaking with their own voices, and developing a group initiative about how to make the ideas travel forward.

Student: I like William Wallace and I like Caligula. (Beginning of imaginative conversing). (More laughing. Indication that students are enjoying this brainstorming. Enjoyment in learning allows creativity to occur).

Student: OK put down William Wallace.

Student: Ghandi. I like the idea of him oppressing his wife when he is the freedom fighter. (Understands paradoxical situations and their power in Theatre).

Student: Yeah Yeah, I like that. Good idea. (Group sharing ideas and accepting offers).

 Memo: Coding this I felt that this was the point of in-depth imaginative conversing. The group was agreeing with what they liked. They had an understanding of the power of paradoxical situations in their drama work. In actual fact, from this point the notion of the audience is raised. The group was beginning to imagine in actual ‘creating’ terms. Interestingly, the HSC exam is never mentioned, although the audience is mentioned a number of times. Hence the audience, in some sense, is the external HSC exam. I would hypothesise that they instinctively felt the audience was real, live, interactive, not an HSC mark. If the HSC exam was the external driving force, perhaps the students might have discussed what the examiner would like to see? This type of conversation never came up with me during the whole process. Why Not?

Student: The conquerors and their wives.
Student: That could be good.

Memo: What is fascinating about the way the discussion/imaginings are developing is that it is an indication of the different levels, even perhaps hierarchical nature of imagining. How am I going to create a hierarchical level? Is there really such a thing? They go from the concrete into abstracting. Therefore they have been exploring their own personal images from History (All either modern or Ancient History students) and trying to solve the group problems by setting up a common thread/even common culture on their theme of Dictators.

Student: Have we got old time and new time people? (Fictitious interplay with the real).

Student: Yeah that’s definitely important. Hitler had a wife the last two days.

Student: Is Hitler really dead, did they find the bodies? I know he’s dead, but no bodies. (Historical accuracy and dramatic imagination).

Student: You know what we have to decide: Why are we all there? (From the fictitious and real into the beginnings of transforming for the task).

General agreement.

Memo: Now, is this the moment when a metaxical situation really starts to occur at a deep level. By this I mean the interplay between the fictitious and real as a distinct function of drama that separates it from all the other arts.

Student: What they haven’t done for society?

Memo: Is this the beginning of holding two worlds in their heads? Articulated by one student. I have noted in the transcript that all students are listening intently to this idea.

Student: A public dictator has power, say over a mass crowd. (Students grappling with two concepts that may need to be inter-linked in their work)

Student: Personal, power over family, umm ahh or people they know.

Student: Overall dictator. Someone who is controlling. (Defining and shaping theme).

Student: Yeah controlling, that’s the word. (Elaborate on identification of theme).
Students: Control freak, dominate. (*Creating role and character*).

Student: And what are the characteristics then?

Student: A loud voice, or how about a silent dictator. (*Dialectical ideas of characters and characteristics*).

Student: Someone the audience knows. (*Actor/audience thoughts. Actor/audience identification*).

Teacher: Why can’t you take two unknown and three known. Then make the unknown ones up.

Students: Yeah. Perhaps. (*Teacher interference, stopping the flow of the students thought patterns*).

Student: The *Who What When Where Question* needs to be addressed. Hey what about what one dictator hasn’t done for society? (*Theatrical scene structures evoked in all minds. Elements of drama*).

General excited agreement

**Memo:** In my opinion these students are beginning to analyse, distinguish, examine, compare and contrast their imaginings. This means they are ready to start the initial creating eg Student: *"The Who What When Where Question needs to be addressed. Hey what about one dictator hasn’t done for society"*. I would also like to suggest that this tumbling of imaginings enabled the group to notice what needed to be noticed about their ideas and to be critical. They allowed elucidation of their dramatic concepts. How did this happen? Eventually this group took a different tangent to the imaginings from this lesson, but this lesson provides a framework. Is this a necessary step in the linking between imagining creating and even kinaesthetic work? This begs the question of how does imagery play a critical role in creating? Also what does intuition have to do with this group’s creating? Somewhere along the line I just need to try and put myself in their shoes. What would I do? What would happen? In conclusion, the groups imagining was coming from all their past experiences and predicting into future abstract ideas. Could one say that the conversing was like the notion of ‘strike and rebound’ ‘reform and create’ (Plato – Atom structure)?
BELI

Student: Bye Bye Bye. That concludes today lessons (names all in the group) We are proud to be on this tape. We are a team. (Collegial and group – reinforcement of imaginings).


Student: Proud, proud – students hug. (Lacking physical inhibitions).

General laughter and tape switched (Release of tension)

Memo: This last segment is really important as it relates to the group’s connections to each other. It relates to the fact they felt happy, they felt they had achieved. The group had begun to work as sophisticated problem solvers and evaluate new information. The individuals were able to justify and elaborate on opinions, and the group could begin tentative decision making between different alternatives. Is this the structure for meta-creative collaboration? Perhaps creative collaborative in their shared drama space in the room and also in their heads? Did they all feel somewhat empowered? I think they were beginning to see they had the ability to act on their knowledge in a powerfully dramatic way. Of course this was borne out by the end result which was a truly innovative and delightful piece of Theatre in which all students would have received the top mark and were nominated for On Stage.

Memo: Students were learning in the affective and cognitive state, but there were continual visual kinaesthetics occurring. This was demonstrated by behaviours that indicated their awareness and interest and responsibility to the task. The group had a high ability to listen and respond. The last part of the lesson, when they all hugged and kissed, demonstrated the appreciation and enjoyment of the task as well as supporting each other in the development of their Group Performance work.
6.5 Analysis of the audiotape of *The Triangle Group Devised Performance* classroom learning activities.

*(Recorded on 2nd May 2000)*

**Example of an analytical memo, April 2001**

Student: Why don’t we talk about some of the images we are seeing.

Memo: The first thing that strikes me about this idea is the notion that the student ‘imagines’ that all members in her group are ‘seeing images’. Perhaps they had given themselves this task to do for homework, or perhaps the student just thinks that everyone thinks in images, as she does. She must have been seeing, hearing and visualising images of the construction of the Drama when at home or elsewhere. What is most important is that this student ties the rest of the group together visually. She evokes the most dramatic moment of this visualising, through amazing sound – almost primeval. NB: could use this part of the tape in the Colloquial.

Student: *Whaling sounds very eerie and beautiful.* (All other students very quiet)

Student: God, imagine everyone doing that.

Memo: What is very important from this moment on, are not only the verbal discourse, but also the visualisation and the evocative sounds. All students have viewed this moment through the perspective of their own experiences and feelings. Their intuition and affective states stimulate them. The sounds contained individual and group meaning for them. How does a situation like the above, just a few seconds of sounds, enrich the group? The cognitive and affective and physical domains came into play.

Memo: This whole transcript might be better for free nodes. The transcript is a free flowing, dynamic, imagining. It is in itself the essence. It is discourse, in so far as it relates to the way the groups communicate, and how they influenced and are
influenced by the ideas that emerge. Could I say that the majority of this group
discussion is ‘imaginative conversation’?

Student: Yeah, I think you can create something so much more, so much more
individual and with its own creative things, when we do it with our own voices.
Memo: In some senses this section belongs to the act of mind transformation. The
student talks about the ‘Individuality of the group’ and the group’s ‘own creative
thing.’ The thought belongs to an individual, but she turns it into a group
thought, even a kinaesthetic thought, as she goes on to discuss “when we do it with
or own voices”. NB: Must look at K. LinkLater. So what does all this mean to me?
Does the structure of the group consistently determine its imaginative and creative
outcome? Yes, perhaps I should create a syllogism? The students in this group
were already in the realms of metaphoric creation. This metaphoric creation was
dramatically framing the way the group thought about the world, that is the
dramatic work and the HSC. Need to elaborate on the fact that at this point visual
imagining and hearing were all playing a role in the students’ ability to perceive
the ‘dramatic action’ of their HSC actor/audience environment. It appears to me
that the students are in the ‘act of transformation’. This is evidence by:

- The process work they were now discussing contained many ideas for the final
  product
- Devising was occurring individually and collectively
- Ideas were “sparking”
- Imagination belonged to individuals but became the group’s
- They were constructing within the constructs of HSC Group Performance.

Student: Soundscapes that . . .
Student: You know what, in the Titanic CD they have that underwater sound.
Memo: I have notated perception as important. Need to elaborate on what I
might mean by this. Node - perception. Is group perception a cluster of dialectical
ideas? Further to this they were identifying with a film they knew. Was this
because it was mysterious, or was it just because they were girls and this film has a
strong romantic line to it?
Notwithstanding the above, in the next thought patterns they start to delve into a range of ideas beyond their experiences. They discuss and verbally create their own version of the world as seen through their imaginative and dramatic eyes. The students keep on visualising:

Student: I keep seeing BT as another world, within the triangle.
Student: I like that. Another reality.

Memo: These students are extending and transforming their original ideas as well as starting to behave as if the fiction they are creating is reality. Is this the interplay between the fictitious and the real? The metaxical situation. All the students were consciously involved in the present, yet they were actively involved in creating this fictitious world. This type of memo is hard to write as I feel that these students were deeply involved in the essence of what I am exploring; the phenomena of imagining that leads into creating.

Memo: Kinaesthetic and metaphor. The notion of group kinaesthetic then comes into play as this group, towards the end of the lesson, all got up and created a movement and sound piece. This improvisation held the essence of all the imaginings they had been talking about. I feel that this group had a kinaesthetic and metaphoric empathy. This involved all the students having a physical identification with all their moments. Page 53 Beyond Words - Movement Observation and Analysis by Carol Lynne Moore and Kaora Yamanoto 1988 USA Gordon and Breach Science Publishers. From my observations, this group created a Kinaesthetic world that also belonged to touch, vision, sound and hearing.

Somehow the students were able to perceive their group body in motion in this fictitious Bermuda Triangle environment. In fact, the improvisation was all about a metaphoric expression of their ideas. The movement had similarities in properties to what they knew about the environment of the Bermuda Triangle (that is the weather, clouds, and air, wind currents). Their bodies created observable differences through just being bodies joined in movement, whilst at the same time actually becoming the air, clouds etc., and the mystery. It was difficult
for me to get the students to leave the classroom at the end of the lesson, as they were so engrossed in their work.

Is there something in this idea that needs to be made into a node? What about the relationship between movement and meaning? For this group it was one of identification with their creating. OK, so the improvisation in some ways reframed the way they had been discussing, in other ways it enhanced what they had been discussing. By reframed I mean that when they actually got up to do all their individual imaginings they had to become one. At the same time the improvisation allowed imaginings to be enhanced and elaborated.
6.6 Analysis of senior secondary students’ Performing an Essay logbooks.

(Collected on 22nd April 2000)


Nina’s logbook
First couple of pages are diagrams and pictures of The Chapel Perilous and Running Up a Dress with the comment “The marriage of women’s theatre, they’re just so right for each other!”

Memo and nodes: Visual intelligence and visual literacy informed this student’s manner of understanding the task. It is also important to note here that metaphoric creating was evident early on in the way Nina and her group went about constructing their task. The idea of marriage was embedded into their performance as demonstrated by how they ‘married’ their ideas together. Group kinaesthetic knowing and empathy. Group metaphoric thinking and creating.

Today we received our Content Area 5 Assessment Task outline. It is to be a 20 minute piece of theatre detailing on The Chapel Perilous and Running Up a Dress. I am looking forward to actually getting up and performing, so that I can put all the information I have learnt into a vibrant piece of theatre.

Memo: Student is analysing what needs to be done. Certain amount of kinaesthetic knowing occurring and a personal expectation of kinaesthetic learning. There is a positive learning experience through embodiment.

My aim is for our piece to be both entertaining and informative while using the Brechtian technique of making the audience think.
Memo and notes: Student, although writing individually, is already thinking in group terms. Her writing has certain kinaesthetic muscularity. She is empathetically exploring how the creating might be achieved. She is thinking actively about the actor/audience relationship through a kinaesthetic knowing. A technical knowing about what conventions and techniques to use. Actor/audience relationship. Kinaesthetic knowing. Kinaesthetic empathy. Kinaesthetic writing.

The group I have been assigned to consists of S, J, C, G, O and E. I am looking forward to working with this group, as I have not had much opportunity to work with most of them before.

Memo and notes: Positive response to the group dynamics; even though she comments on not having worked with them before. This indicates that she believes her personal expectations will be fulfilled.

Today, after we received the task we grouped up and discussed our aims for the piece. We all decided that we want our piece to incorporate comedy and we still have a strong metaphoric message.

Memo and notes: Group already working within an active physical empathetic way. They are also scaffolding their learning, as they have visualized what they want to incorporate and, although it is not clear why they want to incorporate comedy.

I came up with the idea of hanging the structure off the metaphor of marriage. The whole group seemed to like this idea so we began brainstorming ideas that could be used as scenes. We pieced together all the things that we associated with marriage and then wrote down what we thought were the main issues in The Chapel Perilous:

- Discovery
- Freedom
- Religion
- Personal Identity
- Self Discovery.
Memo and nodes: She does not say whether the group got up whilst brainstorming these ideas but from memory they certainly created improvised images of marriage scenes that incorporated all the words they wrote down. The discussing came first, the improvising then occurred. Improvising is the bedrock to imagining and creating and allowed this group to explore their ideas. Improvising engages with problem solving.

We then decided that we wanted to incorporated the Brechtian technique of song and we wrote down a rough draft for a song to the rhythm of Going to the Chapel. Lights up on two groups on either side of stage. RUD singers to CP singers.
RUD Going to the Chapel
CP His name is Judith
RUD Going to have 2.3 kids
CP Numbers were never my forte
RUD Gee, really love you mumsy, with Tom it was always clumsy

Memo and nodes: Musical and kinaesthetic intelligence working. Group starting to explore more structured improvisation and work within confines of the task.

For homework we each had to think of a line and a response to the song. I thought of: "Motherhood’s here, ooh, ooh, ooh. Keep my baby no no no. Today we decided to open our piece with the song and we got in the black box and put actions to the words. While we were doing this we thought of using the traditional church chorus to reflect the school girls used in The Chapel Perilous. We have split our group into Running up a Dress singers and Chapel Perilous singers and have learnt the appropriate lines.

Memo and nodes: Student indicates that the group works in different kinaesthetic ways; e.g. knowing the technical requirements and with empathy. She indicates that body language and observation of each other helps solve problems. Musical and spatial interrelationships also come into play. Body language. Problem solving.
Group kinaesthetics.

It is two weeks until our performance so we have decided to write up a scene order to work from.
Opening song
Invitation
Making the dress
Hen's/buck's night
Mirror scenes,
Mother and baby
Social expectation
End wedding ceremony.

Today we decided to use the song from Sister Act to represent Sally’s lesbian relationship with Judith. Today we also started to workshop the bucks night’s scene. It did not flow very well. It was very funny but it did not relate to the task.

Memo and nodes: Laughter and play provides a release of tension. The group seems to need to go off task. Remember when the Henry VIII group came up with the chiffon material idea when they spent half a day lolling around and talking? WHY? What is it about laughter, playing and improvising that can help creativity go forward?

More general information on task and drawings of stage blocking.

Memo and nodes: Real and fictitious – metaxis. This student works strongly through visual literacy and spatial intelligence. Her drawings are a focal point in her imagining and creating. Drawings indicate a kinaesthetic understanding of the task. There is energy to them.

Today we had an early start and we saw our teacher. The general consensus of the meeting was that we need to develop our scenes and have something to work from.

Memo and nodes: Awareness of the task. Group perception of what they need to do. Look with a critical eye over their imagining and creating.

Our teacher pointed out that we have let our metaphor override our piece, thus slowing our progression. We all agreed to re-arrange the metaphor of marriage and start working on scenes to incorporate the following answers to the actual requirements of the assessment questions. Although disappointed with all our work being re-arranged we all know it is better.
Memo and notes: Empathic teaching. To be in tune, but letting them know they had gone off track. This student is starting to take note of the kinaesthetic knowing again. The conventions and techniques of the task appear to now be more solidly incorporated into her written ideas. As indicated, she is sharing this physicality of knowing with her group. Empathetic teaching. Physicality of knowing. Group shared purpose. Group kinaesthetic knowing. Group imaginative divergence.

So, in light of our decision to start over, the teacher talked with us about alternative openings. It will be a journalist scene where we each say a quote from the reviews of the plays. Mine is “By the 1980’s many playwrights had decided to portray women as more than just sexual objects”. This scene will then link into a sewing scene where we talk about the dramatic forms of RYD. We will all assume a sewing position. I am pinning a hem and say a quote from the play. “You have a lovely figure, a lot of girls would envy you”.

Memo and notes: She records her verbal and non-verbal activities so that the process of how she perceives the imagining and creating are clear. Her logbook entries appear to indicate a growth in learning through the parameters of the task. Group problem solving.

We also had a rehearsal after school today and in that we worked through an adaptation of “The Potential of the Cloth” and also “A Mouth Full of Pins”. Rather than writing out an entire script we will write our own lines and their cue for each scene.

Memo and notes: Some students appear to love to script their ideas. This is obviously to do with the group’s preferred way of working. In the next group a couple of students script and the rest just noted ideas down. Therefore, students who are strong in literary intelligence, or the intelligence of the written word, appear to be the ones who writes the script, whereas students like this on, prefer to draw and write down dramatic action.

We had an afternoon rehearsal today and came up with more scenes. We want to open our piece with a soundscape and us in a line behind a piece of material. We will say fabrics as mother or daughter characters (I am an adolescent girl) and then go in a rhythmic soundscape of Sally’s infamous life.
Memo and nodes: Introduction of a group kinaesthetic prop to help the creating goes forward.

Me: Gingh...
E: Ham
J: Tart
G: Tam
O: Cord
S: Du
All (Scream) ROY
Pull on material and say sexily
Me: I
G: Want
S: To
E: Walk
J: Naked
O: I want to walk naked though the world.”
We rehearsed this scene a lot to get the timing perfect.

Memo and nodes: Group kinaesthetic drama property working dramatically with the words. Elements of drama being explored such as focus, rhythm, dramatic meaning.

Today was our Sunday rehearsal. My group came in two hours early to rehearse. Today was a really productive day and I am feeling more on track than ever. I think our piece is progressing well and that we have good group dynamics.

Memo and nodes: Group interacting, stimulating each others ideas. Tensions occur but they use these to create and go forward. This group is like a small microcosm of society. Group dynamics. Group empathy. Group perception.

We decided to write this scene on Dramatic Forms: It is a sewing scene.
Have you got any Brechtian techniques?
I’ve got banners
I’ve got some
I’m breaking down the fourth wall
I’m making the audience think

Memo and nodes: Although these words are very much part of the task, they also indicate a substantial kinaesthetic knowing by the group on how to incorporate pertinent conventions and techniques into their piece. I would suggest that Nina is something of a super dramatist (Dunn and Betty Jane Wager). She has an innate understanding of how drama works.

What else do we need?
Transformational acting
Where
Did
I
Put
These
Soundscapes?
Here
They are
Well at least you’re using your props for a practical purpose.

I am really happy with this scene, it is fun to perform. I hope the audience enjoys this scene as much as I do. We worked on refining our dance-moves to “Overtime Rock” with the words we have written ourselves. Today is the performance day and we just ran over our piece continuously. One point, we did a speed run to get our energy levels up. I am confident with our piece and I feel comfortable with all my dialogue and actions.

Memo and nodes: Towards the end of the process students appear to be working in a substantial metaxical world, relating both the actual and fictitious to their work.
Group working through an awareness. Embodied awareness.

I am happier with the transformational acting that I do as the mother/daughter. We also did a line run while waiting to go on stage. I really felt like part of an ensemble just before we performed.
Memo and nodes: Does she feel like this because they have worked so solidly as a group, using all their group kinesthetic, spatial, and musical intelligences? Group imaginative divergence and group kinaesthetics. Kinaesthetic teaching and learning.

Well, after performing our piece two days ago I feel great. I am happy with my performance and feel that our group dynamics enabled a steady flow of ideas. 

Memo and nodes: Amalgamation of process. She understands they created a vibrant theatre language for the audience.

Despite our early problems with an overriding metaphor I feel that we performed a piece that not only addressed the criteria of the task but also presented an entertaining and informative piece of theater. 

Memo and nodes: Reflective, and understood when that the initial metaphoric creating was not working. In my experience some students find this difficult to do.

I was really glad to receive laughter from the audience at several points. I also feel that our physical construction of “the dress” was effective and a little different. From several audience responses I gather the audience really liked the dress construction.

Memo and nodes: Interactive excellence and an understanding of the role of the audience. Understand that energy is created through audience response. Group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama property.

Overall I have enjoyed the performance process and am glad with our final outcome. I have learnt a lot about Women’s Theatre, especially in Australia.

Yvette’s logbook
I feel that the performance essay will be OK. Usually I an extremely stressed but things are going at a steady pace and although we did not get it finished today I still feel it is possible that it will get finished.

Memo and nodes: Student working in areas of empathy knowing and understanding the problems with rehearsals.
We continued working on the scenes, from where we left off and I am continually checking up our checklist to see we have covered everything.

Memo and nodes: This student is very organized and practical, checking back and forth on what needs to be done and how it will be done. She has a thoughtful way of creating. This student is very talented (identified by G & T Coordinator) and perhaps this type of reflection is an indication of how she joined the actual and fictitious worlds together in her head and her logbook and hence her brilliant performing.

In the end we will, and I think it is “healthy” that we go off track sometimes because when we do we feel back on track more easily.

Memo and nodes: Great point about going off track. This relates to the essence of play as well as the essence of discovery during the process. Playing was the essence of creating for some groups in their group performance as well as the Experimental Playbuilding groups. Explore Donald Winnicott further and transitional objects.

We will be having rehearsal on Monday and Tuesday and I am looking forward to performing. So far it has become a great experience working with a new group of people. I guess I have found that sometimes groups work and other times they don’t. But something is always pulled together in the end.

Memo and nodes: Group dynamics again come into play. This group had to form they own structures and theatrical and personal rules to accommodate all learning styles. Appears to have been successful from this student’s point of view.

We made up a lot today in terms of scenes, and ticked off more things on the checklist. We did performance styles and Rhyme “Mothers on the...” and we refined a lot of our beginning scenes.

Memo and nodes: By refined she means getting up and phsyicalising, actually looking in depth at the actor/audience relationship. The group would step outside and use their visual literacy or intelligence to keep a checklist. I also helped in the last rehearsal, but they were very adapt at being able to “see themselves” in action.

The whole thing is becoming quite confusing because we keep changing the order of our scenes and so I wrote a structure for our play. Opening:
I write to make sense of the world - Femininity.

CJMR The head’s out. One more playwright push!

L I want to give birth to a
M Confronting
R Sensual
J Controversial
C Spiritual
L Women on a journey

CJMR Sally Banner
MR Citizen of the world
JC Big Frog in a small puddle
Y I want to give birth to an
C Intrinsic
J Acknowledged
R Hegemonic
M Conventional
Y Mother daughter relationship

CJMR Mother daughter
CJ You are the phoenix which rises through my ashes
RM Inevitably, I will be more than she bargained for.

Memo and nodes: Group dynamics and interacting. Yvette is the leader appearing to help the others to solve theatrical problems through embodied learning. Although she demonstrates stress, this type of stress may be beneficial to help the group pull all those last minute threads together. Group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and drama properties inherent in the action of the script combined with a group imaginative divergence and metaphoric thinking and creating.

So we decided to take the main key words from the whole performance that summed up the two plays and the issues. However we did not know how to stage it. That night we made a conscious decision to finish early because we were worn out and had accomplished a lot.
Memo and nodes: There is a great deal of imagining and creating happening even though they are tired. The key words tie into the elements of drama such as focus, timing, place, tension, space to create dramatic meaning.

We finalized and perfected the performance today several hours before going on stage. We also made a big mistake when we changed a scene. We had forgotten why we did the scene originally. We wanted to show a realistic view of how our bodies were “lovely” and how we walked around the streets of Melbourne looking at each other’s bodies. We suddenly just felt it wasn’t working and so took the easy way out. After Miss looked at it and said “change it back” it took us one go to perfect it which just goes to show that if we really had tried to perfect that scene in the first place, then we would have. It was a good lesson to learn.

Memo and nodes: Teacher as facilitator. Teacher empathy but pointing out very firmly that they had gone off track. One of the difficulties with the Performance Essay is that although the group can use its own unique imagining and creating, they must stay within the parameters of the task and not “make things up”. They must use their research on the playwrights, etc., knowledge of plays, back up with evidence. This is a totally different type of playbuilding project than the other two.

Once we had run through we checked the checklist to make sure everything has been included and it definitely had. Everything that needed to be mentioned we had mentioned and we had constructed the piece always remembering the REALISTIC aspect of it. We always tried not to send it up because the plays are not the type to be sent up. We always wanted to keep that special relationship with the audience, to make them feel and empathize as opposed to Brechtian (for example) which avoids the ‘emotional’ side of audience reaction. During our rehearsals time we were quite lost for ideas and found that we had no energy. I ended up bringing everyone some green cordial in the hope of some ‘hypo energy’ and it worked!! Then I suggested a speed run which was so exhausting yet so much fun at the same time. It gave us a release of stress as well as clarifying the performance as a ‘whole’ in our heads.

Memo and nodes: Bodies in action in the world around them. A student cannot do it alone, they must act as a group. Group kinaesthetic acting and interacting. All the
senses coming into play, taste (cordial), physical (speed run), sight (watching
themselves performing), sound (voices and soundscapes), hearing (listening to what
they say).  Abram, Turner and Boal.

The performance itself was great.  It went in a flash and I was extremely happy with it.
When setting up, I thought for a moment that the sewing machine wouldn’t work but the
plug had been switched off at the wall.  Overall there were no mistakes and we went at a
steady pace and before hand relaxed.  We did a “meditation” type “prayer” thing and sat in
a circle holding hands, calmly doing a version of the pieces, running through our lines.
We went on stage confident and I feel we, as a group, performed it to the best that we have
ever performed it.  And I think that this was due to not overdoing it in rehearsals.  We kept
the process balanced.  Individually, I also feel happy with the performance.

**Memo and notes:** This student appears to be fully aware of her relationship to the
metaxical drama world.  She shares this world with other group member.  Their
group created a dramatic awareness of the task, perhaps a dramatic synergy through,
I believe, a group kinesic world.  From what this student has had to say, and from my
observations of the problems they had to overcome, this awareness occurred at
different times for different group members, but eventually they all connected to the
problem -a dynamism.  Group mind-body relationships (Abram, States, Fortier,
Garner)

One thing, which had me worried before was that we had a run through and I forget my
lines.  But that was only because it was the first run through we had as when I was nervous
and so I was forgetful.  But after that it was OK because we had a relaxing run.  Overall,
once again I am very pleased with the performance and I got really close to the group and
discovered more about each individual that I had never know.  The experience has widened
my knowledge and given me insights into group work that I had not discovered previously.

**Memo and notes:** Aesthetics at work.  Aesthetics working alongside and within the
group.  Aesthetics and kinesics.  A capacity to see what there is to be seen as it moves
through the stage.  This provides a conscious knowing of what impact the
performance essay had on the group, herself, and the audience.
**Claudia's logbook**
These are some ideas we came up with in class today. They’re clever but I really do think they are focusing on adapting the content to the metaphor rather than the metaphor to the content.

**Memo and nodes:** Metaphoric inquiry. This student appears to have a substantial understanding, that in this particular task the content comes first and the metaphor must be overlaid on top of it.

My first impressions of the group are good considering we began flowing with ideas straight away, however I can see a domination problem occurring.

**Memo and nodes:** Leadership emerging too early? Group dynamics and interacting occurring. Group as a community being dominated too early by a leader. Perhaps personality conflicts? Perhaps not all students yet seeing the same vision? Group shared purpose and decision making takes time to develop.

What things have we in common in the group? How do our ideas reflect a cultural context, and the distinctive treatment of women? I’m starting to really grasp the idea of both plays in a way, which I can actually get some structure to.

**Memo and nodes:** Logbook entries are not dated, but this is a couple of weeks into the process and the theatrical understanding appears to be sorting itself out in the group.

I don’t mind that some members of the group feel that you need a lot on paper before you begin, but I made that mistake before (referring to a task she did in the Preliminary year). I know I don’t put as much into my journal as others do but I only use it to the minimum so as I can clarify my thoughts. Once I understand I stop. Is that bad?

**Memo and nodes:** Substantial indication of a kinaesthetic learner who also uses her linguistic ability to help her solve problems. She appears to work from an instinctive kinaesthetic knowing and empathy.

My ideas for an opening:
- Represent both playwrights
- Use frozen image
- Use soundscapes
- Incorporate ideologies of both playwrights.

We need to make the difference clear between the plays by introducing the main themes and character.

**Memo and nodes:** The group and their whole dynamics impacted on the opening, this is in fact why the opening was stunning. This student shared her kinaesthetic knowing and perception of how to use a stage space, what to say at the opening paragraph of the essay. and all this would impact on the audience. She is working in the realms of merging all the elements of drama to make meaning and to enhance the group's imagining and creating. Student draws ideas for opening. Visual kinaesthetic to show dramatic kinaesthetic on the stage floor. Problem solving through kinaesthetics and metaxis. Real and illusionary worlds in her logbook.

I think I’ve realized that in order to make this group work I need to take a few steps back from my usual dominating role in the group.

**Memo and nodes:** Self reflective. Claudia understands that she needs to alter her social, personal and drama behavior for the group to keep functioning in a dynamic way.

Both R and Y have really great leadership qualities in that they’re very organized and come back to the group with scenes written. It’s hard for the other members of the group to say what they don’t like so I try to take the best ideas from each and create a new scene from that.

**Memo and nodes:** This student is trying to work with a group kinaesthetic empathy as well as a knowing. She is a very physical actress and manipulates all the imagining and creating to create a vision of her world of the task, but also works within the group structure that has emerged.
A metaphor of female life. Not sure. We are trying to adapt the content to the metaphor rather than the metaphor to the content. This is a difficulty and I with all others must overcome this drama problem.

Memo and nodes: This student has great visual kinaesthetic ability as she understands that the group needs to work from the topic set for study. The metaphor needs to enhance the group’s learning and must be able to be physicalised.

I can’t believe after all the hard rehearsals and constant pondering over ideas its all over! I am so happy with how we all did. It really made me have a sense of pride walking away that night. I must admit I was worried when I watched some of the other groups. it made me think of all the possible insecurities one could have. Something I really valued was before we performed how close I felt to everyone in my group.

Memo and nodes: Collaborating effectively. Transformative community.

We said a short prayer and all gave our words of enthusiasm to each other. It was an amazing energy. This whole process really has made me understand a lot more about Australian Female Theatre and how both plays really did make their own impact. I feel as though the essay will run much clearer in my mind now and hopefully will make it easier to write.

Memo and nodes: Capacity to write with her own kinaesthetic voice, using her other spatial, visual, musical, intelligence’s. Appreciation of the dynamics of drama as a performing art.

I thought our group really did work well together despite some of the struggles for power between R and Y. However the whole group managed to hold ourselves together in a way which made the process what I’d call A SUCCESS!

Memo and nodes: From my observations this student is the one who actually saw how the group dynamics were working, and made many decisions to help the group go forward, not the least being stepping back from the leadership struggle. She used her kinaesthetic empathy to help the group pull together which enabled a group imaginative divergence and metaphoric thinking and creating to occur.
6.7 Example of a senior secondary student’s *Performing an Essay* logbook
(Soundscape)

Wonne – I want to make sense of the world – Fe
Lucy – I want to make sense of the world – F
C. J. R. – The head’s out! One more playwright
Lucy – I want to give birth to a
Marie – confronting
Rachel – Sensual
Jess – Controversial
Castor – Spiritual
Lucy – Woman on a journey!
C. J. R. – Sally Barnes
Marie – Citizen of the world.

C. J. – Big frog in a small puddle.

C. J. – Intrinsic
J. – Acknowledged
R. – Hegemonic
M. – Conventional
Y. – Mother-daughter-relationships
C. J. R. – Mother daughter.

C. J. – You are the phoenix which rises from
R. – Inevitably, I will be more than she.

All – Miss, Mrs., Mama, Momma
Dad, Dad, Dad, Daddie
Ah, Ah, Goodbye Goodbye.

All – Adolescents, female, body, seem
zone, loses, social, appropriateness, and

M. – Frocks!
R. – simple Frocks
L. – good Frocks
Y. – old Frocks
C. – new Frocks

All – expensive Frocks!
Jess – Are they inwardly shaped by outer
C. – dress, nice, nice and neat, nice and t
nice.
Rehearsals: Sunday:

I feel that the performance essay will be ok, usually I am extremely stressed but things are going at a steady pace and although we did not get it finished today (like we aimed to) I still feel very positive that it will get finished.

We continued working on the scenes from where we left off and I am continually checking off our checklist to see whether we have covered everything. In the end we will and I think it is healthy that we go off track sometimes because when we do we get back on track easily.

We will be having rehearsals on Monday and Tuesday and I am looking forward to perform. So far it has been a great experience, working with a new group of people. I guess that I have found that sometimes groups work and other times they don’t. But something is always pulled together in the end.

Monday:

We made up a lot today. Intense of scenes and that led off as we began on the checklist. We did performances styles in a rhyme. It is quite a lot of work and we refined a lot of our beginning ones. The whole thing is becoming quite confusing because we keep on changing the order of our scenes and so I wrote:

A summary of our play, including the scene that we had not forged yet. We are and scene. We are looking to see how we can make up the whole performance and the whole script. Came up and were experimenting if that is just too long to assemble or some people in my group. I have met so confident others with it, so we decided to take it more on board. From the whole performance part. Summed up. We have played each the 6th.

Good morning, we didn’t know it.
6.8 Analysis of audiotape of senior secondary students' classroom discussion on imagination and creativity.

(Recorded on 12th September 2000)

Example of analytical memos, October 2001 and March 2002

SL: I'm interested in your thoughts about how a group actually gets up and starts the playbuilding process.

Student: It's the imagination. Imagination helps me think up creative lies. I loved working in my Group Presentation and I loved working with my group. They were just the best.

Memo: The first thing that strikes me about this response is that the student started with herself, and then reflected back into the project and the people she worked with in the group. What exactly did she mean that imagination helped her think up creative lies? The class responded with general laughter and agreement with this idea, so perhaps it needs more investigation. The student appears to be indicating that her imagination is a way to delve into the unreal. (Is this the interplay between the fictitious and real – metaxis?). Imagining is experimental. Perhaps the imagination is also on the edge of what is acceptable – hence lies. What exactly is a lie? An untruth, a variation of the truth, hence a creative lie maybe one that pushes the boundaries in an innovative way. Must remember that this student is a catholic schoolgirl and so the word lie may have deeper connotations. The concept of lying and truth would be part of her cultural and religious make-up.

Student has already linked the concepts of imagination and creativity together. I would suggest that in some senses this student spoke this first sentence with the Group Presentation Project either subliminally or overtly in her mind as she goes on immediately to discuss HSC Group Presentation, which by this very definition
was a creative lie (for example, Henry VIII's wives look for his Y chromosome so that they could all produce a male heir) and then on the shared experience, very positive for herself and her group. Perhaps what this tells me is that creativity involves the ability to transcend what already is possible, and to create something that wasn’t there before. The group constructed and shared experiences and, decision making and allowed this student to express her initial thought in an original manner, thus pushing, just slightly, the boundaries of her cultural notion of 'lies' and how this fits in with imagining and creating. Therefore do I need a sub-node in imagining or creating that relates to personal experience?

Student: I think we worked best when we had pressure on us.

Memo: I am very interested in this idea of 'pressure' and if or how it can produce outstanding work. The pressure this student was discussing was HSC Internal and external monitoring and/or examination. Interestingly during the rest of the discussion not one student mentioned the word HSC. Why not? The word pressure has negative connotations, yet the student uses this in a positive manner to say we produced the 'best'. Does she mean the best result, the best way to get the group creating and producing? This assessment frame, this assessment pressure, could then produce the best. Perhaps this whole statement tells me that in Howard Gardner's' terms the assessment structure was 'intelligence fair', allowing students to explore directly through the functioning of their intelligences rather than forcing them to reveal through the customary lens of a linguistic- logical instrument (Gardner, 1993 Page xv). The assessment structure created in the class environment did put pressure on the students and therefore the groups, but the assessment structure allowed creative exploration and gave students the opportunity to realise their potential in a manner that suited their learning style, often active and kinaesthetic. Therefore pressure was positive in the creating. Interesting to compare this to the pressure of students having to sit and write in an HSC exam, but perhaps outside my charter. Node under creating and pressure.

SL: What happened to your ideas when you put the material up and started moving with the material?
Student:  Ah much easier

SL:  Why was it much easier?

Student:  Because it is very intimidating having a blank stage and five people who want to do something, it can inhibit your imagination. The colours……

Memo:  There are a number of interesting points in this conversation. Firstly, U answered the question for C. U belonged to another group yet they too had used symbolic objects to overcome some dramatic difficulties. Also interesting to note that U uses the words ‘intimidating’ and ‘blank stage’. Perhaps it could be that those two ideas in a group presentation are one and the same. Her concept of an empty stage is not the same as Peter Brook. He says “I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space … that is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged” (page 11. The Empty Space).

Note:  U, used the work blank; blank as in nothing, not substance, different from ‘bare’ as you can cover something that is bare. Blankness = no interaction, no response – no thought and therefore no imagining and no creating! To overcome this problem symbolic props were sought to create some type of meaning. Yes, very intimidating when a group knows they must get this together for part of their HSC. I would suggest that their symbolic props, material, created energy and enhanced their imagining and creating. The prop is an outside influence that was endowed with imagining and creating and also kinaesthetic structures. Review video and logbooks.

Student:  When we used the parachute material and started waving it around, I think in all of our minds it triggered off a little spark.

Memo:  The most interesting concept here is ‘spark’ because the actual conversation was sparking off memories of problems and how different groups overcame them. The notion of ‘spark’ seems to imply that conceptual imagining was therefore created by the group, ie the group had a shared vision brought to life by dramatic action and kinaesthetic movement with the symbolic or metaphoric idea/prop. Note:  This is important because the notion of group kinaesthetics needs further exploration in all areas of my participants. What would have happened if students had not found this link in to their work? Interesting to ask some drama teachers if there is any commonality with ‘kinaesthetic props’ (if I can
describe them like this) and group kinaesthetic action. How could this link allows fresh, new original ways to express the world. Students used their spark to filter into their consciousness, and also dramatic consciousness. At this point I concur with Gardner who says an individual is considered creative if she regularly solves problems or fashions products in a domain in a way that is initially seen as novel but that ultimately is recognised as appropriate for a domain. (Gardner, page 54).
For example, both groups received full marks for their HSC and were nominated for On Stage. Node: 'Creating through properties’ Do I need problem solving under this. How about Kinaesthetic Drama Property?

Student: You get your initial ideas, but you have to get up to be creative, and we wanted a Physical Theatre Piece.

Memo: Firstly all these ideas are linking one to another through the development of the class discussion; eg. Creative lies, pressure, blank stage, solution through kinaesthetic prop, spark and conceptualising into you have to get up to be creative.

Question: Why do you have to get up to be creative? Could they all just sit, script then create? I suggest that for these groups to be especially creative the act of getting up allowed metaphoric thinking. So what are the characteristics of metaphor that help create? Metaphors can allow seemingly minimal ideas to reveal new aspects. (Look at my Philosophy notes from Sydney University). He also goes on to say a play metaphor and a cognitive metaphor differ significantly.

A play situation admits all kinds of possibilities, whereas transmitting a definite message forces children to strictly obey metaphor creation principles. (Page 198/199 - Tadeusz Marek Psychological Mechanism of Human Creativity) Perhaps these groups were using both these ideas of metaphorical creation? Perhaps node of metaphor should be under Creating or Kinaesthetic rather than just group?

Memo: What is interesting about the next part of the discussion is that students’ tried to analyse what motivates or stops motivation, and therefore imaging and creating in groups. I distinctly remember that they were all being reasonably polite so as not to hurt each other’s feelings. They had all previously been in groups that had had difficulties. This then is an important point in group creation. That is group structure and group abilities extended to how a group
imagines together, creates dramatically, and dynamically, and creates
kinaesthetically. My observation from my own work and On Stage is that groups
who work physically together produce the most dynamic work in relationship to
actor/audience, and concepts. I can discuss that later on as I have worked on these
concepts, actively and theoretically before.

Student: If it becomes personal, then you are intimidated and you can’t let yourself
imagine things and you are always afraid that what the other person is thinking will be
that I hate it.
Memo: The word intimidates again; this seems to imply that people or space
intimidation creates a blankness.

Student: Imagination is a personal thing, not everyone shares the same imagination.
Memo: The idea that stands out here is the concept that the imagination is
personal, even if the group has to eventually share and create from their group
imagination, and that students already recognise how imagination works at
different levels within each person’s cognitive and affective domains.
Node: different levels of imagining. Imagining, creating, kinaesthetics =
produces work of a high meta-order through individual and group working at
highest taxonomy.

Imagining, creating, partial group kinaesthetics = produces work of a substantial
order through capacity to analyse and create but not totally connect
kinaesthetically. I.e ideas are good, but the enactment has deficiencies because of
the lack of group movement and interaction. For example E’s group, The 3 Eves,
only started to work when they physically started to interact with their cognitive
and affective ideas.

Student: We kept going over and over the same thing, until we got up and started
experimenting and the apple made more sense of the actions.
Memo: Imagining and creating inhibited by blankness and or people or dramatic
space. Imaging through one person’s ideas and this may mean that the whole
group may not all understand. Perhaps a student’s imagining is too abstract or the
group does not have the capacity to create a metaphoric or symbolic? Need to elaborate more on the above, but it is a start in my conceptual thinking about the manner in which imagining and creating can produce outstanding self devised work. What nodes come from here that create depth to my ones on transforming abilities?

Student: I thought it was really heaps good with our group that we spent just time together, going over to N’s place and some people are afraid, well not afraid. You know they don’t want to touch each other or anything. You know we just didn’t care, we could jump into each other and just like.

Memo: What is challenging about J’s statement is that I know this has a great deal to do with my concept of group kinaesthetics. Perhaps I need to analyse the words ‘not afraid’ and ‘to touch each other’. Group members were risk takers as far as bodies were concerned. Group members lacked many inhibitions; few body constraints. That is bodies could become anything. Group members believed that their bodies could express ideas, there bodies as a whole. Through play, over at N’s place, this consolidated their ‘non afraidness’ of physical touch, and therefore this released their imagination’s to create in a kinaesthetic and metaphoric manner. ‘To touch’ means that the group could touch each other physically, and I would suggest emotionally they felt in a safe environment, but because of their playfulness, for instance, they could be creative and kinaesthetically expand. Perhaps one could deduce that the group kinaesthetics were working at a very highly level. Look at Bloms Taxonomy. Note: Do I need a node that particular relates to Taxonomy? The notion of play is still very important. Where to locate this node? This student went on to back up her concept by saying ‘being yourself, and that everyone if just kind of being themselves’.

Student: The imagination has no barrier, but the body does if you want it to. A breaking down of barriers.

Memo: Two main points stand out here, first is that perhaps I need a node on meta cognition, and secondly that Boalt’s concepts of the body and the physical need to be re-looked at. This students is imagining and verbally creating at a far higher level, in my opinion, than any of the others. The second student is again
bringing into debate the concept of ‘Play’. Re-look at Donald Winnicott’s concepts of playing.

Student: Everything you do is based around your imagination. When you speak to people you have to imagine how they might take it, you have to imagine how they might feel. You really have to use your mind to put yourself into others shoes before you do something.

Student: I believe in our society now, imagination is taking a much more dominant role. If you have go imagination you can strive much further in society I think and in career,

Student: To some extent in today’s society, imagination may be taking the place of religion, like it is the driving force of some people, it is their optimism, and it is an ambition. The imagination allows some sort of positive outlook on their situation at the moment.

Memo: It is important for me to sometime analyse the students’ thought patterns as a group, and how the group members work off each other. This is because I am looking at the concept of group work. In fact, group and self devised. This brings a point I have never mentioned the world self devised. This means it comes from them the group, it’s their group imagination, they have many outside influences, but together they create. Need to think this through more deeply. Also, did imagination and religion link because of their religious background? Is this an attempt to work outside their religious framework?

Student: Talking about the imagination, what I find interesting is the triggers, just like when we learnt about Boal and metaxis.

Memo: Perhaps this notion of triggers is really important. The student suggests that there are different things that trigger imagining. She speaks almost in the metaphysical realms, outside the everyday physical. Her discussion is characterised by an attempt to explain the reality of her world that is beyond that which is only empirically knowable.

SL: But what does metaxis mean to you?
Student: I think it is an ability. I think we live life that is real, and I think people, well even ambition is imagination and determination. I think that requires imagination and does even when reminiscing on things. I think looking back on the past also required imagination, things get altered to suit ourselves. I don’t know I just believe everybody can.

Memo: Interesting point is that she believes everybody, even perhaps subconsciously understands that they can hold the real and imagined worlds in their minds.

Student: I do, (believe in metaxis) I think on things and bring it back to reality because you can run away with these dreams, and yeah lets do a production and we are all fish under the water …you have to bring it back. It’s good, that fundamental idea, but put in realistic limits.

Student (Metaxis) It’s like reaching for the moon and falling for the stars.

Memo: What is most interesting about this discussion on metaxis is how it delves into metaphoric thinking. Do I need a node on this? It is just such a lovely concept to think when we as humans hold the real and imaginary worlds in our heads and bodies we are reaching for the moon and falling for the stars. This is imagining and creating at a high level, but perhaps there is never the highest!

Student: The whole idea is to express yourself.

Student: With this idea of the real and the imaginary, there are so many times I just jump up in the middle of class, and people go what the hell was that. I mean like I think the imagination is used a lot to interpret things your own way. Like information, something boring and, and then I will do something like Oh wooo, you know, it helps me make sense, rather than just sitting there and repeating it. It’s your imagination that is part of your body.

SL: C is gesticulating here. (General laughter)
Student: Outside of drama people think, sometimes I get frustrated talking with people that don’t do drama. I honestly think people still see drama as a bludge subject. (general agreement).

Student: And there was a girl from outside of drama was watching our group and she thought ‘Oh my God are you psycho. What’s going on?’ She can’t understand the way it works.

Student: Drama gives you a lot of space to express.

Student: You can’t read other peoples’ essays, but in Drama you can see others peoples work and appreciate it.

Memo: First interesting point is that the students recognise that sometimes they think and work and create differently from other students. It appears to me they are proud of that. More important the last comment ‘You can’t read other peoples essays, but in Drama you can see others peoples work and appreciate it.’ This has great connotations for the assessment procedures as well as their ability to create, see, feel, hear and be part of the actor audience relationship. The Performing an Essay playbuilding project has influenced this statement. Kinaesthetic teaching and hence kinaesthetic learning. Creating in drama is not hidden away. It is a sharing experience, a visible ends to a means that is dramatically constructed and is to be shared and created to inspire and motivate. In Drama therefore it can be looked at as the ability to create from nothing, and sometimes that is different from an established way of learning. Imagining and creating and kinaesthetics in drama are individuality, but it is how that individually comes together in a dynamic framework in the group that allows for heightened embodiment.
6.9 Example of a senior student’s essay on *Australian Women’s Theatre*
In Suzanne Spuiners’s "Running Up a Dress" and Dorothy Hewitt’s "Chapel Perilous," a distinct female perspective on female characters and female issues is presented. This is done through the use of performance styles, thematic concerns, and drama through dramatic forms and conventions, such as lyrical. Firstly, the use of psychological dialogue (as a performance style) in the Chapel Perilous clearly addresses the female perspective by allowing Sally Banne (the main character who is also female) to express herself and her female issues that she is associated with in the play. The fact that Sally Banne is the main character in the play who is a female also enhances the language that she uses. For example, Sally states: "I could punch your mouth and kiss you till the blood comes!" It is through statements such as these that the audience is given insight into the psychology of Sally Banne, thus providing a female perspective on a relevant female issue. This need for particularism. The statement demonstrates the issue of inner turmoil for Sally Banne, who, as she suggests, is confused as she speaks of doing two physical actions that oppose
each one. This in itself challenges the psychological not only of Sally Bannen but of the audience. Furthermore, the fact that the statement comes from Sally Bannen, in itself demonstrates the female perspective which is heightened by the lyrical nature of the words that produce images such as “kiss you till the blood comes!” (Hence the psychological and lyrical language (performance style) of The Chapel Perilous presents a distinctive female perspective on female characters and issues.

Similarly, the act of running up a dress, a dress is made on stage, in this illustrating the use of a performance style. This act (which occurs throughout the whole play creating coherency) directly presents a female perspective on female characters. This is done because sewing has always been a female tradition and thus by having two female actors carry out the act of sewing, represents not only an acknowledgment and respect for sewing, but also reflects the characters in the play. (ie: mother and daughter relationship as paralled by making the dress through the act of sewing.) It also provides a female perspective on female issues as the sewing action of sewing links directly and metaphorically
to the mother/daughter relationship hence linking to the female issues in play. For example: Conflict between mother and daughter as demonstrated in the dialogue:

Mother: “My daughter makes me angry”
Daughter: “My mother makes a spectacle of herself!”

Therefore the performance styles in Running up Dress as created by the playwright present distinctive female perspective on female characters and issues.

The thematic concern also allows the playwrights to focus on female perspective on female characters and issues.

Dorothy Hewitt surround Sally Banner with the thematic concern of society’s acceptance around Sally Banner. Once again, he fact that the thematic concern is directed towards a female character already points out the female perspective. Hewitt shines through. Society does not accept Sally’s sexual endeavor and as a result Sally is described as “Dirty little whore” and as “just a girl with nest thighs pressed together”, all negative remark. These comments highlight the fact that an issue is present - the issue of society and how they do not accept Sally’s journey.
mainly because of her sexual expression. Therefore, the thematic concern that Dorothy Hewitt creates in the play "Running Up a Dress" presents a distinct female perspective on female characters and female issues.

The thematic concern Suzanne Spunner creates in "Running Up a Dress" focuses on how motherhood is constructed, not natural, but rather, constructed. This being a female perspective as it is only a female who can be a mother. It is through this thematic concern that an insight into the female character is created, and this can be seen in the scene "The Potential of the Cloth" where the cloth as symbolising the daughter says: "I am the dream that will be fashioned by her hands... I am the cloth, she is the sewer." This statement combines both character and issue together as the issue (or thematic concern) is of motherhood being constructed, which is demonstrated in the statement by use of the word "fashioned." In other words, meaning constructed, as opposed to motherhood being natural. The female character is presented through the use of words such as "her" and "she," thus the thematic concerns in "Running Up a Dress" present a distinct female perspective not only of female characters but also female issues.
The use of dramatic forms and conventions also allows the playwright to present distinct female treatment on female characters and female issues.

In the Chapel Perilous of the dramatic forms or conventions used is expressionism which highlights an emotional journey of a female character (Sally Banner) and the female issues she is associated with. For example, the issue of self-discovery as Sally tries to find herself in perspective of her society. She states "I am Sally Banner", "I make my own patterns... I am a citizen of the world!" These statements are a means of showing the form of expressionism in the play, as Sally not only expresses herself, but expresses herself while experiencing an emotional journey, thus taking the audience on an emotional journey which is indicative of expressionism. It is through this dramatic form/convention that a female issue (self-identity and discovery) is brought up and how it is Sally Banner—a female character experiencing this issue. Hence, the dramatic forms presented in Dorothy Hewitt's Chapel Perilous present distinctive female perspective of female characters and issues.

Similarly, Suzanne Spiro uses
female perspective on female characters and female issues through the use of performance styles, thematic concerns and through dramatic forms and conventions in their plays: Chapel, Raisous and Running Up a dress.
Appendix 7.

Analysis of videotape data

**Example of analysis December 2001 and January 2002**

**Synopsis** - Video length 12 minutes 45 seconds

*The wives* of Henry VIII are searching for the Y chromosome so that 16th Century England can have a male heir to reign on the throne. During this quest they work together for the good of the English Monarchy. Simultaneously each wife has a secret desire to be the one to find the Y chromosome and therefore because the mother of the future King of England. *The Wives* used a representational set. Chiffon material was hung from the lighting bars in the shape of a Y. One piece of material was allocated to each character. Each piece of material was a specific colour that endowed their character with motivation and attitude to the quest. The material was used as a chandelier, babies, dancing partners, horses, veils, masks, to hide behind when spying.

**Analysis of the Group Devised Performance: The Wives**

In analysing the performance the following are investigated:

- Narrative structure through scenes
- Elements of drama for selected scenes
- Spatial and gestural relationships of characters
- Character interaction
- Dialectics.

**Narrative structure through scenes**

The narrative can be broken down into scenes. The scene breakdown demonstrates the way the group imagined and created their ideas.
Scene Content

1
Half light. Loud snoring is heard. Characters peeping out from behind material. All softly walking in together. Snoring continues. Whispered voices, “is it..” “shhh” “Can we” “shhh” contrasting to a loud German accent “vell is ze coast clear?” Establishment of characters looking for ‘him’. All characters in black, but each costume is different. Short skirts to long skirts; trousers to feminine dress and black stockings. Snippets of information given to audience to glean that they are the wives of Henry VIII and that Katherine Parr is missing. The quest for Y chromosome starts.

2
Wives mount their chiffon material horses. Each horse and character has a particular personality; a particularly way of trotting, cantering, riding the horse.

The dialogue indicates that these women are looking for Y chromosome

Jane: It is going to be so difficult to find.
Katherine: What's going to be so difficult to find?
Anne: Why What?
Jane: Henry's Y

(Pertinent dialogue that expresses the conflict in the fictional context)

They are on a mission to find it for the sake of England.

3
The wives enter Henry's ballroom. Gossips, slander and intrigue begin between the devious wives. Flattery and sarcasm reign. Wives dance Henry's favourite dance and socialise with guests. The wives idiosyncratic personalities are further established. They are ambitious. They try to seize an opportunity. They try to lose one another and go alone on their search for the Y chromosome.

Anne: Personally ladies, I don't think the Y chromosome is in here
Catherine: Yes...um excuse me while I go and powder my nose.
Katherine: Has anyone seen my rosary beads? Oh I must have left them in my saddle bag.
(Pertinent dialogue that expresses the subtext of the mission (that is sabotage), in the fictional context).

They depart into hedge maze, watching furtively and seeking desperately, the Y chromosome.

Each wife's chiffon material becomes their Henry. They talk to him, hold him, caress him, and demonstrate their desire to have the baby. The decline in their relationships with Henry begins:

*Katherine:* Look at me Henry
*All:* Why won't you look at me Henry
*Catherine:* I'll make you feel young again. I'm doing it for you Henry
*All:* Just for you
*(snore, then woman's moan)*

(Pertinent dialogue that expresses the anguish in the fictional context)

This scene is one of fury and disbelief as they discover Henry is in bed with Katherine Parr. They hide behind their material, they peep over into the bedroom. They are distressed. They squabble. They discuss their love and romance, and Henry's sexual whims. They all felt they had something special with him. They try to get back to the quest and search for the Y chromosome. Then Anne of Cleves announces that she thinks she "*might be pregnant*".

All wives quickly make their own babies from the chiffon material. They are motherly. They tenderly love and care for their babies, but the bickering starts again. Catholic versus Protestant babies; female versus male babies; alive versus dead babies.

*Catherine:* Stop bickering: If we're going to continue the Tudor line we have to get Henry a healthy, male heir.
*Katherine:* ...and to do that we need the Y chromosome
*Jane:* Like Henry said
Anne B: When did Henry say that?
Anne C: In his letter

(Pertinent dialogue that expresses the conflict in the fictional context)

7 All wives are on task together again. They search through pieces of the letter, brought forth from their cleavage. They try to decipher the code. The Y shaped chandelier is the destination. They find the phial with the Y chromosome in it. They run to their horses and set off at a gallop through the great park at Windsor Castle, to tell Henry.

8 The atmosphere changes. The wives are coquettish and call out lovingly to Henry.

Anne B: Henry, Henry, we've come
Katherine: We've solved your mystery
Jane: We've got that healthy male heir you've always wanted.
Catherine: Henry?

(Pertinent dialogue that expresses the desperation in the fictional context)

The atmosphere darkens. Henry is dead. The wives silently go back to their material and create the funeral veils

9 Slowly, as if at a funeral, Jane Seymour sings 'Greensleves', but the lyrics are altered to sing about their great love for Henry. The wives create a matrix of colour with their veils, which demonstrates their grief. The quest is over. The Y chromosome found, but the mission is incomplete. Lights fade. The end.
Elements of drama for scene 2 (Board of Studies, 2003a; Haseman and O'Toole 1986; O'Toole, 1992)

The elements of drama that explore The Wives nuances and dramatic complexities, through comedy, are made explicit in scene 2.

**The Human Context:** The Wives are on a quest. The bickering and bantering has begun. They ride purposefully as they wish to quickly find the Y chromosome for England’s sake. They are united because of their social and cultural connections as Queens and wives. They are desperate women. They hate one another because of this very commonality. They are vulnerable because no one can produce the male heir so desperately needed.

**Dramatic Tension:** The dramatic tension is evident in the manner in which they furiously ride their horses. All appear to be working together for the common good but each wife has her own personal goal. This dramatic tension is achieved through comedy.

**Focusing the action:** The action is focused through the chiffon material, which symbolically becomes the horse and rider.

**Place and Time:** On one level the time is 16th Century England and the place is the Great Park at Windsor Castle. On another level, time and place have been altered so that the audience can suspend its disbelief and connect with the fictitious narrative of five Queens of England, journey on their horses, to find Henry VIII’s Y chromosome.

**Language:** The language, both verbal and gestural, is pacing and fast. It informs the audience of the mission as well as indicates how selfish each wife is. It succinctly lets the audience know the importance of a male heir, to their husband Henry, and to the England establishment. There are verbal and gestural characteristics for each wife. Jane Seymour is practical and determined. Katherine of Aragon is loving but old and pious. Anne of Cleves is naïve and ignorant. Anne Boylen smart. Catherine Howard simple and girlish.
J: To the horses.
(horse sounds)
A of C: Why?
J: Y is going to be so difficult to find.
K: What's going to be so difficult to find?
J: Y.
A of C: Why What?
J: Henry's Y.
C of A: Wife? There's clearly more than one of us.
A: Not wives, Y.
K: Why is there more than one?.
C of A: There's five.
A B: Not wives you old fool, Y.
A of C: Why What?
J: Henry's Y, there's only one Y we need to find.
C of A: Why do we need to find Y anyway?
A B: To give Henry a male heir.
(horse sounds, riding furiously)
A of C: Vell do ve know exactly where zis Vy chromosome is?
J: I'm sure we'll find it.
C of A: For Henry's sake.
J: For England's sake.
A B: To the mission.
All: To our mission.
(Pertinent dialogue that expresses the confusion and fantasising in the fictional context)

This is the language of comedy in a dire situation.

Movement: The movement in this scene expresses the desires and wants of the characters. The whole of the stage space is used as horses and riders engulf the action. The movement is speedy and fast and demonstrates the need for urgency to find this Y chromosome and beget an heir.
**Mood:** The events create a shared mood and atmosphere of excitement and energy. The quest is on its way.

**Symbols:** The chiffon material, hung from the lighting bar, creates each individual horse with its rider. They have a personality of their own. The symbol of the Y chromosome is kept strong through the gallop of the horses and the desires of their riders to be on their ‘mission’.

**Dramatic Meaning** The drama starts to tease out the dilemma of the quest. The audience is taken inside the action through the wives’ metaphorical riding of their horses. Outside this action the Y chromosome and Henry wait. The characters’ motivations control the action as they verbally and physical parry with one another. The audience understands the importance of the mission and the complexity that will surround it. The dramatic meaning is driven by forceful humour.

**Spatial and gestural relationship of characters in scene 2**

The moment of meaning in this scene, as achieved through spatial and gestural relationships creates the heightened tension of the quest. The characters' body language interact in the spacial environment. This relationship is communicated as theatrical body language with dialogue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Stage Movements</th>
<th>Degree of spatial relationships</th>
<th>Rhythm of Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All characters huddled together <em>CS</em></td>
<td>Close</td>
<td>eyes out front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All characters run to respective horses mount and gallop. <em>Whole stage space is used.</em></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>eyes to horses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Seymour canters out <em>CS</em></td>
<td>Central focus</td>
<td>eyes to distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Howard and Jane Seymour respectively trot <em>DSR &amp; CS and USL</em></td>
<td>Closing in</td>
<td>eyes to each other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and SC.

Other characters trot  
USR and DSL

Anne of Cleves DSL  
Distance  eyes to horse  slow (confused)

In designated space all other characters  
trot  USR, USL, UCS. Distance  eyes to each other  medium (manipulating)

Horses rear up  
 whole stage space is used.
Central focus  eyes to horses  fast (controlling)

Characters dismount  
meet CS  
All connected  eyes out to Ballroom  medium (despairing)

Characters behind  
chandelier CS  
All connected  eyes to each other when toasting the mission  fast (needful)

Promexics = codes governing use of space
Kinesics = codes governing use of movement


CHARACTER INTERACTION

Characters
- Katherine of Aragon
- Anne Bolyen
- Jane Seymour
- Anne of Cleves
- Catherine Howard
- Katherine Parr - illusionary - spend whole time in bed with Henry VIII
- Henry VIII - illusionary

The Wives chose to create a character based performance for their Higher School Certificate. These characterisations were developed using prior knowledge gained in the Preliminary Year. The group wished to loosely entwine realism with metaphor...
theatre. How the characters interacted in the Group Performance is demonstrated in the way the group approached their particular roles. The wives were full rounded characters. The characters were psychologically complex. The physical and vocal attributes were used to enhance the dramatic conflict.

Each student’s imaginings created a past and present for their character. This was based, in part, on historical research and their own ideas on what the character revealed. The group’s collective imagination then created the complexity of these characters on their journey together. The wives were emotionally entwined, yet individualistic in their super objectives. This allowed the given circumstances to be filled with pathos and humour. The wives touched, laughed, squabbled. They were ultimately jealous of each other. The progression of the dilemma providing greater and greater character tension.

**Dialectics**

Dialectic analysis focuses on categorising oppositions within the drama presentation. I have listed the central oppositions that serve to structure the narrative of The Wives. This methodology allows an analysis of how the group constructed the dramatic conflict and contradictions in the narrative.

**Wives versus Wives**

This major opposition is continually established through the wives use of opposing tactics to get what they want.

Frailty, vulnerability, charm and piousness contrasted to greediness, self centredness, manipulative, spiteful, and envious. These tactics signify the jealous and obsessive nature of the Queens/wives versus their subversives’ competitiveness.

**Patriarchal monarch versus queenly duty**

The manipulation of historical fact is a potent force. The notion that a male baby must be born to rule England is elaborated through ambition and fanatical undertaking of the
wives, yet their queenly duty and inability to bear the son provide a continuing dialectical tension.

**Expectation versus reality**

The audience has a particular role in this; they know the historical reality versus the wives expectations. This dialectical force created empathy, pathos and comedy as it contrasted so subtle with history fact.
7.2 Written videotape analysis - *Performing an Essay*, senior students, *Feminism versus Femininity*.

**Example of an analysis January and May 2002**

**Synopsis** - Video Length: 15 minutes 20 seconds.

The narrative structure is designed as an essay. There is an opening paragraph that answers the essay questions, mainly with a type of ‘physical’ topic sentence. Physical symbols – making the sign of the cross and sewing, complement the action. The two playwrights, using material, push themselves out into the theatre world.

**Elements of drama** - *(Board of Studies, 2003a; Haseman and O’Toole 1986; O’Toole, 1992)*

**Analysis of opening kinaesthetic paragraph**

The elements of drama that explore the group *Feminism and Femininity* are made explicit in the opening ‘paragraph’.

**The Human Context:** The roles of the respective playwrights, and their different ideologies are made apparent to the audience through the use of words and the physical action of giving birth. The human context of females as protagonists in the theatre world is also paramount in the opening paragraph. The human context is shown to be dynamic, interactive, and belonging to a world full of possibilities.

*Y:*  
*I write to make sense of the world* - *Femininity*

*L:*  
*I write to make sense of the world* - *Feminism*

*C,J,M,R:*  
*The head’s out. One more playwright push!*

*L:*  
*I want to give birth to a ...*
Dramatic Tension: The dramatic tension is evident from the start when the symbols of sewing and blessing each other are used in a provocative way. The tension is there as soon as the playwrights get born and the words (evidence from the plays) are used to allow the audience to feel that women’s theatre may not be “safe” theatre after all.

M: Confronting
R: Sensual
J: Controversial
C: Spiritual
L: Women on a journey

Focusing the action: The action was focused immediately through the staging and the use of the material but it also became apparent when the group spoke as one.

C, J, M, R: Sally Banner

Place and Time: In some senses place and time were not overly important in the opening segment of this Performance Essay. The notion of place and time are embedded into the audience’s understanding of when the plays were written, and if the audience did not know this, it was made clear during the piece. Place and time had a more universal feel as it was made apparent by the group’s stagecraft that place and time had to do with women, their relationships etc.

M, R: Citizen of the world
J, C: Big Frog in a small puddle
Y: I want to give birth to an
C: Intrinsic
J: Acknowledged
R: Hegemonic
M: Conventional
Y: Mother daughter relationship
C, J, M, R: Mother daughter
C, J: You are the phoenix which rises through my ashes
R, M: Inevitably, I will be more than she bargained for.
**Language:** The language is both verbal and gestural and its pacing is fast and forthright. It succinctly lets the audience know what the group felt the respective plays positions on feminism and femininity were. There is an undercurrent of humanity that allows the opening to be engaging rather than didactic.

**Movement:** The movement of the opening scenes expresses the conflict performance styles and themes of the place. The stage is used to separate the actors from the audience, so that the group’s opening topic sentence is flung out to the audience, only when they come forward with their material and take on female dress roles (almost flirting) do they break this separation down.

**Mood:** The opening creates a mood of energy, knowledge of the topic, and great physicality and dramatic action.

**Symbols:** The physical symbol of giving birth allows the audience to see what this group’s concept was of women’s theatre. Hard work but ultimately rewarding. This was a very imaginative and creative opening. The physical symbols of sewing, and a blessing, are ones that the group felt relate respectively to both plays and hence would say as much to the audience as words. (Which they did).

**Dramatic Meaning:** The dramatic meaning was the ability of this group to answer the essay question as a group in performance. They were tied into a group kinaesthetic empathy, knowing and props, through their exploration of a metaxical world. They demonstrated group imaginative divergence as well as exploring metaphoric creation.

**Example of the complete kinaesthetic essay**

The opening paragraph is a complete kinaesthetic experience. Embodiment through words and the use of real and imagined drama properties

\[ Y: \quad I \text{ write to make sense of the world - Femininity.} \]
C,J,M,R: The head's out. One more playwright push!
L: I want to give birth to a
M: Confronting
R: Sensual
J: Controversial
C: Spiritual
L: Women on a journey
C,J,M,R: Sally Banner
M,R: Citizen of the world
J,C: Big Frog in a small puddle
Y: I want to give birth to an
C: Intrinsic
J: Acknowledged
R: Hegemonic
M: Conventional
Y: Mother daughter relationship
C,J,M,R: Mother daughter
C,J: You are the phoenix which rises through my ashes
R,M: Inevitably, I will be more than she bargained for.

From this there is discussion and debate about the conventions and techniques used in both plays, that is soundscapes.

All: Mm mm mama mamma
     Oh oh dadda dadda
     Oh oh goodha goodha
All: The adolescent female body seems like a battle zone over social appropriateness and expectations.
M: Frocks
R: Simple frocks
L: Good frocks
Y: Old frocks
C: New frocks
All: Expensive frocks
J: Are they inwardly shaped by outward appearances
C: Dress nice, nice and neat, nice and tidy, everything nice
J: Socially respectable
Y: Keep your knees together an cross your arms if you must
J: Social expectations.

During this ‘paragraph’ the students are using the material to make all types of dresses. But they are not individuals, they are almost like one dress with different characteristics – I think one could truly say all the group kinaesthetic areas were working as one:

All: Raspberry
Poor sally, she never made it, no matter how hard she tried, she tried hard not to know it through she was a minor poet, until the day she died
All: Poor Sally. Bow
R: Judith?
Y: I find you unwholesome, absurd.
R: Canon?
C: You dirty little whore
R: Mum? Dad?
M: Always making trouble. I’’ make you listen.
R: Michael?
J: I don’t want you. I don’t want you
R: Headmistress
L: Cuckolded by God Sally. Cuckolded by God.
All: Bow Sally bow (Drop to ground)
(Sally unravels, drum roll sound)

Students working with great physicality and empathy, whilst continuously using their group kinaesthetic props, material, ironing board, etc., in a dynamic way. By this time the group is creating an argument and theme for their performance essay that explores the provocative nature of the plays, and what they say to an audience about female characters as protagonists.

Also the students knelt on the ground in a bow whilst using their group hands to make the drum roll. The group have created their own subjective, impressionistic 'writers' voice:

M: Welcome to The Chapel Perilous Theatre. We the girls will be Running Up a Dress for you tonight. Give it up for dramatic forms.

All (singing): You put some Brechtian in An a little bit of song Some Elizabethan And look what you've got Notice were a chorus that's a Dramatic form That's what it's all about You put some soundscapes in And some art and craft on stage Some emblematic theatre Topped off with some props And some physical theatre and you've got Dramatic forms And that's what it's all about Oooh Chapel Perilous Oooh Running Up a Dress (L. and Y with material Oooh Dramatic forms J Dress)
And that's what it's all about.

The 'paragraph' on dramatic forms is absolutely delightful, the group are working in union with great energy and purpose; it is a wonderfully creative way to summarise the types of dramatic forms used in these plays. The way they created their group kinaesthetic knowing is so vibrant. Use of material as a prop to contrast and provide conflict:

L: \textit{Dart’s in the right places}
C: \textit{Dart’s in the right places}
Y: \textit{My mother could make anything from a pattern}
R: \textit{My mother could make anything from a pattern}
All: \textit{Mothers in the kitchen}
\textit{Doing a bit of stichin}
\textit{Sewing in performance styles}
\textit{As we speak}
\textit{How many performance styles}
\textit{Do we seek?}
R: \textit{One}
C: \textit{Two}
L: \textit{Three}
M: \textit{Four}
J: \textit{It’s a complete kinaesthetic experience}
\textit{Psychological dialogue}
\textit{Metaphor of sewing}
\textit{Non realistic to realism}
\textit{Dress made on stage.}

There is a substantial argument running throughout this piece on feminism as brought to life by Sally Banner and how this was seen as controversial compared to women’s business of making dresses and exploring femininity. Group imaginative divergence combines with metaphoric thinking and creating.
Y,M,J: We believe that women are complex and interesting theatre subjects, per se

R: Theatrically interesting wouldn’t you say Mr. Leonard Radic?

C: Home cooked and home spun

R: Complex Radic?

C: I would have preferred something more rugged, dynamic and tension filled

R: I see. In the same way perhaps as having James Bond bake scones. Perhaps it’s be more ‘rugged” if I’d had the Mother Running up a pair of army shorts?

All: WHAT does society think?

What DOES society think?

What does SOCIETY think?

What does society THINK?

In the 1970’s

L: I was in a Chapel Perilous

I took it out of the feminist culture of the 1970-‘s and put it into the 1940-‘s to create a more vibrant actor/audience relationship. More confronting.

All: Mmmmmmmmmmmmm

Y: But is it appropriate for women to be on the pill?

J: Abortion! We can’t allow that!

M: Do you think divorce should be justified?

C: Sexual promiscuity

R: And communism ... is that the way of the future

All: Society, society in 1986.

The above reinforces what they felt was the patronising aspects of a male society, and this was still reflected in the audience reactions, the political and social areas that the plays stemmed from. In this next section a group kinaesthetic empathy is occurring
whilst the group manipulates the Streets of Melbourne as a group kinaesthetic property.

Y:  
   I was Running Up a Dress

All:  
   Oh that is so cliched! Why not become part of the workforce?
   One by It's good that someone finally said that motherhood is constructed.
   One.

All:  
   Australia has become a culturally diverse nation.

J:  
   Do you think my breasts are...

M:  
   Too big?

C:  
   Too small?

L:  
   Too flat?

R:  
   Too pointy?

Y:  
   You have a lovely figure! A lot of girls would envy you (Start walking around)

L:  
   Hi. I'm from the Home Cooking Company searching the streets of Melbourne today for views on Motherhood from the daughters of our community. Excuse me?

J:  
   Yes

L:  
   What was the first thing your Mother made for you?

J:  
   A white hale sport viole party dress with a blue sash. Excuse me?

M:  
   Yes

J:  
   What was your Mother's catch phrase?

M:  
   When you're a Mother, You'll understand. Excuse me?

Y:  
   Yes

M:  
   What was your Mother very good at?

Y:  
   Making fine stylish clothes. Excuse me?

C:  
   Yes

Y:  
   When do you feel most like your Mother?
C: When I’m depressed. We have a characteristic way of sighing. (Sigh) Excuse me?

R: Yes

C: What was the best, most extraordinary thing your Mother made you?

R: A blue and white circular skirt, with a matching handbag. (All become Barbie Dolls) for my Barbie Doll. Excuse me? (to audience).

Metaxcial synergy operating in this scene. The scene gives an indication how students used their workshop’s imagination to springboard into dramatic creativity. The students wished to explore how mothers and daughters learn about bodies, their taboos and celebrations, as well as how mothers and daughters lives can be inextricably shaped by the other via the clothes that are sewn. The students used the idea of theatrically creating the streets of Melbourne where the mapping of the clothed female body takes place in society. They were combining the real and imaginary world’s in their performance.

All: No comment

(Performance paragraph break)

Stylized Movement – Female interaction. Connecting physically to one another and one by one saying out to the audience as readers of their essay.

Femininity
Feminism
Sexuality
Relationships
Dramatic forms
Performance styles
Thematic conventions
Controversial
Conventional
Social Context
Cultural context
Dorothy Hewitt
Suzanne Spunner
Chapel Perilous
Running Up a Dress
All: AUSTRALIAN FEMALE THEATRE

Through physicality, body language, observation and a group dynamic the students created a conclusion by briefly restating the theme based on their ideas of feminism and femininity. The words were said to the audience as they created a group of women talking to one another in a relaxed and intimate way.
7.3 Written videotape analysis - Experimental Playbuilding, junior students, Dominant Masks

Example of analysis December 2001 and March 2002.

Synopsis - Video Length: 5 minutes.

The Dominant Masks group devised performance is based on exploring the elements of control and power. The scene is set nowhere. The characters are enticed and motivated to all become the same, and yet throughout the scene there are always differences.

Analysis of the video:

In analysing the scene the following is investigated:

- Narrative structure through scenes
- Elements of drama for selected scenes
- Spatial and gestural relationships of characters
- Dialectics

Narrative structure through scenes

The narrative outline can be broken into scenes.

The scene breakdown demonstrates the way in which the group organised and presented their theatrical ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A white masked character (a) enters, upper centre stage, through black curtains. Plays with an imaginary object that flows and moves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Slow, atmospheric music surrounds the action until scene 8.

An unmasked character (b) enters, upper centre stage, through black curtains, and interacts with the masked figure and flowing object. This is performed, centre stage, around a white pool of light.

A third unmasked character (c) enters, upper centre stage, and joins the movements. This is quickly followed by a fourth unmasked character (d), upper centre stage, who joins in after a momentary pause.

The imaginary flowing object turns into an object that is held high over all their heads. They all push this into the surrounding space.

A change of dramatic tempo as characters line up. (a), (b) and (c) create a stylised robotic movement. Although maintaining position in the line, (d), moves in a free flowing manner. This demonstrates the dramatic tension of characters - sameness versus difference

(a) draws a white flower from her persona and starts to entice (b) away. (c) and (d) look on horrified.

(a) endows (b) with a white mask. They become like one character. They repeat their robotic movements. (c) and (d) are rooted to the spot in fear and horror. There is a gap between the two groups. They are separated by a white spotlight. Turning slowly (a) and (b) march robotically down centre stage and entice (c) into their sameness. A slow motion tug of war occurs over (c). The stage lights flash. Eventually (c) becomes masked. (d) is left in the space, isolated because of her differences. She repeats her free flowing movement from scene 5, whilst the others repeat their robotic movements.
Change of tension and pace through the use of hard metallic music. Lights flash. (a) (b) and (c) march towards (d). Through the stylised use of hands they represent their conscious desire for all to become the sameness (d) becomes masked.

(a), (b), (c), and (d) repeat, in a line, their robotic movements.

(a) crouches away from the line, head down. (b), (c) and (d) turn away from the audience into the curtain. (a), still crouching, looks up to the audience and now displays her differences – she has become a red masked character. Music fades. Lights down.

Elements of drama for scene 7 (Board of Studies 2003a; Haseman and O'Toole 1986; O'Toole, 1992)

The elements of drama, that explore the essence of the Dominant Masks dramatic imaginings, are made explicit in scene no.7.

The Human Context: The characters symbolically represent states of mind. Group kinaesthetic knowing merging with group imaginative divergence.

Dramatic Tension: The continuous tug of war within the human condition to be the same as well as to be different drives this dramatic moment. Students manipulate an imaginary group kinaesthetic drama property to create dramatic tension.

Focusing the Action: The foci of the action are the symbols of war.

Group metaphoric thinking and creating focused the action.
Body language demonstrates control and a demand to be recognised. Body language demonstrates kinaesthetic intelligence and embodiment of ideas.

The movement of robotics bodies versus a free flowing body, combined with the slow motion action in the tug of war, expresses the conflict of human desires to be the same and to be different.

The mood is one of compromise versus determination. The students created a mood that was almost physically tangible.

This scene is multilayered with symbols. The single mask has an individuality about it. When (b) and (c) become masked, the masked characters becomes the dominant force. The mask(s) contrast to the expressiveness of the human face. The pool of light, centre stage, acts as a subconscious bridge for the characters to be pulled over. The music heightens the symbols because of its surreal qualities. Group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and use of drama properties combined with their metaphoric capacities has created a dynamic scene.

Humans can easily be enticed and motivated to belong to the dominant group.

Dialectics

Dialectic analysis focuses on categorising theatrical oppositions and contradictions.
Therefore I have listed the central oppositions that serve to structure the narrative. This methodology demonstrates the manner in which the group's imaginative ideas were created and how the recurrent theme evolved.

The dialectical approach is evidenced by:

- **Sameness versus Differences.** The major theme is continually, established and restabilised by masked and unmasked characters.

- **Character versus Characters.** One masked character, who changes the composition of the unmasked, plays an important part in how the scene is structured. At the beginning the unmasked are dominant in numbers. In the middle the masked are the dominant group. The end is unresolved. There is a rhetorical question "Will a red mask become dominant, through the same process that has just occurred?" The audience is left to decide for themselves.

- **Power versus Submission.** This is dealt with in Scene 7 as we see the third unmasked character struggling with which way to go in life. The Dominant culture wins.

- **Ideology versus Ideology.** This is the last opposition as the audience is left wondering what a red mask ideology signifies. This scene is therefore an open ended narrative.
Elements of drama for scene 10. (Board of Studies, 2003a; O'Toole, 1992 & Haseman and O'Toole 1986)

The elements of drama, that explore the groups final meaning, are made explicit in scene no. 10.

The Human Context: The characters symbolically represent opposite states of mind from their initial appearance on stage.

Dramatic Tension: The group should now all be satisfied to be the same, but differences are again appearing in their world.

Focusing the action The focus of the action is on change.

Place and Time Place and Time are universal. The dramatic action is symbolically happening anywhere and everywhere. The audience is incorporated through the looking out, by the red mask.

Language The body language is one of tension and surprise.

Movement: The movement contains elements of the robotic motif, but a new element is added, through an unexpected change of levels.

Mood The unexpected is a tangible feeling in this scene.

Symbols: The white masks have now become the symbol of sameness. Through the powerful use of a new symbol – the red masked character, and the exploration of different levels, engaging the audience through face and eyes, the notion of differences still...
pervades the drama. The harsh metallic music heightens the feeling of disquiet. The surreal nature of the scene is heightened.

Dramatic Meaning: The dramatic meaning demonstrates the uncomfortable idea that the human condition follows the dominant ideology. Unfortunately ideology is ever changing.

Promexics = codes governing use of space
Kinesics = codes governing use of movement

Spatial and gestural relationship of characters

Due to the nature of the group devised task the characters were thrown together through the opposition of spatial and gestural forces.

How the characters interacted in the scene is demonstrated in the way the group, constructed the flow and ebb of their characters, and their positions on the stage. There is a distance and closeness within the characters. A continuous dramatic idea, that the dominant characters will seize any opportunity, runs through the scene. The rhythm of all characters was dominated by the beat of the music. These elements directed and focused the audience attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Character Stage Movements</th>
<th>Degree of Spatial Relationships</th>
<th>Rhythm of Characters (To Music)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Character (a) enters CS</td>
<td>Alone on stage</td>
<td>eyes on imagery object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Character (b) enters UCS Distance</td>
<td>eyes connected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Character © enters CSL</td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>eyes connected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Character (d) enters DCS</td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>eyes connects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4  Semi circle is formed CS  Closing in  all eyes on object  18 beats
   All into a huddle,  Almost connected  all eyes on object  18 beats
   throw object DSC

5  All into a straight line CS  Almost connected  all eyes out front  3 beats
   (a)  (b)  (c) Robotic  "  "  36 beats
   (d) Free flowing  "  eyes around space

6  (a) entices (b) CSL.  36 beats
   (c) (d) move CSR
   (a)  (b) repeat motif.  Almost connected  eyes out front  9 beats
   (c) (d) look on  Connected  eyes on human context

7  (a) (b) march SR around (c).  Tug of war  eyes connected  16 beats
   (b) (c)move SL  Connected  looking at (d)  9 beats
   (d) moves SR  Distance  looking at others  9 beats

8  (a) (b) (b) marching around (d) spread out  eyes shifting  16 beats
   Lights flash.  Change of Music
   (d) thrown in pool of light CS.
   (a) (b) (c) bend over (d) CS  Connected  eyes connected  36 beats
   (d) rises & joins them CS
   (a) slips away. SR  Distance  eyes on ground

9  (b) (c) (d) robotic movements  Almost connected  eyes to front  16 beats
   (a) crouched on floor  Distance  eyes on ground

10 (c) (d) robotic movements  Almost connected  eyes to back  36 beats
    (a) looks up with red mask  Distance  eyes to audience

DIALECTICS

Dialectic analysis focuses on categorising theatrical oppositions and contradictions. Therefore I have listed the central oppositions that serve to structure the narrative. This methodology demonstrates the manner in which the group’s imaginative ideas were created and how the recurrent theme evolved.

The dialectical approach is evidence by:
• *Sameness versus Differences.* The major theme is continually, established and restabilised by masked and unmasked characters.

• *Character versus Characters.* One masked character, who changes the composition of the unmasked, plays an important part in how the scene is structured. At the beginning the unmasked are dominant in numbers. In the middle the masked are the dominant group. The end is unresolved. There is a rhetorical question "Will a red mask become dominant, through the same process that has just occurred?" The audience is left to decide for themselves.

• *Power versus Submission* Is dealt with in Scene 7 as we see the third unmasked character struggling with which way to go in life. The Dominant culture wins.

• *Ideology versus Ideology* is the last opposition as the audience is left wondering what a red mask ideology signifies. This scene is therefore an open ended narrative.
7.4 - 7.13 Videotape analysis - (See attached VHS videotape - PAL)

**Time: 14 minutes & 35 seconds**

The following 10 videotape segments are examples of the participating students’ playbuilding performances. The selected segments demonstrate the complexities of the group kinaesthetic paradigm, as well as the embodied kinaesthetic learning that is taking place.

### 7.4 Dominant Masks

Example of an interrelationship between group imaginative divergence, metaphoric creating, and use of a group kinaesthetic drama property. Characters symbolically representing states of mind (see Chapter Five, section 5.6 Elements of drama).

**Time: 1 minute & 51 seconds**

### 7.5 Sameness versus Differences

Example of group kinaesthetic empathy and use of drama properties. Kinaesthetic and interpersonal learning styles (see Chapter Five, section 5.6 Elements of drama).

**Time: 1 minute & 37 seconds**

### 7.6 The White Nothing

Example of an interrelationship between group kinaesthetic knowing and group kinaesthetic empathy. Opening scene developed from playing and improvising (see Chapter Six, section 6.5 Group kinaesthetic knowing).

**Time: 1 minute & 17 seconds**
7.7 The White Nothing
Example of an interrelationship between group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and metaphoric creating. Flight scene - Embodied learning (see Chapter Six, section 6.5 Group kinaesthetic knowing).

Time: 1 minute & 08 seconds

7.8 Dominant Masks
Example of junior students experimenting with an actor/audience alienation effect. Last scene (see Chapter Seven, section 7.5 The drama and theatre connection through embodied learning).

Time: 1 minute & 14 seconds

7.9 The Wives
Example of group embodied imaginations interrelated with group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and use of drama properties. Horse riding scene (see Chapter Seven, section 7.5.1 The Wives – embodied analysis of voice and body).

Time: 1 minute & 27 seconds

7.10 The Wives
Example of group imaginative divergence and use of a personified group kinaesthetic drama property. Seducing Henry (see Chapter Seven, section 7.5.1 The Wives – embodied analysis of voice and body).

Time: 2 minutes & 01 second
7.11 Feminism versus Femininity
Example of group kinaesthetic knowing, empathy and use of drama properties in a metaxical situation. Opening kinaesthetic paragraph (see Chapter Eight, section 8.3.1 Analysis of Performing an Essay - Feminism versus Femininity).

Time: 1 minute & 34 seconds

7.12 Feminism versus Femininity
Example of group kinaesthetic knowing and group kinaesthetic empathy to heighten the emotional perceptions of the audience. Mapping the female body to concluding kinaesthetic paragraph ideas (see Chapter Eight, section 8.3.1 Analysis of Performing an Essay - Feminism versus Femininity).

Time: 1 minute 28 seconds

7.13 The Female Protagonist
Example of the interrelationship of the key questions. Concluding kinaesthetic paragraph - Embodiment of pertinent theatre conventions and techniques leading to making the dress on stage (see Chapter Eight, section 8.3.2 Analysis of Performing an Essay - The Female Protagonists).

Time: 0.58 seconds
Appendix 8.

Teacher's workbook
8.1 Example of teacher's workbook for *Experimental Playbuilding.*

*(Reflections on 10th November 2000)*

Groups have been formed and students are using their improvisation learning to help them to create this surreal drama. M's group is firing. They are using all of the ideas we have explored in our spontaneous and rehearsed improvisations. I also think W's group is doing very well. They are thoroughly enjoying the whole process as they are so engaged in all the lessons.

I wonder about 'the friends'. They are just so committed, but not much is happening. Need to help them explore how to use their Lycra material. I think perhaps they just like the Lycra material.

Overall the first couple or lessons have been reasonably dynamic. I am glad I chose to do this type of experimental playbuilding, as it is such a change to our work at the Starlight Room Children's Hospital.

Students are responding to me being particular about how I am teaching this. It is always such a challenge to teach this to Year 9 and over the past three years I have refined it so I think that it is now a very powerful physical unit which relies on bodies not words.

All other Year 9 and 10 classes are doing well. This is a great Stage 5. I have to organise when my class will present this. I need to ask them if they want another Year 9 audience, or just to have themselves. Will get M to videotape this. End of year blues occurring for all the staff.
**KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

Students should be able to:

- Demonstrate some of the basic skills of dramatic tradition through the use of a Dramatic Form or Forms, e.g. Make-Up, Fairytale, Dance, TIE, Experimental, Melodrama, Cabaret, Greek, etc.

Achieve this through a variety of drama techniques that relate to Dramatic Forms eg.

**EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE**

Students experiment with space and movement though a variety of warm ups. E.g. Students become Molecules floating in space; dynamise from the micro to the macro. Teacher as side coach helping students metaphorically improvise. Students as abstract objects creating a new world. Light versus darkness; happiness versus anger; swirling nightmare and tingling dream; proud robot versus angry robot

Link movement based warm ups to Dramatic Form – The use of Masks in Experimental / Avante Garde Theatre

Whole class use hands to create masks and restrict breathing. Discuss feelings and body knowledge.

Discuss basic rules of Masks.

Circle – Soft ambient music, turning from circle and looking in. Structured improvisation work on “The Box” theatrically linking into “What Happens Next”

Discussion and debate on atmosphere and dramatic structures experienced through improvisations. Link back to structure of Experimental Theatre as a Dramatic Form. Students discuss and enact how this Form is different from conventional mainstream theatre. Students use journals to note take and record process work.

Improvised warm ups that relate to the power of masks. E.g. Masks as Chorus; Rhythmic Movement; Time machines; Seasons; Life cycles. Students focus on the body expressing ideas symbolically.

---

**Year 9 Experimental Theatre Project**

**ASSESSMENT**

Teacher check list on how effectively students have incorporated characteristics in process and final performance

Student Journals

Peer Assessment

Assessment for learning during the first weeks. Assessment of learning at the end of the project.

Student and teacher evaluations
LEARNING OUTCOMES

SKILLS
Students should be able to:

- Use the skills of improvisation and playbuilding and scripts to develop their understanding of the dramatic structures within the form(s). Making offers, accepting offers, sharing the action, yielding

Develop a language appropriate to the Form(s).

Keep a detailed Drama journal

Use the acting techniques appropriate to the Dramatic Form.

Explore the Dramatic Forms unique contribution to the performance process.

Understand the actor/audience relationship appropriate to the Dramatic Forms.

Communicate with increased skills and confidence both individually and collectively within a group

Work co-operatively and creatively in group situations

Use and experiment with the elements of dramatic process, refinement and presentations.

Reflect on their own work and the creative work of others.

Use drama literacy to enhance theatrical meaning.

Group discussing the notion of the Surreal and the subconscious mind. In depth exploration into the purpose of Experimental Theatre in relationship to its theatrical messages and issues. Connect to the actor audience relationship.

Students to create a recurring motif on theme of human differences versus sameness. Use Music. Discuss importance of recurring motifs.

Small rehearsed improvisation following detailed scene structure. E.g. ABC are the same. D is different. ABC bring D into the circle. Create a small scene showing 1) sameness 2) differences 3) rejection 4) Ending can either be acceptance and dismissal.

Discuss this rehearsed impro in relationship to actor audience relationship in Experimental Theatre. Contrast to Mainstream Theatre.

Warm ups whole class.... To music.... Symbolize the underworld. A world of vice and corruption. Start as human beings and slowly turn into a cockroaches. Bodies must metaphorise. Use status for A to demonstrates power over B. Repeat activity but become a corrupt lizard, spider. Groups of three animal each. A, B, C status pecking order.

Students discuss and record outcomes of these quick warm ups and there purpose to the Dramatic Form of Experimental Theatre.

RESOURCES

Dada/Surreal video
Ambient Music
Romper Stomper music
Electric Nightmare Music
Variety of other musical sources
Material
Lycra
Television
LEARNING OUTCOMES

VALUES & ATTITUDES
Students should be able to:

- Develop a sense of worth and self-esteem and an appreciation of the worth of others.

Develop an informed appreciation of production and performance through a Dramatic Form

Accept positive criticism and critical analysis of their own work in Drama

Value the collaborative nature of a Dramatic Form

Enjoy theatre as a community activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brainstorming the Reasons for and Characteristics of Experimental Theatre.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theatre that:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- breaks away from Mainstream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- delves into subconscious/shadow self</td>
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<tr>
<td>- delves into dreams/ surreal/ illogical with own logic</td>
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<tr>
<td>- nightmare/rational and irrational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- twirling/ falling</td>
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<tr>
<td>- odd events/distortion</td>
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<tr>
<td>- running on the sport/sensations</td>
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<tr>
<td>- scene changes quickly/human consciousness</td>
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<tr>
<td>- characters that represent states of mind</td>
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<tr>
<td>- mask/self and world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- robotics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- language lyrical/poetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- emotive monologues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- directed at audiences senses as well as minds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- body expressing ideas symbolically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- character symbolically represented as animals/abstract</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(During warm ups use Image Theatre methodologies to create some of these Experimental Theatre characteristics.)

2 week project

3 to 4 Groups Theme: Why do human exists? What is our purpose? Groups brainstorm aspects of Human existence. Groups explore one or two contrasting aspects. Corruption versus honesty; sameness versus difference; Television versus Reality; Dance Parties versus solitude.

Stimulus material which can help students with this concept... Surreal paintings. Current Newspaper Articles; Speeches/Poem; Stimulus must be theatrical used as a vehicle for social and political comment on the state of the human existence.

TASK
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE
WHY DO HUMANS EXIST?
WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?

Using the theatrical characteristics of Experimental Theatre create a 4 to 5 minute playbuilt scene that reflects your groups issues. You must decide how you want to affect your audience and how your group will dramatically achieve this.

Remember to check list the theatrical characteristic your group are using and why you are using them

You need a detailed Journal of the process, problems you have encountered and the ways you and your group have solved them. Evaluation of final performance.
Appendix 9.

Analysis of data using QSR NUD*IST Vivo (Nvivo) software
9.1 Example of coding junior secondary students
Experimental Playbuilding journals

(QSR NVivo coding 10th August 2001)
1. What did you find the most challenging about Experimental Theatre? Trying to get the message across without talking.

2. How did your group decide on:
(a) dramatic structure and
(b) roles/characters?
We thought we would be interesting and different and
our characters in because they would suit it.

3. What worked well for your group and why?
The music and the material worked really well and the way that [ ] kept on getting further away from each other on stage.

4. What would you change in the group work and why?
The movie (Scene). So it could be clearer that there was no people watching it.

5. What did you find the most challenging about Experimental Theatre?
I personally found it hard to come up with a play which had no story line.

6. How did your group decide on:
(a) dramatic structure and
(b) roles/characters?
We discussed between the group about the personality and characteristics of each character, and then decided who would suit each character.

7. What worked well for your group and why?
I thought the props and material really well because it helped add some thing to the play. And how [ ] and I moved away from each other was effective.

8. What would you change in the group work and why?
Well, I would have preferred if it had gone a bit longer.

9. Overall I thought it was a great experience

10. What did you find the most challenging about Experimental Theatre? Trying to get our message across to the audience in a simple yet story way by using a range of experimental theatre dramatic techniques.

11. How did your group decide on:
(a) dramatic structure and
We all just brainstormed ideas about TV versus reality, and we played around certain ideas and then structured them by how well they worked in certain ways.
(b) roles/characters?
We just assigned ourselves who we would be. [ ] and [ ] wanted to be the killers, and [ ] wanted to be killed.

12. What worked well for your group and why?
We all brainstormed well and we had good ideas which helped us create a good structure. We also had deadlines to follow up, so that made us work faster.

13. What would you change in the group work and why?
I would have extended it and probably have tried to make it clearer and used many different dramatic techniques.

14. What did you find the most challenging about Experimental Theatre? Answered from audience point of view. No story line
Use of techniques that were unfamiliar.

15. How did your group decide on:
(a) dramatic structure and
We chose the topic from the list and thought of problems/happenings to do with that topic.
(b) roles/characters?
After choosing "Corruption versus Honesty" we decided to do the Aboriginal versus European settlers, as they were the main groups.

16. What worked well for your group and why?
The Music
The characters
What would you change in the group work and why?
We thought our group didn't perform so it would probably be to perform

Answered from an audience point of view.
9.2 Example of initial analysis on the emergence of kinaesthetic nodes

(QSR NVivo proximity search for kinaesthetics on 7th September 2001)
Passage 9 of 23  Section 0, Para 149, 21 chars.

149: Constantly improvise,

Passage 10 of 23  Section 0, Para 160, 81 chars.

160: frozen images have helped us - we can learn our characters through these images.

Passage 11 of 23  Section 0, Para 192, 112 chars.

192: the monitoring was! But it was good to know that there was a monitoring because it got us focused and moving.

193:

Passage 12 of 23  Section 0, Para 213, 207 chars.

213: Yes, we did a few improvisations, as well as the game where you get tangled up and have to re-tangle yourselves. We also played around with soundscapes and we will be using those at the start of the piece.

Passage 13 of 23  Section 0, Paras 218 to 219, 71 chars.

218:

219: We are putting in a lot of physical theatre in our group performance.

Passage 14 of 23  Section 0, Para 227, 40 chars.

227: as anything can be possible in drama.

Passage 15 of 23  Section 0, Para 243, 45 chars.

243: thus we must create with our imaginations.

Passage 16 of 23  Section 0, Para 251, 133 chars.

251: Once we got up, we went forward as well, because we played around with movement and light (torches) to come up with the start of our

Passage 17 of 23  Section 0, Para 263, 76 chars.

263: We will get up and improvise our ideas as well as brainstorm ideas on paper.

Passage 18 of 23  Section 0, Para 277, 168 chars.

277: Our group played some theatresports games, firstly the alphabet game, we made sure we all stood up when playing this game so it brought us a greater influx of energy.

Passage 19 of 23  Section 0, Para 277, 228 chars.

277: We also played the game of song with a theme and music type as well as the space jump type games where we jumped into situations spontaneously. Also, we have sat around and just started talking to each other
9.3 Example of node analysis descriptions

(QSR NVivo node listing on 27th August 2001)
This relates to how the students create through kinaesthetics to eventually put the work in a situation where there is an actor/audience relationship. This can belong to the classroom situation or to the final HSC examination.

2 Assessing Drama Devising
Assessing Drama Group Devising using teaching and learning tools within the kinaesthetic intelligence.

3 Bodily Kinaesthetic Learning
Learning through the analysis of the body - Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Students possess varying degrees of intelligences, but the ways in which these Intelligences combine are varied. In my research the emphasis is on the kinaesthetics.

4 Collaboration
I will not use this node again as the name Group Collaborating is more precise. The information in this Free Node must be used in conjunction with the above, as I don't know how to take the information from here and merge it.

5 Collective Imaginings
I am putting this one in as I feel this is an important node. But do the other nodes superseded this? Perhaps this is the first part of the process 'the groups imaginings', then I have to use another node as the group starts collective creating.

6 Collective Wisdom
This free node relates to how the groups used their ideas in devising. It also relates to the fact that some students have a collective wisdom because their sister had previously undertaken Drama. This knowledge appears to have been passed down; maybe by the younger sisters viewing the playbuilding shows.
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Drama Education
Secondary School Playbuilding

Enhancing imagination and creativity in group playbuilding through kinaesthetic teaching and learning

by

Sarah Lovesy

Thesis submitted for
Doctor of Philosophy
October 2003

University of Western Sydney

Volume 1 of 2
Multimedia item accompanies print copy
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- Colleagues and friends in the secondary drama education field
- Barry Lukeman, my husband, for his continuing assistance, patience, love and belief in my abilities over the past five years
- Family and friends, especially my son, for their personal encouragement.
Statement of Authentication

I certify that the material in this thesis is entirely my own work, apart from those elements that I have acknowledged in accordance with the University of Western Sydney regulations. Furthermore, this thesis has not previously been submitted towards a higher degree at any other university of institution.

Signed:

[Signature]

Sarah Caroline Lovesy
Student Number: 84200600
Date: October 2003
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
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Abstract

This research investigates the drama education form of playbuilding, and particularly the phenomenon of kinaesthetic teaching and learning which is aimed at enhancing group imagination and creativity.

Playbuilding is a process whereby groups of students devise and act in their own plays using a variety of dramatic elements and theatrical conventions. This research explores the playbuilding learning experiences of two secondary school drama classes and the playbuilding teaching experiences of four drama teachers. The research underpins current drama and theatre education praxis that relates to learning through embodiment, symbolic creativity, and the purpose and function of metaxis in a secondary drama classroom. The study relied on qualitative research grounded theory techniques, focus groups, student workbooks, classroom practices, closed questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and videotaped materials.

Central to this research are the phenomena of imagining and creating that occur in secondary drama playbuilding groups learning through a group kinaesthetic paradigm.

The study addresses the following questions:

- What are the links between imagining and creating in playbuilding?
- What impact do kinaesthetic teaching and learning practices have on imagining and creating in playbuilding groups?
- How do phenomena such as group imaginative divergence and group metaphoric thinking and creating contribute to playbuilding success?
- How do phenomena such as group kinaesthetic knowing, group kinaesthetic empathy and the use of group kinaesthetic drama properties enhance the teaching and learning practices of playbuilding and the playbuilders’ potential to become group kinaesthetic learners?
- What teaching practice would optimise imagining and creating in secondary school playbuilding groups?
These questions are considered in light of the analysis of the data and literature review.

This study concludes that there is a paradigm which identifies secondary drama students as group kinaesthetic learners, and that kinaesthetic teaching and learning practices open up pedagogic spaces in playbuilding that significantly improve the effectiveness of group embodied learning in drama education.