Chapter One

Overarching Statement

Drama researchers need to direct more of their investigation and dialogue towards consequential issues that are likely to have an impact on the actual teaching of drama in a classroom. What good is academic drama discourse and research if it is totally removed from the teachers it is meant to serve and the students it is meant to inspire? (Young D., 2001)

Whilst the area of research related to ‘the actual teaching of Drama’ is vast, the research in this portfolio is limited by time and space. Therefore it is specifically directed towards three ‘consequential issues’: how students learn in process drama, the sorts of knowledge, skills and values that teachers need in order to promote that learning, and how the use of this knowledge is best developed in tertiary education. These are addressed through three core questions:

(i) What is 'Process drama', and what is its essence as a method of teaching/learning?
(ii) What is meant by the professional craft knowledge of a process drama teacher?
(iii) Can the development of professional craft knowledge be enhanced in tertiary education?

Core Question 1: What is 'Process Drama', and what is its essence as a method of teaching/learning?

I have addressed this core question in two parts. Part A presents and discusses current theories about the nature of 'Process drama', in the context of leading research in this field. I have done this in order to clarify the particular teaching/learning practices referred to in these publications. Part B describes how teachers promote learning in process drama, and discusses how my research articles contribute to the body of knowledge about the teaching/learning practices of process drama.

Part (A) The Historical Context - “What's in a name?”

Since the early 1990s the term ‘Process drama’ has been widely used to describe a form of drama derived from Dorothy Heathcote’s teaching in the 1960s, originally called ‘Drama in
Education' (DIE). According to Cecily O'Neill the new term, 'Process drama', was used almost simultaneously in Australia and North America in the late 1980s, and she credits Australian Brad Haseman with the first use of the term in print. In 1991 Haseman described "process drama" as a unique way of combining a range of new and old dramatic forms. This included "role taking and role building, the 'key strategy' of teacher in role, the means of being inside and outside the action, distance and reflection" (O'Neill 1995: xviii).

In 1992, in his book *The Process of Drama: Negotiating Art and Meaning* John O'Toole used the term 'Drama in Education' when referring to this form of teaching, but he moved readers closer to the change of name by describing and analysing its 'processual' nature. O'Toole asks:

"Is there a difference between 'the drama process' and 'process drama' - imposing phrases both? Verbalising the nouns, we know what is meant by producing drama, but does proceeding in drama mean anything? If not, why is the word 'process' so popular? process in drama may be defined as: Negotiating and renegotiating the elements of dramatic form, in terms of the context and purposes of the participants (1992: 2).

In 1995 O'Neill dedicated her book *Drama Worlds: a framework for process drama* to explicating this form of Drama, and began by differentiating it, not from DIE, but from more performance orientated teaching:

"The term process drama usefully distinguishes the particular kind of complex improvised dramatic event from that designed to generate or culminate in a theatrical performance....The primary purpose of process drama is to establish an imagined world, a dramatic 'elsewhere' created by the participants as they discover, articulate, and sustain fictional roles and situations" (1995: xvi).

O'Neill saw process drama and Drama in Education (DIE) as "almost synonymous" (1995: xv), but in 1998 Gavin Bolton, one of the pioneers of DIE, was at pains to differentiate them. For him process drama is
"a sequential programme, derived from Heathcote but crucially independent of her in respect of its theatricality and made up of a wide range of dramatic forms, from 'living through' to work on scripts" (1998: 231).

Whilst it is probably true that process drama has evolved to contain more theatricality, this does not seem important to teachers outside England; Australians have not had their bitter division over whether "drama" or "theatre" (process or product) ought to be taught in schools. What is taught in Australia is a continuum of many forms, from child's imaginative play to theatrical performance. 'Heathcotian' Drama is only one of the forms taught, so perhaps calling it 'Drama in Education' was making too large a claim. The history of drama theory is a history of evolving forms and changing names, as Bolton's own publications show. Process drama, if not the same thing as DIE, at the very least has developed from it. As David Davis has articulated:

"Much that has characterised drama in Education over the last forty years or so has been the search for productive involvement in this present moment: Heathcote's 'Now time', Bolton's 'It is happening to me now', O'Neill's 'I am watching this happen to me now'. It has involved the search for ways to involve young people in this elusive present moment in a way where something significant is happening to them, where they are contributing to what is happening and where they are to some extent conscious of the experience in a way that takes them into and beyond that present moment" (Davis in Bolton 1998: xii).

Living in the present moment is the dominant state of mind in Heathcotian Drama; creating in the moment is the essence of its intent. When Haseman, O'Toole and O'Neill independently used the term 'Process drama' in print in the 1990s, they were validating a term already being used by Australian and American teachers to refer to Heathcote's invention.

When Heathcote's methodology first emerged in England in the 1960s, it was highly controversial. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, her goal was different from her predecessor Brian Way (1967) who had sought the 'individuality of the individual'. Instead Heathcote saw the students as social beings, and taught them as one large group, pursuing 'an
understanding of the society they live in, and its past, present and future' (Johnson & O’Neill, 1984: 12). Secondly, Heathcote physically intervened in the drama using teacher-in-role. This technique was later adopted enthusiastically by Drama in Education teachers, but at first it seemed shocking. Bolton said of his initial reaction to teacher-in-role:

"I resisted its usage at first, not because it was not effective, but because the idea of a teacher actually joining in was more than my traditional teacher training and attitude to professionalism could stomach!" (Johnson & O’Neill 1984: 8).

With this technique the teacher enters the drama in a fictional role and guides the action from inside. Sometimes she lowered her own status and increased the power of the students' roles. Heathcote coined the term "Mantle of the Expert" for this technique which she refined over the next thirty years. It became "the fictional springboard from which all learning could be pursued ...... Mantle of the expert can be used to teach anything (Bolton 1998: 241)

The most outspoken critic of Heathcote’s methodology was David Hornbrook (1989). He asserted that a method depending on a charismatic personality was essentially useless for more 'ordinary' individuals. He scornfully attacked Heathcote's followers whom he called ‘New Muggletonians’ (after a seventeenth century sect, though these days it has an interesting Harry Potter resonance with the non-wizards of Rowling's books). He decried the 'fierce sectarianism' of Drama in Education enthusiasts, alleging that Heathcote's every ‘casual utterance becomes inscribed as text, texts become sacred, and dissent is reducible to heresy’ (1989: 18). The very thing that had attracted teachers to Heathcote, her charisma, he saw as dangerous:

"I would suggest that spiritual acquiescence came to characterise the discourse of drama-in-education in the 1980s and that dense, mystifying language played a major part in Heathcote's ascension. It helped to envelop her with an aura of pedagogical magic which served both to deflect criticism and to reinforce her mystical status" (1989: 18)

Hornbrook also criticised the 'family' feel of the writings of many DIE disciples:

"The employment of first names, the avuncular familiarity, the selective use of critical judgement, make it almost impossible to prise the text from the personality. In a blur of
disciplinary defensiveness, Gavin becomes inseparable from Gavin's theories; to challenge the idea is to challenge the person" (1989: 20)

Hornbrook's attack on the style of DIE writing made a pertinent point. The field of Drama Education is relatively small: practitioners come to know each other through conferences and publications, and it is often hard to differentiate the 'dancer from the dance'. Sometimes a critique of practice is seen as a personal attack. A by-product of this, as Fred Inglis remarked wryly, is that

"In drama education you have to be nice to people even when you need to be nasty, except of course when everybody else hates them as well." (1998: 252).

Hornbrook has continued to be the main person "everyone hates as well". His often snide attacks on 'Dorothy and Gavin' fuelled the debate, and made him a major target of those defending Drama in Education. His (apparently deliberate) provocative writing regularly draws angry responses from a wide range of people: Davis, O'Toole, Taylor and others.

However, the body of theory underlying process drama has been defined as much by its challengers as by its supporters; it has been negotiated internationally from its beginnings in British DIE. Most recently Haseman has claimed

"As a genre process drama has been firmly described and leading practitioners have travelled the world weaving and then unravelling the artistry and pedagogy of their practice" (2002: 200).

In process drama participants develop knowledge using the same meaning - making processes that they use in everyday life: they interpret body language and voice qualities, read emotions, explore subtexts, respond to what they think other people want, manipulate symbols, use a particular values base to make a decision, choose from alternative actions and realise the consequences of that choice. They do so in a fictional world they create together. The teacher of process drama is a facilitator, acting as what Giroux (1993) calls a 'border crosser', creating a
space where multiple voices can be heard. Groups of students collaborate in role to express and explore ideas. There is no outside audience and no intention to communicate beyond the participants themselves, so though they work in role, an acting ability is not usually important. All that is needed in process drama is for the participants to willingly suspend their disbelief.

Our understanding of process drama has strengthened as educators demonstrate and research their own practice and that of other people. Using theories, content knowledge and his/her own practice in his/her own context, each process drama teacher develops his/her own professional craft knowledge. This process is defined and discussed more fully in the second core question addressed in this chapter.

**Part (B) How drama teachers promote learning in process drama.**

In this section I shall describe process drama, and indicate how my research has helped to elucidate this form of teaching. Cecily O'Neill, regarded as a world expert in the teaching of process drama, has recently listed its typical features. Each feature depends upon abilities developed as part of professional craft knowledge. I shall use O’Neill’s list as a starting point, and apply it to specific examples in my research publications.

**Typical Features.**

According to O'Neill, process drama is defined by:

- Separate scenic units linked in an organic manner
- Thematic exploration rather than an isolated or random sketch
- A happening and an experience that does not depend on a written script
- A concern with participants' change in outlook
- Improvisational activity
- Outcomes not predetermined but discovered in process
- A script generated through action
- A leader actively working both within and outside the Drama (cited in Taylor 2000: 24)
Separate Scenic Units.

O’Neill suggests that process drama involves organically linked ‘scenic units’, created through a range of drama techniques and structures. My article “Playbuilding: more than the sum of the parts” in Chapter 2 of the portfolio offers an example: the ‘Shopping’ model that I created. Teachers plan (or choose mid-lesson) the scenic units and techniques, and whether or not they seem ‘organically linked’ depends upon the teacher’s expertise in choosing from the students’ ideas and blending them, apparently seamlessly. Because of its ephemeral nature, process drama requires that teachers remain ‘in the moment’, responding immediately to student input.

As Eisner has said

“responses to the 'music' of classroom discussion are often a matter not of reflective practice - reflection here is much too slow - but a matter of instantaneous response to the qualitative immediacy of the events themselves” (cited in Woods 1996: 24).

The teacher usually launches the drama enterprise with a well-chosen stimulus called a ‘pre-text’. It may be a single word, gesture, location, story, idea, object or image. Some pre-texts used in the research recorded in this portfolio include pictures, a map of a shopping centre, picture books, a television news clip about an escaped Asylum seeker, and a 'squib' from a newspaper about a baby found abandoned on a train. According to O’Neill, who coined the term,

“A pre-text has a much more precise structural function than merely to propose an idea for dramatic exploration. The purpose of the pre-text is to activate the weaving of the text of the drama, because although the dramas may not originate in a text, it always generates a text in action" (cited in Taylor 2000: 25).

The effectiveness of a pre-text depends upon the teacher’s ability to recognize the opportunities presented by the lesson topic, anticipate the potential risk in roles, and define a structure for the drama that will set up conditions where collaborative creativity can occur.
An Emerging Theme

Each pre-text used in a process drama class is capable of giving rise to many themes and can create quite different fictional worlds. As is suggested in most of these publications, it is not really possible to state the outcome of process drama before the lesson: what emerges depends on interactions between the teacher, the students and the pre-text. For example the first article in my portfolio refers to the 1996 NADIE Phoenix project (see Appendix 3). Several teachers from all of the Australian states taught drama using the same pretext, a picture book The Mysteries of Harris Burdick. The class of the Victorian teacher, Tiina Moore (who also led the project) explored the topic ‘scientists dealing with the paranormal’, but this was only one of many topics emerging from the uses of this pretext.

Similarly, my three different uses of The Great Bear as pre-text, described in Chapter 5, led to the emergence of three different themes. In Chapter 4 my intention in the article Following the Leader was to pinpoint when, why and how the theme ‘guarding the Woomera detention camp’, became the one that Haseman and the group chose to explore. As is argued in that publication, the leader (Haseman) draws upon his professional craft knowledge in order to sense where the group might go as it pursues an emerging theme.

An Active Leader

The leader guides the unfolding drama using his/her knowledge of content, pedagogy and the students. He/she helps them choose roles by framing how they interact with a pretext. For example, in the workshops in Taiwan cited in Chapter 5, I used the walled medieval town pictured in the pre-text (an illustration of a group of entertainers approaching the town) as the basis for the roles to be adopted. I asked the participants to read this image, discussing who might live in the town, and the sorts of lives they might live. Then they adopted roles developed from their combined understandings of medieval times in China.

Brad Haseman’s work, described in Chapter 4, demonstrated how a drama teacher makes time and space for a choice of ideas. Participants in his drama refused the roles of refugees that he
originally seemed to be suggesting; instead they became guards. This choice emerged from the group's discussion of asylum seekers. One participant said she wanted a ‘real’ drama experience and felt she didn't know enough for a genuine entry into the traumas a refugee must experience. Haseman made space for her powerfully expressed opinion, which helped persuade the participants to adopt the roles of the guards at Woomera. Sometimes teachers guide the action in role; at other times they coach unobtrusively from outside the action (as when Haseman urges the guards to plant the refugees letters).

In planning process drama the teacher chooses a level of role which suits the cognitive and affective challenge he/she wants for the students. As is discussed in Chapter 2 in Walking in Another Person’s Shoes, Morgan and Saxton (1986) have differentiated five levels of roles from which teachers can choose. These range from “dramatic playing” where students are simply themselves in a fictional context, through to “acting”, when they create a script from their process work (as in chapter 2, Playbuilding: more than the Sum of the Parts).

**Improvisational Activity**

The participants in process drama, both students and teacher, create in the moment. To do so they need to be able to pick up cues and respond quickly. They negotiate the drama reality whilst their characters interact, keeping the "now" flavour of the work. In a group improvisation each participant's line of dialogue (or "offer") can be ignored, taken up or rejected, but too solid a rejection can block the development of that particular drama pathway. Teachers often determine the direction of the drama by acknowledging or making space for particular student offers. Sometimes teachers accept part of the offer, but change some of the details. In Chapter 4 my analysis of Haseman’s workshop shows how some student offers are ignored, for example the repeated question “Can we be the guards’ families?”, whilst other ideas are picked up and reinforced by the leader’s use of gesture and warm tone of voice: ‘That’s a lovely idea!’
Change in Outlook, Discovered in Process

In process drama students physically engage with ideas through roleplay. Each student explores the consequences of being a particular person holding a point of view and experiences the world from a different perspective, even if it is only momentarily. Physicalising a role and linking it to the participant's own comparable experience can give rise to real emotion - through what Stanislavsky called 'emotion memory'. As is cited in chapter 5, Helen Nicholson has argued

"the body is not an instrument of the mind nor secondary to it; it is central to the development of understanding and very literally how we interact with, and experience the world" (2001:163).

The founder of DIE, Dorothy Heathcote illustrated the importance of the emotions when she said of DIE "It's really affective learning but it's built in cognition" (1988: 24). In process drama participants develop cognitive/affective understandings which they may apply to their own lifeworld experiences.

Outcomes Discovered in Process.

In drama the class is not told beforehand what outcomes they will pursue. Indeed the teacher may not know at the beginning of the process what the outcome will be, because it partly depends the decisions made in action by both students and teacher. As is cited in several chapters of this Portfolio, such as Chapter 1 and Chapter 5, Bill Spady (1992) conceptualises three types of outcome - technical, transitional and transformational. The latter is the type most often sought by drama teachers, and its realisation will not be immediate. What students learn through the drama metaphor may not be immediately applied to their life; it may take years before the impact of the learning experience is realised.
Core Question 2: What is meant by the professional craft knowledge of a process drama teacher?

This section begins by addressing issues related to the nature of the knowledge being developed by the participants in process drama, and then explores the centre of my research, the professional craft knowledge of process drama teachers.

Developing Knowledge in Drama.

Chapter 3 of the portfolio is dedicated to my research into different ways of knowing. The way that the participants come to know in process drama is as important as what they learn. Embodied knowing and affective learning are two important features of process drama. In this field there have been two main philosophical approaches to the place of affective learning represented by the theories of Peter Abbs (1989) and David Best (1992). Abbs argues that knowledge is based on intuited feeling, which occurs first and is separate from cognition. Opposing him, Best argues that reason and feeling occur simultaneously: that rationality is a part of feeling. In this phase of my research, I am more inclined to agree with Abbs.

In Chapter 3 the article Using practical knowledge of the creative arts to foster learning draws upon the theories of Habermas (1995), who argued that knowing has three different aspects: that which is scientifically provable (technical); that which we learn through language and negotiation (hermeneutic), and that learned from a reflexive viewing of the world, foregrounding our own assumptions (critical). Process drama taps into all three, but especially sets out to develop hermeneutic and critical ways of knowing. So for example in Developing Collaborative Creativity in Chapter 3 Peter Bateman recognises the importance to his Namibian students of consulting their tribal elders, so that their thinking is part of what is known in their culture as ‘Ngomo’. In Chapter 5 in Drama and the Learner one student reveals in her journal that she can not enter into the ‘Great Bear’ drama because her personal convictions about caged animals is stronger than the drama requirement to suspend disbelief.

Drama develops knowledge in the arts, and knowledge through the arts. The first refers to the sort of knowledge actors construct as they develop their art form, described in Chapter 3 by the
actor Camilla Ah Kin in the article *Using practical knowledge of the creative arts to foster learning*. The second, knowledge through the arts, refers to knowledge about the world, learned through Drama, exemplified in this same article by the primary students who developed an understanding of life in Antarctica with their teacher in role sessions.

Chapter 5 refers to the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin on how meaning is constructed. He sees communication as in continual tension between ‘centripetal’ (pushing towards unity) and ‘centrifugal’ forces (seeking multiplicity and heteroglossia). My research has found that sometimes students maintained their individual opinions, whilst apparently conforming in action. For example, a student in the ‘Great Bear’ drama does not reveal her religious beliefs to her group (as she says, keeping her own thinking ‘safe in the head’) but can share other ideas broadly, helping the group to create a still image.

However, what true communication aims for is what Mayerfeld Bell and Gardiner call ‘radical tolerance’:

This is not a form of tolerance that simply allows us to ‘put up with’ the existence of multiple forms of life and world views. Rather, it aims at a mutual recognition and co-understanding in a manner that opens up each such form of life to a diversity of reciprocal influences and points of view (1998: 6).

Generally students in process drama collaborate to create work they all feel proud of. That is what their teacher strives for. As Tiina Moore said of her teaching “I wanted every student to feel he/she had an investment in the story and I wanted the experience to be a strong and memorable end to their primary years” (cited in *Walking in Another Person’s Shoes*, Chapter 2).

**Professional Craft Knowledge**

The form of knowledge that I believe is most important for the success of process drama is the teacher’s professional craft knowledge. Developed during day-to-day classroom teaching, the
professional craft knowledge of a drama teacher is a blend of propositional knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and knowledge that comes from cultural experience.

Traditionally the status and credibility of any profession rests on its propositional knowledge, derived from research and scholarship and providing the theory for practice. However, as Schon (1983, 1987) has pointed out, professionals do not simply apply theory to practical problems: many of the important decisions made in professional practice are based on ambiguous stimuli and uncertain data. Professional people develop an extensive body of highly context specific craft knowledge which they apply, modify and re-apply to problems which arise in their professional life. Over time it becomes embodied, unconscious knowledge.

The term 'professional craft knowledge' is not the only term used to describe the knowledge base of a professional. For instance, research by Titchen and Ersser (2001) reveals ten different terms used in literature to do with a teacher's knowledge base: the terms pedagogical content knowledge, aesthetic knowing, ethical/moral knowledge, knowing-in-practice, intuitive and embodied knowing, as well as empirical and scientific knowing are commonly used. However, I have chosen to use 'professional craft knowledge' as my preferred term because to me it connotes artistry, uncertainty and context specificity, combined with skilled practice. As teachers reflect in action in the micro-contexts of their own classes the lines between the knowledge forms are blurred, and it becomes unconscious, tacit, embodied knowledge. It consists of

“a repertoire of examples, images, practical principles, scenarios or rules of thumb that have been developed through prior experience”. (Cervero 1992: 91)

There is much debate in the literature about the process by which teachers move from novice to expert. According to Berliner (1988) there are five stages in the development of professional craft knowledge. The novice seeks rules and recipes; the advanced beginner seeks contextual knowledge, and begins to understand when the rules might be broken; competent teachers make conscious choices and monitor their actions, adapting them to suit their goals; the proficient
teacher is more holistic, and uses ‘intuition’ and ‘know-how’; finally he/she reaches the stage of expert where

“the teacher and task have become inseparable, the teacher’s practice is characterised by a fluency and automaticity in which the teacher is rarely surprised and where the teacher is fully adapted to and in control of the situation.” (Calderhead 1996: 12)

Brad Haseman’s workshop described in Chapter 4 is an example of the modelled practice of an expert. Haseman, in what he calls a ‘leaderly drama’ session, demonstrated that effective lessons are neither leader-less nor overly dominated by the teacher; he drew on his professional craft knowledge to facilitate collaborative creativity. Before the class he distributed a paper which provided access to his forward planning. He anticipated, and then demonstrated in the workshop, managing energy, laying trails, weaving ideas together, sensing what the group wants, withholding in order to maintain tension and surprise, and ‘smelling’ emerging scents. All are abstract teaching practices, difficult to describe and usually only learned in action.

Haseman’s workshop was also an excellent demonstration of how teachers really prepare for lessons. His planning, like that of most process drama teachers, is of the type that Stenhouse (1975) has called ‘procedural’: the focus is on the management of processes and materials rather than on pursuing a particular outcome. Teachers reflect in action, rapidly choosing between a range of possible structures, resources and techniques. Haseman chose the direction of the lesson as he sensed which themes and role perspectives were best engaging a majority of the students. He recognised and supported potentially fruitful suggestions, and intervened to re-direct unproductive work. Sometimes the intervention was unobtrusive, done in role or by coaching from the side. At other times it was more obvious. For example when the students’ interest and energy flagged, Haseman froze the action in the fictional world and out of role he specifically asked the students “Where do we go from here?”

An important part of the professional craft knowledge of process drama is the ability to promote the artistic/aesthetic development of groups of students. This implies an understanding of the
cultures within which the participants are living and from which they necessarily draw, as well as skilled teaching. Bolton has argued that

"the conscious creation of an art form is a sophisticated group responsibility that requires tacit or explicit agreement on choice of focus, injection of tension, and sensitivity to shared meanings that may resonate from the continual focus on a particular object or action or language image. We want the children to acquire those very skills previously used by their teacher on their behalf." (Davis & Lawrence 1986: 163)

A good example of children acquiring those skills is seen in the first article in Chapter 2, in what their teacher Tiina Moore called "an unexpected gift" to her lesson. Three girls, undirected by the teacher, came to the room early and set up a three dimensional equivalent of the picture they were exploring. Because of the shock effect of finding the pretext brought to life, the class was immediately focused and motivated to explore the Drama. Another important part of professional craft knowledge is the teacher's pedagogical content knowledge. Shulman (1986) defined it as:

"The ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others... Pedagogical content knowledge also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult; the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those frequently taught topics and lessons." (1986: 9)

Part of a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge is knowing how to use the elements of Drama, especially focus, tension, symbol and role. The work can be focused by choosing to explore the 'second dimension' of the role: an aspect of life that the participants know from their real life experiences. In Chapter 5 the Taiwanese teachers became not just entertainers, but 'auditioning entertainers', using their real varying levels of confidence and skill as they presented their acts. Professional craft knowledge also incorporates what Bolton (1986) calls the "art of constraint": knowing how to maintain tension. For example, tension is increased when the guards in Brad Haseman's drama in Chapter 4 are reminded that they must be careful
how they treat the Asylum seekers, because their actions are being monitored by the Churches and by the UN.

The ability to use *symbol* is an important element of pedagogical content knowledge. Objects or events are repeatedly used in the drama so that gradually they accumulate emotional connotations that help define the meaning. For example, in the *The Baby on the Train* Drama, cited in Chapter 2, students were asked to use the same bundle of baby blankets in each still image and improvisation, re-enforcing the centrality of the baby to the separate narratives being constructed and facilitating the emergence of a combined story.

Perhaps the essential drama element that needs to be planned for is the *role* that the students will adopt. A very important part of professional craft knowledge is what Bolton (1986) has called 'protection into role'. Using techniques that prevent a confusion between reality and the fictional world, the teacher structures the lesson so that students are able to explore emotions safely. The roles they adopt are clearly differentiated from their real selves. The students set their drama in a fictional place so that they are clearly not (on the surface of it) talking about their real life. If the material is "hot" (that is, potentially threatening) then choosing a distanced, more contemplative technique like a still image is preferable to a technique like real-time improvisation where students may unwittingly make their real emotions public. This is demonstrated in most of the articles in the portfolio (for example in the model *The Baby on the Train* in Chapter 2 and *The Great Bear* in Chapter 5).

Teachers draw on their pedagogical knowledge of how roles are created in order to help develop the drama work. As Haseman and O'Toole (1987) have pointed out, students can develop role by exploring three aspects: function, status and attitude.

Each role adopted will have a *function* in the total Drama, developed by asking 'what is this character trying to achieve? How does he/she assist or hinder the others?' In issues-based drama, students might only represent their role function, though that might change as the drama
goes on. As is stated in Chapter 2 in *Walking in Another person’s shoes*, a ‘Bulldozer man’ can be converted so that he becomes ‘a Greenie’ in a drama about conservation.

Each role will also have a particular *attitude* towards the drama events. Staying true to that attitude is a way of developing the role. Sometimes the real attitude is hidden and the students are (knowingly or unknowingly) working with subtext. They develop a growing awareness that a character has some sort of hidden agenda, and it takes a while to discover their real intention.

In the ‘*Baby on the Train*’ drama (cited in Chapter 2, *Walking in Another person’s shoes*) the Minister for Transport has called a meeting, but her bored expression and refusal to listen show she is not really going to redress the commuters’ problems. As they become more sophisticated with role, students learn to use subtext themselves as they take on an attitude.

*Status* is important: knowing what power each person has will affect how the characters interact, determining the level of confidence, the vocabulary, and tone of voice used. The teacher’s own choice of role status will often determine how the drama unfolds, and how directly it is steered.

In Chapter 4 there is an interesting power tussle between Haseman in role as the head of the detention camp and a participant in role as the UN representative, each trying to choose the direction of the drama as they respond differently to the guards’ questions about handling the Asylum seekers. The need for an alert leader is also illustrated in this class: Haseman had to deal with an observer outside the action caught up in the drama and trying to contribute information. His initial exasperation was observable; but he quickly controlled this and invited her to join the class and the discussion in role.

Expert teachers need to manage two worlds: the ‘real’ physical world of the classroom and the fictional world of the drama. The term ‘metaxis’ was coined by Augusto Boal (1979) to describe the state of ‘double knowing’ of his audiences in his Theatre of the Oppressed. Gavin Bolton (1984) applied the term to the ‘double knowing’ of students engaged in classroom drama where the group is its own audience. They are simultaneously participant and percipient: they act in the fictional world that they create, but observe themselves acting, simultaneously
aware of their drama context and their lifeworld. One student in _The Great Bear_ Drama in Chapter 5 acknowledged that being in role as a villager taunting the performing bear made him think about how he treats people in his life. (Simons 2002)

As I shall explore in the third core question of this portfolio, there is a third form of metaxis that operates in tertiary education, when pre-service teachers are invited to become simultaneously student and teacher. I have called this 'professional metaxis', and as is reported in the portfolio, this is a common way of assisting beginning teachers to develop professional craft knowledge.

Sometimes student learning in the Arts emerges from what Hargreaves calls a 'conversive traumatic experience'. After easing drama participants into role, the teacher seeks to surprise them, stepping up the tension with an event that is

"disturbing, or even shattering; their normal state is somehow unbalanced in these moments, and this has a powerful impact on their learning and long-term memory."
(Hargreaves, 1990; 147).

This was the case in Brad Haseman's drama when he used his professional craft knowledge to bring about the incident where the guards were surrounded by the protesting asylum seekers.

**Core Question 3: Can the development of professional craft knowledge be enhanced in tertiary education?**

_What does being a good teacher mean? And how does teacher education contribute to the development of good teachers? Surprisingly, these questions are not always central to the design of programs to prepare teachers. All too often images of good teaching are left unarticulated, presumed to be part of a shared, but tacit, understanding. As a result one of the most fundamental aspects of teacher preparation is left unexamined_ (Valli, 1992: xi).

In the past two decades research into teacher effectiveness has moved away from technical analyses of specifiable teaching skills. Instead more holistic aspects of teaching are explored
using qualitative methods like narrative enquiry and action research. Since the 1990s drama journals such as Drama Australia (NJ) and Research in Drama Education (RIED) have published a plethora of classroom based studies, usually a practitioner working in a real context researching his/her own practice in order to get at teacher thinking. But does the popularity of classroom research imply that teachers do not really learn to teach until they enter the profession? If so, what is the function of pre-service education, and how can it serve the teaching profession?

In the past tertiary educators may have focused too much on meeting the initial needs of beginning teachers. Novice teachers want rules and recipes to help them survive the initial stage of teaching and most teacher preparation courses prior to the 1990s met this need by concentrating on observable skills, such as lesson planning, questioning, explaining and management techniques. Little was done about facilitating the complexity of thinking needed in a real classroom. The professional development required to move beyond the initial phase was left to luck, to the teacher’s own efforts, or perhaps to an employer who understood the difficulties faced in the first few years of teaching.

**Moving from Novice to Expert**

A real problem in the facilitation of good teaching is that little is understood about the complex processes by which beginning teachers become more expert. Berliner (1988) identified five stages: the novice, the advanced beginner, the competent teacher, the proficient teacher and the expert. The stages depended on the teacher's ability to move away from rules and towards holistic, intuitive teaching. Titchen (2001) described a similar process. The neophyte begins by applying theoretical principles. Over time these applications are fine-tuned in practice and transformed into practical principles: the theory is absorbed and made tacit. Then, immersed in similar (or different) experiences the practitioner is confronted by a confusing situation and works things out for themselves:
“Learning comes about not only through close involvement of heart and head in the situation, but also by being able to stand back and reflect upon the experience.” (Higgs & Titchen 2001: 7)

Enhancing Reflective Practice

Since the 1990s most teacher education programs have recognised the importance of developing reflective practices. However, what is understood by reflection can vary considerably, from technical reflection on skills to more critical reflection on teaching. Some theorists (such as Cruickshank) have focused primarily on technical reflection after the fact, often under the guidance of a supervising teacher. Since Shon tertiary educators have been aware of a significant difference between reflecting in and on practice. The ability to think on one's feet is generally regarded as the mark of a professional. Whatever the definition, there is some general agreement that the reflective teacher is one who is able to analyse his/her own practice and the context in which it occurs, but

.... “the extent to which reflective teachers are expected to take into consideration personal, organisational, social, ethical and political factors in their deliberation differs from one teacher education program to another” (Calderhead1992:141).

Case Studies

At Sydney University in the Master of Teaching degree, introduced in 1993, the emphasis has been upon developing the reflective practitioner. This course uses several methods to make conscious the tacit knowledge used by teachers as they go about their work. The MTeach course (as it is called) promotes reflective practice by several methods, primarily promoting enquiry learning using cases commissioned from teachers in the field. Richard Walker, the co-ordinator of the generic course simply called ‘Study 1’, describes the process by which the cases are studied:

“Students working in small groups are presented with authentic problems from their profession and are required to make judgements and evaluations concerning the information provided. They are required to find relevant disciplinary knowledge
concerning each problem scenario, to use this information to make diagnoses and to suggest solutions for these diagnoses. During the course of these activities, students are introduced to the clinical reasoning processes that are the basis of practice” (Walker 2001: 26).

These case studies also begin the students’ initial enculturation into professional practices of teachers. Analysing and discussing cases gives the MTeach students their first taste of a teaching community, whose distributed intelligence they share. Through case study they “become problem solvers who pose questions, frame and re-frame problems, explore multiple perspectives and examine alternative solutions. In short, case-based teaching can help neophytes learn to think like a teacher and can promote communities of learners among veterans” (Shulman J & Shulman L 2000: ix).

Studying cases based on real teachers’ real experiences is a way of freezing a problematic aspect of teaching at a crucial moment, giving the neophyte time to understand why a decision needed to be made in that context at that time, and to think about alternatives they themselves might have chosen. Using the case-based approach helps beginning teachers become metacognitive about reflection in action. This method also helps to ease them into more holistic learning, incorporating the planned and unplanned aspects of real teaching.

**Live Case Studies and 'Professional Metaxis'**

As well as the cases used in the generic courses, MTeach students specialising in drama explore several types of case study in their drama curriculum course (part of ‘Study 2’). They write and explore cases themselves, and deconstruct cases written by other teachers. They also engage in what I believe is a third type of case study - the re-enactment of drama scenarios originally designed by other people, in order to understand in the body how a teacher thinks on his/her feet. These dramas are usually described in the literature in sufficient detail for them to be duplicated. Examples are the ‘*Seal Wife*’ (O’Neill 1995) or my own ‘*The Baby on the Train*’ used in tertiary education here and overseas (See Appendix 4). These drama ‘cases’ are re-
enacted in class, and laid open for deconstruction and reflection during and after the enactment. For example, the group might break their enactment of the ‘Seal Wife’ to reflect on why O’Neill’s use of the initial still images of the woman’s life was an effective teaching/learning technique and what else might have been done. In the case of the University of Reading students using my ‘The Baby on the Train’ model, the teachers had to anticipate what adaptations would be necessary for teaching a group of young male offenders.

Haseman (2002) has criticised the growing practice of re-enacting documented process dramas as if they are a type of script. If the drama is simply duplicated, then his criticism seems valid: such teaching will do little to advance reflection in action and connoisseurship. However, I believe that there is a place for using such published dramas in tertiary education. For example, the meta-cognitive analysis of a re-enacted publication can become a ‘live’ case-based study, through which neophytes can develop what I call a professional metaxis: they experience as ‘students’ but at the same time they identify with what the teacher does. The public, collaborative nature of the experience makes it available for deconstruction, comparable to a case in written form. Their external observance of the practitioner, combined with reflection by the leader and other participants on their internal processes, can help to deconstruct the craft knowledge involved.

Haseman’s ‘Asylum Seekers’ Drama, detailed in Chapter 4, is typical of the way many tertiary drama teachers model their own or other people’s practice. Together the participants create a piece of Drama, reflect in and on the work, and deconstruct it. Because Haseman’s participants were teachers they experienced a professional metaxis, strengthened because Haseman pre-specified in writing the range of choices he (the teacher) held in his head: resources and actions (such as ‘laying trails’) that he might use in the workshop. He anticipated some of the teaching alternatives available, so that after the fact students could analyse how his mind had been working in the moment that they observed from outside.
Several of the publications in my portfolio involve ‘cases’ re-enacted in tertiary education as examples of process drama. They were originally created in action by an expert, and then re-enacted to help pre-service teachers experience the gestalt that occurs when separate drama techniques are put together. My article in Chapter 2 - *Playbuilding: more than the sum of the parts* was intended as a model for Primary teachers new to this drama form. The ‘*Shopping*’ drama example is offered as a support for them to re-enact and analyse. *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, also cited in Chapter 2, was originally created in the moment by Victorian teacher Tiina Moore and her class, documented using reports from the ‘outside eyes’, and made available for dissection and discussion because it was published in the NADIE monograph.

**Deconstructing Modelled Practice**

At Sydney University, in curriculum courses and during practicum, pre-service teachers are initiated into teaching practices by three main methods: modelled practice (observing expert practitioners and asking questions), scaffolding (team teaching with more experienced peers) and coaching (teaching alone, but with advice from a critical friend or mentor). Each of these is accompanied by reflection. At the University we lecturers use modelled practice as a way of facilitating teacher development. My colleague Robyn Ewing and I often team-teach, for example creating new pieces of process drama, or re-enacting 'live cases', already published pieces in journals and books (such as *The Baby on the Train*).

We invite critical reflection on our teaching/learning from the students and from each other. As part of this process we point out to the students when we think our plans don’t work. That this may be an unusual way to work came home to me very strongly in Taiwan (described in Chapter 5 of this Portfolio). The experienced teachers (to whom I introduced drama methods) were initially shocked when I said things like “That didn’t work very well: it probably would have been better if I had used a different technique”. In an Asian culture, where teachers are highly respected and seen as authority figures, this sort of comment was difficult for the students to deal with.
At Sydney University my own practice is offered as a way to work, rather than the only way it should be done. It is seen as a case study in action, one element that could be used by the students to construct their own professional craft knowledge. Examples of how I work with beginning teachers are offered in most publications of this portfolio, and are most developed in Chapter 3 (*Developing Collaborative Creativity*) and in Chapter 5 (*Drama and the Learner*).

The practicum is a core part of the University’s preparation of teachers, with each student placed in the field under the care of a mentor liaising with a tertiary educator. Pre-service teachers are able to observe and reflect upon interactions between and amongst the students and teachers. So for example, as is reported in chapter 5, two practicum students took the opportunity to observe and critique me as I worked with a year 10 drama class using *The Great Bear*.

On practicum pre-service teachers observe the teaching of process drama lessons, and with their mentor’s support design their own programs based on appropriate syllabuses and policy documents. The range of professional experiences in the Practicum, including playground duty, parent-teacher meetings, sport and excursions, allows a pre-service teacher to develop a greater awareness of the diversity of students in their classes. As they gain experience, they develop their professional craft knowledge, exploring the links between theory and practice, developing their personal teaching style and extending their professional understanding. They broaden their appreciation of the realities of schooling and of the roles of teachers within specific schools and communities. Their professional craft knowledge is developed and enhanced.

The following Chapters contain the six publications and their contextualising prefaces.
Chapter Two

The Nature of Process drama


Preface

This is the opening chapter in Teaching Drama 11-18, aimed at an international audience. I was the only Australian writer in this book. Teaching Drama 11-1 has been well reviewed in drama journals and is now used as a text by tertiary educators around the world. Writing for Drama Australia (NJ) McLean called it

“a stimulating and wide-ranging view of the possibilities of drama teaching’ that ‘will become essential reading for teachers wanting to stay involved with the ongoing complexities of why and how to teach drama in the information age.” (NJ 2000 vol 24, 2: 114-117).

My chapter was commissioned by the editor, Dr Helen Nicholson. First in the book, it uses Australian praxis to exemplify the teaching of process drama in junior years. It explores the place of role and story in process drama and shows how a teacher balances the use of activities that were planned for and dealing with the unexpected. It cites two examples of research - one from my own teaching, and one class taught by Victorian teacher Tiina Moore.

The Research

Moore’s work was part of a research project which I had instigated when I was Primary Projects Officer for the National Association for Drama In Education (see Appendix 3). One primary teacher from each Australian state devised and taught drama using the same starting point: Chris van Allsburg’s picture book The Mysteries of Harris Burdick. Each teacher documented his/her teaching, and the project as a whole showed different ways drama could be taught, depending on the context. The whole research project was published in the 1998 NADIE Research Monograph no 5, "Phoenix Texts", edited by Tiina Moore who led the project and also taught what I thought was the most interesting lesson.
My own Drama, ‘The Baby on the Train’, offered as model and potential "Live case" has been developed over time in schools and with tertiary students in Australia, Canada and the UK. It has been implemented by many other teachers around the world, most recently by students from the University of Reading, working with young offenders. (See Appendix 4)

“Walking in another Person's Shoes- storytelling and roleplaying” describes process drama and re-affirms some teaching techniques that I have always seen as important, such as scaffolding. It also introduces some of my new ways of thinking about drama. For example, this article primarily advocates facilitating the expression of student differences rather than teaching universals.
Teaching drama 11–18

Edited by Helen Nicholson
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Part One

Teaching Drama 11–14

 Processes of Learning

The first part of this book presents four different approaches to teaching drama in the 11–14 age range. It is not intended to offer a complete overview of a drama curriculum; on the contrary, the contributors to this part have selected particular aspects of their work to discuss rather than offering an entire pedagogical framework. However, taken as a whole, this part does raise some interesting questions about the kinds of learning that students undertake in drama: how do they progress from an integrated curriculum to a curriculum organized around discrete subjects? Where might drama be placed in the curriculum? What is the value of extra-curricular drama? How might we encourage students to work collaboratively? How should we assess their work?

All these questions are, of course, value laden and all have implications for the teaching of drama. As Jerome Bruner has pointed out, nothing is 'culture-free': this includes both drama teaching and, more broadly, the culture of education. However, rather than trying to find definitive answers to these difficult questions, the contributors have reflected on the different contexts in which they teach, shared their own dramatic interests and areas of expertise, and have taken account of the individual needs and experiences of their students. Furthermore, there is an acknowledgement that drama takes place in a range of educational contexts; Jennifer Simons and Shane Irwin specifically discuss ways of working in the drama curriculum, Denise Margetts applies her knowledge and understanding of the practice of drama to the English classroom, and Bryony Williamson describes and discusses processes of working in drama and theatre as an extra-curricular activity.

Jennifer Simons explores the relationship between drama, narrative, storytelling and role-play. Her work is particularly focused on the younger students in this age group, many of whom are at the point of transition from primary to secondary schools. She suggests ways in which we, as teachers, might build on their experiences of working in role in primary schools. In the early years of secondary education, she suggests, students are often supported when the
work is carefully structured and crafted by teachers who are able to slow down the action and thus encourage them to learn, think, and feel more deeply. Working in the context of an English classroom, Denise Margetts also finds ways to help her 14-year-old students reflect on their work by encouraging them to understand how meanings are made and represented in dramatic form. She asks students to slow down the process of working by capturing and framing dramatic moments using various forms of computer information technology such as video and digital cameras. Although the educational contexts are different, both processes stress the importance of collaborative working practices: drama requires students not only to share ideas and insights, but also to embody them.

The emphasis on the body in drama education is not exactly new, but it is newly recognized. It provides a bridge between verbal language, feeling and cognition; the physical is, as Denise Margetts points out, an important element of literacy which is often ignored. Shane Irwin, in his chapter on physical theatre, makes similar connections between language, movement and abstract thought. In pointing out that ‘an intellectual concept is often clarified by physical action’, he recognizes the importance of somatic learning and the inseparability between the mind and body in cognitive development. It is an aspect of learning which Bryony Williamson also explored when she combined the roles of teacher of drama and director of a play; she implicitly rejects the idea that performance is solely concerned with technical skills or entertainment, and offers many valuable insights into how performing plays offers creative and intellectual challenges to students as they learn how to interpret and realize a dramatic script.

THE PROVISIONALITY OF DRAMA AND FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

All the practitioners who have contributed to this part of the book raise questions about the dynamic, unfixed and provisional qualities of drama. Indeed, it is suggested that, in order for students to understand the processes of working in drama, they are aided when they have a conceptual understanding that all dramatic texts are always in some way ‘unfinished’ and open for reinterpretation. However, there is a potential tension between forms of assessment, in which criteria are necessarily predetermined, and the open-endedness of drama as a creative practice.

Jennifer Simons provides a helpful description of the significance of the relationship between formative and summative assessments. In linking student-centred and subject-centred approaches to teaching, she recognizes that teachers use their knowledge of both drama and of their students in assessment procedures. Assessment is really helpful only if it provides new information about individual students’ learning, when it clarifies the relationship between teaching and learning, and where it enables teachers to help students to progress. However, as Denise Margetts points out, a dramatic vocabulary helps students to evaluate their learning. It would appear that when assess-
ment criteria are explicitly framed in subject-specific terms, and communicated to the students, they learn to recognize how new or unexpected ideas were developed. Indeed, in his discussion of learning processes, Vygotsky uses specifically dramatic terms to point out that students who are motivated in their work, and understand why they are working in a particular way, are able to contribute appropriately and inventively to the work. In practice, this means that students are not assessed on their private values, beliefs or attitudes, but on their actual and visible contributions to the development and realization of the drama.

Throughout this part of the book, there is an awareness of how to encourage students to learn by balancing clearly identified objectives with well-defined assessment procedures. However, as the contributors also recognize, in the reality of classrooms there is sometimes a gap between the real and the ideal, between neatly invoked educational theories and day-to-day classroom practices. It is this gap, however, which is often inventive and productive, enabling students to work creatively for themselves.

NOTES
2 See, for example, how Vygotsky recognizes the importance of motivation in Vygotsky, L. (1962) Thought and Language (trans. E. Hanfmann and G. Vakar) (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp. 149-50.)
Chapter 1

Walking in Another Person’s Shoes: Storytelling and Role-play

Jennifer Simons

As Macbeth’s world collapses towards the end of Shakespeare’s play, he registers his utter despair by describing life as

a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.¹

This image is shocking partly because it simultaneously evokes and denies the belief that stories are told to make sense of life. Barbara Hardy called narrative ‘a primary act of mind transferred to art from life’. Bruner tempered this, but agreed that ‘no one questions that learning the subtleties of narrative is one of the prime routes to thinking about life’.²

Every culture has a history of oral stories and, contrary to Macbeth’s image, a traditional tale is usually told by a highly respected figure to teach important history, laws and customs. In the oldest living culture, Australian Aboriginal Dreaming, most clans tell stories related to the creation myth The Rainbow Serpent. From such stories, understood literally by children and metaphorically by the Elders, people learn how they should relate to each other and to the land. Stories are created when we survey people, places and events, selecting and connecting significant moments in such a way as to make sense out of otherwise chaotic experiences. Usually a story has an orientation, a complication and a resolution, though sometimes we are plunged in with little introduction, and not all complications are happily resolved. Sometimes the way that events are connected does not fit a pattern of logic we are used to (as in Magic Realism). Stories vary with the author’s culture and creativity.

Audiences are also active and creative when they apply stories to their own lives. Britton suggests that ‘we improvise upon our world representation . . . either to enrich it, to embroider it, to fill in its gaps and extend its frontiers, or to iron out its inconsistencies’.³ Because ultimately meaning is made at the level of reception, stories offer multiple meanings and one interpretation does
not rule out other possibilities. Sometimes, as in stories which assert the
dominant culture, it is only through finding and exploring gaps and inconsistences that students are able to see how the story relates to them, and drama is an effective way to do this.

In this chapter I shall explore some of the ways that storytelling and role-play can be used both to increase students’ understanding of themselves and their lives, and developing an aesthetic appreciation of the techniques themselves.

**Drama and Storytelling**

For the layperson, ‘drama’ and ‘story’ may seem interchangeable terms: indeed hearing a story and watching drama may seem to produce the same result. However, dramatists and storytellers construct their artworks differently and their audiences process them in different ways. For example, storytellers use words and voice to evoke a fictional world in the imagination of each listener, but dramatists present actual three-dimensional representations to a mass audience. Dramatists construct signs, simultaneously using multiple channels of communication, from which audiences deduce the story, much as they do in everyday life. In classroom drama if there is no external audience students may sign at a more intimate level of understanding, not attempting to communicate beyond the group itself. They work in complicated metaphors, engaging in *metaxis*, that is simultaneously in the fictional world and in reality. They manipulate time differently, focusing moment by moment on the present, and the narrative viewpoints that they adopt may shift as they create.

Role-play is a collaborative art form, and is most effective when it draws upon the cumulative experiences of the group, producing stories with which they all can engage. Teachers scaffold learning around the elements of the art form, such as finding a *focus* or theme; creating or playing with different forms of dramatic *tension*, and finding ways to create *symbol*. The defining element of role-play is *role* and deciding whose point of view is to be adopted is one of the crucial planning decisions. Morgan and Saxton usefully explain that students can choose from five different levels of role:

- *dramatic playing* (students are themselves in a fictional context)
- *mantle of the expert* (the students’ status is as ‘the ones who know’)
- *role-playing* (students sustain a point of view not necessarily their own)
- *characterization* (students adopt attributes of a specific person)
- *acting* (students adopt an external appearance, voice movement, etc. in order to create a role for an audience).²

Each level of role has its own appropriate place in the students’ arsenal of techniques for developing and presenting a story. Gavin Bolton has pointed out that students mix ‘modelling’ and ‘managing’ in role-play, sometimes duplicating behaviour they have seen, but at other times resolving emerging
dilemmas as they occur. Students gradually become more conscious of the role level they are using, and more able to manipulate role-playing to create their own collaborative stories.

Through the technique of teacher-in-role improvisational skills may be enhanced. Students are assisted to develop their roles when the teacher is inside the drama with them, modelling what it means to sustain belief, and judiciously using questions which inform the drama. In role, teachers may suggest possible actions, make offers and challenge thinking. For example, 'They told me that I'd find you people, the Volunteer Brigade, useful in preparing for bushfires. My farmhouse is isolated and a fair distance from the dam. There are water tanks on the roof, though. What should I do?'

SCAFFOLDING ROLE-PLAY TO CREATE OR EXPLORE STORIES

Making meanings from story has always meant connecting it with lived experience. In reading or listening these connections are usually made privately but drama students make their understandings public, risking rejection by the group. Because of this, role-playing may challenge self-esteem, so we teachers need to create a secure environment for students. In practice, we can help students move from the private world of stories to the public realm of role-playing by planning carefully. This involves three interrelated elements:

- the choice of stimulus or content of the role-play
- the dramatic structure of the role-play
- the implications of the students' roles.

Although role-play often looks as if it develops spontaneously, for it to work successfully the lesson needs to be carefully crafted. It is really only when we as teachers recognize the opportunities presented by the topic, anticipate the potential risks in the roles and define a structure for the drama that we set up conditions where collaborative creativity can occur.

The choice of stimulus may depend on the students' background knowledge of language or culture or stories. Information may need to be fed into the drama or students may like time to prepare by pooling ideas. If the topic contains difficult or disturbing material, the chosen stance may need to be a distanced one. In a story where a young person commits suicide, the students may be framed as archaeologists unearthing the bones, reflecting from a distance in time. It is also important that drama students have their real world strongly in place, and do not become lost in the fiction. An imaginary or symbolic knife works better for role-play than a real one.

The choice of topic often suggests how the lesson might be structured. Theatre audiences watch a story unfold moment by moment, deducing meaning from people in action. In the early years of secondary school it is usually the teacher who chooses and sets up these significant moments around which students create their drama. Students tend to focus on plot and rush into
action but teachers can slow the process with different techniques and structures. For example students can begin with a story’s ending, and work backwards, exploring why it happened or they can adopt role within role – students being Clark Kent being Superman – to deepen the exploration of meaning. Focus can be shifted from what happened to why or how it happened.

The initial steps of the lesson should lure or edge students into the drama world. They become imaginatively engaged, and are positioned to use their lived experiences in the role-play. One effective starting point is what Cecily O’Neill has called a pretext – a stimulus which implies a strong context and characters, and plants clues for the creation of an enticing drama world.6 As in life, students link the significant events and characters of their emerging fictional world in a meaningful way, making sense of events.

The choice of topic, the structure of the lesson and the techniques chosen all have implications for the roles that the students adopt. They may begin in different ways: from outside (for example with a still image) or from inside the character (for example after hot-seating). Students might consider the function, the status and the attitude of the role. Sometimes in issues-based drama the role function is enough: the ‘Bulldozer Man’ is of interest only because he threatens the trees that the ‘greenies’ are trying to save. Knowing the status of the role will affect the way others relate – the vocabulary and tone of voice adopted. The role’s attitude or emotional stance may help create mood. Sometimes the real intentions are revealed only through subtext, presented through body stance or tone of voice.

These three aspects of role-play (the chosen pretext or topic, the techniques and structure, and the development of role) all require teachers and students to work together with craft and skill. They engage with other roles by making them offers of action – statements with embedded cues for action that the others can either accept or reject. It is important that these offers are not negatively blocked with a denial of the fiction. In response to the offer, ‘Is it hard to be an only child?’ a good reply could be, ‘Oh, I’m not an only child but we don’t talk much about my sister’ rather than the blocking response, ‘I’m not!’ Groups of students can be given a few moments to prepare or sketch out what they will do, or they can be sprung into immediate improvisation. In both cases, they have to draw upon their experiences and understandings of the real world in order to create the fictional one.

The next section of this chapter will explore two examples of drama classes where teachers and students worked together to explore the boundaries between lived experience and fiction, role and narration, role-play and storytelling.

STRUCTURED LEARNING AND FLEXIBLE NARRATIVES USING A PICTURE AS PRETEXT

In 1996 as part of the NADIE Phoenix Project in Australia, Tiina Moore used as her pretext a picture chosen by her students from several alternatives that she offered them.7 This picture shows a girl in shadows, lying in bed. Her arm
has dropped from holding a book, out of which a vine is growing. The picture is subtitled, ‘MR. LINDEN’S LIBRARY’ He had warned her about the book. Now it was too late’. From this starting point her class built an original story in their chosen genre (the supernatural), based on one student’s suggestion that ‘Tess’ (as they named the character in the bed) had somehow entered the book. In order to develop the story, the class drew upon their knowledge of pop culture, using jargon from _The X Files_, describing Tess as in a state of ‘forever sleep’. As teacher-in-role Moore facilitated them into expert roles: doctors trying to suspend their scientific disbelief in the paranormal and bring Tess back to life and out of the book.

As in all good teaching, the drama evolved within a structure set in place by the teacher, but filled out in unexpected ways by the students. Moore describes her intentions for the lessons:

> My own practice is rooted in drama for literacy whereby narrative becomes the basis for speculation about story outcomes and for embedding drama skills and structures. Form and content are intertwined in improvisational work in order that children first have something to say and secondly have choices as to how best to say it . . . I wanted every student to feel he/she had an investment in the story and I wanted the experience to be a strong and memorable end to their primary years. I foresaw a synthesising of many learned drama structures and forms within what I hoped would be a good story.

Reflecting on the lesson, Moore describes the behaviour of some students at the beginning of the lesson as an ‘unexpected gift’ that set the tone for the lesson. Moore’s plan included specific resources, but allowed for flexibility; she duplicated the picture on the overhead projector, and ‘just in case’, also provided a rostrum, white sheets, book and a trailing vine similar to those in the picture. Three girls entered the classroom before the teacher and, undirected, ‘with aesthetic attention to detail . . . proceeded to give an almost ritualistic quality in the setting up of the bedroom scene’. They re-created the image, and then one of the girls climbed into the bed, taking on the role of Tess.

> The fact that we had a main character, a strong focus for our discussion as doctors, and a serious attitude to the story which was not imposed by the teacher, meant that we could enter straight into the positive tensions of the situations rather than the sometimes tedious detail of setting up. It is perhaps embarrassing to admit, therefore, that although our story moved forward I am not convinced that we again equalled the lovely awe of those first minutes of class.

Moore’s ‘embarrassment’ is merely a recognition that in drama lessons students often achieve beyond the teacher’s expectation; good scaffolding allows them to enter what Vygotsky called the _zone of proximal development_.

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8. Moore's original text.

9. Moore's original text.
Walking in Another Person's Shoes

To help the class create their story, Moore used a range of drama strategies such as mantle of the expert, chant, thought tracking, hot-seating and writing in role. She had planned to use still images to express some of Tess's adventures when she was inside the book but acceded to the students' request for a less controlled technique, and allowed them to choose their own means of dramatic expression. Kate Donelan, present in the class as an observer, comments on Moore's reflection-in-action decision to alter her plans.

Watching the purposeful and joyous group work proceed simultaneously way beyond Tiina's initial time constraint, it occurs to me that her judgement is absolutely sound. These students need this extended time; although the room is noisy and seemingly unfocused the group process is engaging most of these students in quite complex and demanding problem solving. Up to this point the lesson tasks have required controlled reflection, watching, listening and restricted language responses. This group task has now released them ... They are manipulating dramatic elements to express what has intrigued them in this unfolding narrative. They seem to need this phase of exploring their sense of the possibilities of 'dual worlds' before they can focus again as a class on the unconscious side of Tess in order to bring her back to the 'real world'.

In the course of their role-play the students created a highly complex dramatic story. The group with whom Moore worked were at the end of primary school and, in terms of continuity and progression, her work provides a suitable model for drama which might be developed with students in the early years of secondary education.

CREATING A ROLE-PLAY FROM GAPS IN A REAL STORY

One useful source of real-life pretexts which allows for role distance is to be found in 'squibs', the little fillers in newspapers which give the dry bones of a story which will be given more fully in the next day's paper. It is best to find reasonably ambiguous stories, where gaps are present or possible, and which has the potential to link with the students' experience. One that I have used is 'The Baby on the Train', which taps into the fact that most Sydney students come to school by train.

On Friday 20th August at 5.30 p.m. a group of school children found an eighteen-month-old baby, apparently abandoned on the train between Maintown and Greystanes. The baby was in good health, apparently well cared for. They took the baby to the stationmaster, who handed it to the police.

Using this fragment the class explores the text and creates an original story. This topic is as old as Oedipus and as metaphoric as a fairytale – the myth of the abandoned child. What makes this pretext palatable for use with young
students is the possibility of a happy ending and the (perhaps strange) fact that it is the children, not adults, who save the baby. Although the work needs to be adapted according to context, here is an outline of the planning of a unit of work that I have used several times with different classes and with different results.

**Step 1** The *teacher-in-role*, as a representative of the Transport Ministry, conducts a ‘Trains Summit’ inquiry into problems encountered by city commuters. The students can choose roles related to train travel, such as guards, passengers, station officials. In the course of the summit the teacher elicits a real description of peak-hour trains from several points of view. Who is likely to be on board? Which groups of children might be on an evening peak-hour train? How safe is it?

**Step 2** Out of role the class is asked to negotiate the *arrangement of the space*, moving chairs to construct a peak-hour train. Students position themselves as someone on that train. Each is invited to step momentarily out of the picture and view the total *frozen image*. Then the teacher ‘*taps in*’ to hear the thoughts of each person on this peak-hour train.

**Step 3** The students are asked to come *out of role*. The teacher reads the squib, and the pretext is launched: this is the train; this is where the baby was found. What questions occur to you? What are the gaps in this story? Their questions are written on the blackboard and remain there throughout the drama.

**Step 4** In groups of four the students are asked to *prepare role-plays* set back in time one year, when the baby was 6 months old. Each group can decide its own family circumstances but they are given a built-in *tension* – to choose a moment which is happy but which contains the seeds of a future problem. The baby is to be present in each role-play as a bundle in a blanket. Each group shares its presentation; the spectators are asked to identify the seeds of the future problem buried in each role-play.

**Step 5** It is six months later; the problem has escalated and the baby is a year old. Each group is to decide who would now be the chief carer of their child and one person in each group is to enact this carer. The representatives of each group are simultaneously *hot-seated* as a panel on a TV show hosted by the teacher-in-role, discussing childcare, its joys and difficulties. They may choose to talk about their difficulties or reveal them in subtext.

**Step 6** One of these stories is pursued as a *gestalt*. Each group now takes on roles related to the chosen baby, and each is allotted a particular time to explore on the day on which the baby was lost. (There is no need to make these flow as a connected story; they could be thought of as rumours.) Students prepare and present in chronological order, and several possible explanations emerge. The class decides on one story – perhaps the most interesting or most likely version.

**Step 7** Half the class *sculpts* a volunteer as the central character in the baby’s life. The other half become people in the story who helped, or made life more difficult. They are placed in the space, relative to their impact on
the central character. Symbolic props can be added (e.g. a stool to elevate the social climber; a school bag for the weighed-down student). The image is animated, with sound-effects or single words. The groups swap places, mirroring and repeating the image, so both halves see the picture from the outside. Students then reflect out of role on the process.

I have taught this unit to students at many different levels. The sculptured image, where the social forces on the carer of the child were represented, always emerged as a powerful symbolic representation, summarizing the understandings of the group as each symbolic character is placed.

ASSESSMENT

An important part of lesson planning is to match planned outcomes with suitable evaluation techniques. In drama this is problematic as the content of the lesson often deviates from the plan because of spontaneous input from the students and on-the-spot changes in direction by the teacher. Therefore the planned assessment tasks need to be fairly flexible. What the teacher assesses may be skills such as the ability to sustain a role, or to manipulate an element of drama, such as mood or tension. Group processes or the ability to connect with an outside audience may have been important objectives.

Assessment can be formative, used to determine how the learning is progressing, and what the next lesson should be, or summative, measuring the intended learning at the end point. The type of assessment that a teacher uses partly depends on the planned outcomes. Bill Spady describes three kinds of outcomes: technical, transitional and transformational, which vary according to differing time frames. Technical outcomes pursue immediately observable changes in learning. With transitional outcomes change becomes observable after a longer time, perhaps the end of a unit of work. Transformational outcomes seek to bring about new understandings; they are the "bigger picture" outcomes. For example, what do you really hope the students in your class will achieve by being in your class? What do you want them to take with them at the end of the year? (11)

An important assessment tool is the teacher’s observation of the class. Using Eisner’s concept of the connoisseur, John Thompson has argued that experienced teachers can use this tool effectively because of their professional knowledge of drama and of their students. (12) Sometimes teachers feel insecure about using such apparently ‘intuitive’ appraisal, but as Ben Shahn observed:

intuition in art is actually the result of prolonged tuition. The so-called innocent eye does not exist. The eye at birth cannot perceive at all, and it is only through training that it learns to recognise what it sees. (13)

In the first unit of work – the story of Tess – Moore’s description of her intentions indicates that she was pursuing transitional and transformational
outcomes, difficult to evaluate at the time of the lesson. Because she was researching the whole teaching-learning process for the Phoenix Project, Moore had more potential sources of assessment than is usual in teaching. She kept video records, an oral taping of the class, and reflective notes on her own practice. She observed the students and also had an outside observer. The students’ written work was also a means by which to assess. They reflected in journals, and wrote in and out of role. As is the case with many drama lessons, the pressure of time meant that Moore had to end more abruptly than she wished. As a final task she asked students to write in role addressing the story’s ending and was pleasantly surprised by the responses.

In several instances students who were very self-conscious and seemingly minimally involved . . . had written poignantly in role. It is always worth checking shifts in understanding in more ways than simply through teacher observation. Insights often come out of discussions . . . allotted significance by the luxury of time. 14

In the second unit, ‘The Baby on the Train’, although my original intention had been to explore the failure of the adults to save the baby, generally the students were more interested in the circumstances of the baby’s life. The assessment therefore needed to be adjusted to the reality of the class. Rather than rigidly adhering to the planned task (writing in role as one of the adults on the train) this was adapted to writing an explanation to the grown-up baby of why he or she was taken into care. Students also rewrote the squib as a full media story including the created details. Students could be assessed (by teacher observation) for their contribution to the group processes leading to the performance. Prior to each lesson the teacher could note pertinent criteria for summative assessment, such as ‘offered ideas to the group’ or ‘accepted and built on ideas’ or ‘fulfilled one of the group tasks, e.g. kept notes on the group work’, and place individuals under these criteria. Individual students can be tracked over several lessons, with appropriate intervention to make sure that the students are developing well.

IN CONCLUSION: WALKING IN ANOTHER PERSON’S SHOES

Storytelling and role-playing are basic skills in drama, and probably form the strongest bridge between the teaching and learning of drama in primary school and secondary education. Through constructing collaborative stories, especially when expressed through role-play, students are able to develop meaning-making skills as they create original artworks.

Tiina Moore, reflecting on the ways that each teacher across Australia in the Phoenix Project had used role-play to create drama stories, comments:

as in the teaching of story writing, there will be times that the emphasis may shift to style or grammar rather than topic but when form and content are effectively married, both are strengthened. The teacher’s particular
emphasis will be determined by the children’s needs, administrative agendas, his or her own educational philosophy, skills and timetables.15

Stories can connect us in metaphor to people around the world, in the past and in the future, helping us to explore what it means to be human. It is in respecting difference as well as finding similarities that humanity can develop its full potential. In becoming aware of perspectives left out or submerged by a story students may be taught to question the taken for granted. Because drama uses specific contexts as well as common themes, students are able to reflect on their own position in a range of possibilities, and become aware of the values embedded in particular constructions of events. Trying these out in role-play takes students a good way along the road to walking in another person’s shoes, aware of the affective dimensions of the learning.

NOTES
1 Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act 5, sc. v, lines 26–8.
Article 2 published as:

Preface
This chapter was commissioned as part of a book primarily designed to support teachers implementing the drama section of the newly launched Creative Arts K-6 syllabus in NSW. I was very familiar with the Syllabus, having been part of the Board of Studies consultative committee. I had run several in-service sessions with teachers and had written Beyond the Script: Drama in the classroom (Cusworth & Simons: 1995) largely with this syllabus in mind. I had also contributed to two resources for teachers published by the NSW Department of Education in support of the new syllabus: a video script (Navigating Drama K-6 written with Robyn Ewing) and a CD Rom (See Appendix 5).

The Research
After discussing their intentions for this book with editors Mooney and Nicholls I decided to begin my chapter with an example of my own praxis - a model developed by teaching several groups of year 6 students in NSW primary schools, and refined with feedback from my tertiary student observers. This article gives an example of how a process drama teacher can link separate scenes in an organic manner, generating a script which students can choose to perform. The theory in the chapter gives the reader an analysis of process drama, and my practice is described in sufficient detail to be re-enacted as a model; it could be a starting point from which a novice teacher could begin to build his/her own professional craft knowledge. The title of my chapter focuses the readers’ attention on the fact that process drama (seen here as the first stage of playbuilding) should be more than isolated or random sketches.
Playbuilding: more than the sum of its parts

Jennifer Simons

Jennifer Simons is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney, where she works with both graduate and undergraduate students preparing to teach drama in schools. She has been a keynote speaker at several international drama conferences and has published widely both in Australia and overseas. She has worked with drama teachers in most Australian states, as well as in several countries overseas.

This chapter outlines the process of playbuilding by describing in detail a drama set in a shopping centre. It is a step-by-step guide on how to set up and introduce the form of playbuilding using process drama to structure the drama learning experiences. The action is devised by the students and structured by the teacher as facilitator. Students adopt roles, negotiate the dramatic action, refine their improvisation, structure and rehearse scenes. As a model, this shopping centre drama engages the students in many forms of drama in developing the action. These forms, such as storytelling and improvisation, are discussed in detail in other chapters of this book.

Playbuilding involves the sustained exploration of ideas or images through the combination of several drama forms, such as improvisation or the other forms already described in this book. In playbuilding students collaborate in and out of role to create and critically reflect upon a fictional world. They explore different aspects of their chosen theme in drama sessions that continue over a period of several days, perhaps even weeks. All three arts processes (making, performing and appreciating) may be used in playbuilding. Sometimes the students simply create understanding for themselves like actors in rehearsal; they are at once the actors and the audience, and the process rather than the product is what is important. At other times their intention is to share their ideas with an outside audience, so they concentrate on communicating their understanding. Then playbuilding becomes more than the sum of its parts, as the students work to help an audience make meaning from the assembled drama forms.

Playbuilding for an audience is like constructing a jigsaw
puzzle. Each individual piece has its own particular shape, colour and feature. Ultimately, however, to make a picture you need to decide where each piece best fits: at the top, as part of the sky? Perhaps down at the bottom, in the sea, or in the middle of the puzzle, as part of a child’s shirt? In order to create a play for an outside audience the class has to decide which bits from their original process drama to choose, and how to put them together to make the play meaningful. Should it begin with a narration, or a mime? Might the improvisation piece work best at the beginning, middle or end of the play?

**Imagined situation**

Let’s imagine a visitor new to drama education happening upon a playbuilding class. The conversation might sound like this:

**Visitor:** What’s happening? Am I in the wrong room? I thought you were teaching them drama! There are kids sprawled on the floor, talking animatedly in small groups and drawing on big pieces of butcher’s paper. They aren’t even moving, and I can’t see any scripts.

**Ms A (The Teacher):** It’s process drama.

**Visitor:** But they’re not acting; they’re not on a stage?

**Ms A:** We’re playbuilding - making up bits of drama that we’ll put together as a whole play. Later on we might perform it. We haven’t decided yet whether we want to. What the kids are doing at the moment is constructing a pre-text.

**Visitor:** A what?

**Ms. A:** A pre-text. The stimulus that starts the drama. They’re collaborating to create a map, and I’m going to use it to launch an imaginary world and then we’ll take on roles ... You’ve missed the first part.

Let’s go back a little. This class is year five (10-11 year olds). Every one of the twenty-five students wants to be in a play, and they don’t want a script with a star character, four speaking parts and twenty trees and flowers! So, with their teacher, Ms A, they’re going to make an original play, creating their own roles and exploring things they know and care about in their own district.
This particular piece of playbuilding began with a whole-class discussion of shopping, something all the students have experienced, even recent immigrants. The lesson began with Ms A asking the class to describe the most interesting features in their local indoor shopping mall. Near the school there are two actual shopping centres, and different things appealed to different students. All of the suggestions were written on the board: a stage where actors and singers perform; a central water feature, with fountains and gold fish; an international eating area where you can buy all sorts of food; a big sweeping walkway that comes down from the carpark, but where skateboards are forbidden; a large supermarket; lots of specialist shops, and so on.

Next, in groups of six, the students created maps of several imaginary shopping centres, including their ideal shops and attractions and naming their own centre (for example "Shopping Planet"). This is what the students were doing when the visitor came into the room: they were lying on the floor, talking, negotiating and drawing, all the time developing an enthusiasm for and commitment to this drama idea. They were combining their own lived experiences, the group descriptions on the board, and imagination. This takes time and space, and the teacher had planned for both.

In the next step students created a single shopping centre map by choosing one feature from each small group map, considering its potential for drama. The students circulated around the room examining the butcher's paper drawings: one member of each group remained with the map to answer questions and explain the ideas. Finally the teacher brought the class back together in a focus circle. This structure allows each person to be seen and heard, facilitates an equal status, and helps the group to concentrate on the issue at hand. Ms A assisted the whole class to compile on the board the final group map of a place they called 'Plaza of the Twenty-first Century World' ("PTC World" for short). With the teacher's help the class then brought PTC to life through playbuilding. The map remained on the board during the lessons, which were held in a small assembly hall away from the main body of the school.
The teacher's choice of this space eliminated the problem of noise disturbing other classes as the group worked spontaneously on their play.

**The “Shopping Plaza” model**

The following model describes the steps in the teacher's planning and implementation of her ‘shopping’ drama. Her classes were spread over a week; at the beginning of each session some time was taken to recall what had happened the day before. The model can be adapted to suit different contexts, different grades and different levels of experience. It makes use of several elements of drama (such as tension and symbol) as well as a variety of drama forms (such as improvisation). The model could be expanded to incorporate other forms, such as puppetry or perhaps a readers’ theatre segment, and other drama teaching techniques could be used, such as side-coaching where the teacher stands outside the drama, feeding in ideas.

**Starting out**

Each student adopts the stance of a person who might be inside the plaza on its opening day, choosing from suggestions compiled on the board. Whilst they ‘role-walk’ around the room, perhaps to music, each decides why that person is at PTC, and how he/she feels about this opening day. They stop on a sound signal from the teacher, and in role introduce themselves to other characters nearby, sharing gossip they have ‘heard’ about this day, for example, that Kylie Minogue may be coming! After a few moments, the class comes back together in the focus circle, where they meet to reflect and discuss.

**Teacher-in-role**

The teacher explains that she is going to take on the role of a public relations officer, hired by PTC to create a good news story for the local media. She will put on a pair of spectacles and wear them when she is in role. The teacher then enters the drama as the PR officer, and in role begins questioning the shoppers using prompts to elicit specific details. Are there shop owners here? Which shops? Are there shoppers here? Who else
is present? Perhaps security guards? Entertainers? What gossip did they hear? What good things happened? They are told that the happiest experiences will be broadcast on the local TV station. The teacher removes her spectacles when she steps out of role.

**Improvising**

In small groups the students prepare improvisations of happy events on the opening day. These will be used by the PR company to advertise PTC to the local community - eg someone could be buying the first lottery ticket sold at the newsagency. If there is an appropriate song, (eg by the entertainers) this could become a scene. Each group rehearses and presents an improvisation lasting no more than one minute.

**Extending**

An extension of the drama might be to give the groups time to produce a video of these happy events. They could view and critique the video-tape as examples of screen drama. They could also establish a website for PTC, using these video vignettes.

**Discussing in focus circle**

Back in the focus circle the teacher leads the class in a discussion. What if everything did not go as planned on opening day? What could have gone wrong? Which particular characters would know about these problems? Who could be questioned about them? (for example, security chief, a lost child, an older woman who found it difficult to get around, an injured worker.) Volunteers are asked to take on these roles.

**Hot-seating**

A panel of characters is questioned in role about the least happy events on the opening day. This teaching-learning technique is sometimes called “hotseating”. The questioners ‘lead the witnesses’ (to appropriate the legal term) as they question them - that is, they make an offer that the characters can accept or reject. For example a leading question could be: ‘is it true that you caught a shoplifter on the surveillance camera in one of the shops?’ In improvisation this sort of question is preferable to the blunt question ‘What went wrong?’ which provides little support for students inexperienced in creating fictitious events.
The purpose of questions in hotseating is not to trip up the people in role, but to collaborate with them by making suggestions, helping them to create an interesting situation or character. The making of offers is very important in hotseating, and the teacher may have to spend some time getting the questioning technique right.

Using some information raised by the hotseating, students in small groups choose and develop depictions (still images) of serious problems at PTC, not shown on the 'happy' TV show. The problems should arise from the sort of business conducted in the shop, for example, the butcher cuts off his finger, the bank has a hold-up, the cafe owner spills a milk-shake on someone's good clothes, the dancer falls through a gap in the stage floor. After preparing their depictions, each group simply tells the class the name of their shop and then shares the image, requiring that the class read the body language to decide on the problem.

The teacher suggests they roleplay a meeting called by disgruntled shop owners and employees to discuss the serious problems of the opening day. She tells them she is changing to a new role: second in charge of PTC management. She puts on a colourful scarf to signal the change, and moves quickly in role into this scene.

Ms A: They tell me you want to talk to the manager. He's asked me to apologise; he has missed his flight, so he wants us to start the meeting without him. I believe some of you are upset?

The purpose of the meeting is to fix the problems, or perhaps cover them up. However, the teacher, as part of PTC management, gradually reveals through subtext that PTC is refusing responsibility. When talking to the 'shopowners' and 'employees' she refers vaguely to "your contracts", and implies that individual shop owners caused their own problems. The status that the teacher has adopted means she can be sympathetic, but she must refer them to 'the boss' or 'the
board' for a final decision, since she is only second-in-charge. There can be no simple solution, and probably no resolution to this drama. The students may have to make ethical choices in this session. They are pushed to defend their ideas and perhaps fight for justice. In role the teacher strongly challenges them to do so. The session is highly unpredictable in its direction, responses and developing tensions.

Reflecting

Finally, out-of-role the group returns to the focus circle in order to reflect on the drama. Students are invited to de-role by sharing their experiences inside the roles, and reflections of the interactions between other members of the group when they were in role. They are invited to write in role for different parts of the local newspaper, for example, front-page news, social columns, or the business pages. These reflections form part of the teacher's evaluation of the playbuilding together with observations and other forms of documentation.

The next section of this chapter will make some generalisations about playbuilding, referring to this shopping plaza model to give specific examples.

Teaching playbuilding

Playbuilding often begins as a piece of process drama, where students and their teacher co-investigate a topic by enacting roles and improvising actions in an imagined world. Process drama is highly ephemeral, and its focus is on pooling understandings that students bring to the drama from their various lived-experiences and imaginings. The teacher of process drama needs to be skilful at reflecting in action, able to use the particular knowledge and skills of the class. He/she "needs to recognize the opportunities presented by the topic, anticipate the potential risk in the roles and define a structure for the drama that sets up conditions where collaborative creativity can occur" (Simons 2000 p18).

There are several different stages in the playbuilding process, and in the latter stages the group may move from process to product. Playbuilding stages may involve selecting a theme to
explore, researching and reflecting on the topic, gathering resources, choosing settings and roles, improvising, selecting drama techniques (eg still images) and drama forms (eg mime), scriptwriting and performing. Scriptwriting can include scenes with dialogue or just scenario descriptions. In playbuilding students do more than take on acting roles: they share the functions of playwrights, designers, directors and choreographers.

Allocating the amount of time to teaching playbuilding is dependent upon each classroom context, similarly for the length of a session. One session could be allocated to each step of the shopping model, and some steps could be facilitated over a few sessions. Another option is to cover a couple of steps in the one session. Age and experience of the participating students is also a factor in timing a unit on playbuilding.

Choosing the topic

Playbuilding topics may come from any curriculum area. Drama is especially useful as a way of integrating the creative arts, or teaching across the curriculum. Dorothy Heathcote, the renowned British dramatist, typically began by asking students what they wanted to make a play about. However the next step in her teaching plan was to link the students’ ideas to more universal human traits. She asserted that “Learning to codify many ‘particulars’ which seem different and finding common universals so that the particular aspects of the materials used gain deeper significance for participants is essential” (cited in Johnson & O’Neill 1984, p35). So, for example whilst the students might consider a Heathcotic drama as about individuals having an adventure on a ship, the teacher’s planning will ensure that they also explore, at a symbolic level, some reasons why emigrants leave their homeland. As in all good plays, the specific topic of the drama (eg cheating a naive shopper) can be seen as a metaphor with a broader application to life (eg unethical dealing with less advantaged people). The teacher’s planning of this double layer will ensure that students engage in worthwhile learning.

The drama topic may emerge from a resource the teacher
happens upon, such as a particular exhibit in a museum. Alternatively the teacher may tap into a current craze. For example, issues from the Harry Potter books (such as helping a friend in trouble) may be explored, though it is better to use minor or parallel characters and missing scenes, rather than reproducing the details of the books or film. Drama teaching is about encouraging students to express their understandings, rather than merely duplicating what they see or read. It is important to find a context that makes room for creativity and original work.

Ms A chose shopping as her theme because it is basic to survival in city life and familiar to all of her students. Shopping is also a fun topic, one young children often play with. For Ms A it was a metaphor for important questions about life that she wanted her class to explore. Their specific explorations in the shopping Plaza drama applied more generally to questions such as: What might happen if you take risks with safety? What are some ways to demand your rights, yet negotiate so others are happy too? Such questions guided the selection of drama forms, and where the teacher placed them in the playbuilding structure. The context she used was shopping, but many of the drama experiences applied more broadly to other life situations.

Planning the lesson structure

Teachers approach Playbuilding by pre-planning some teaching and learning activities but they remain ready to replace those plans with ideas that the students bring to the action. According to Stenhouse "the nature of knowledge - as distinct from information- (is) that it is a structure to sustain creative thought and provide frameworks for judgement. Education as induction into knowledge is successful to the extent that it makes the behavioural outcomes of the student unpredictable" (Stenhouse 1975, p82). Drama planning is suited to what Stenhouse called a process model of curriculum: it focuses on managing the lesson activities and resources, rather than on trying to bring about a particular outcome. Whilst the teacher may start by anticipating outcomes, the particular outcomes may change as student input affects the direction of the drama. Moreover,
drama outcomes are often what Spady has called ‘transitional’ or ‘transformational’ outcomes (cited in Cusworth & Simons, 2000.) They may not be easily measured immediately after the session. The changes that they bring about in affective domain are long-term.

In planning for playbuilding the teacher needs to over-prepare, broadly anticipating a range of responses and supplying a wide range of objects and resources that might come in handy. Then when she intuits what the students are most interested in pursuing, and/or he/she senses that energy is high the teacher can choose a direction. So, for example, Ms A had anticipated exploring fame, focusing on hotseating a famous visitor to the PTC, but she abandoned this goal when she sensed that the students wanted to explore how emergency services might deal with a serious problem in safety provision at the shopping Plaza.

### Choosing a pre-text

Drama planning includes the teacher’s choice of a “pre-text”, a powerful teaching resource which will suggest characters, a context and an issue to be explored. According to Cecily O’Neill, who invented the term, the function of a pre-text is to “launch the dramatic world in such a way that the participants can identify their roles and responsibilities and begin to build the dramatic world together as rapidly as possible” (O’Neill 1995, p20). More than a simple stimulus, a pre-text “has a much more precise structural function than merely to propose an idea for dramatic exploration. The purpose of the pretext is to activate the weaving of the text of the drama” (O’Neill, 1995). Its power to motivate the students is an important characteristic of a pre-text. Not all are written texts or stories. For instance, the pre-text for this drama was the PTC map created by the class, rather than introduced as a fait accompli by the teacher. In Ms A’s drama, the students were initially lured into the dramatic world by the discussion, negotiation and drawing involved in designing the map.

### Choosing the roles

One great advantage of playbuilding is its ability to generate
interesting roles for every student in the class. Usually the students will explore several different roles during the playbuilding process. They should be able to choose a role they will enjoy (as Ms A’s class did in step 1, the role walk), and should be able to volunteer for more specific and demanding roles (as they did in the hotseating in step 5).

In planning her playbuilding Ms A chose to ease the students into the fictional PTC world with role-walking and gossipping. Students were unselfconscious because these teaching-learning techniques involved acting simultaneously with no-one watching, and no judgement of their acting.

As the exploration deepened over the next steps, Ms A supported the students from inside the fiction. As the PR officer improvising with them in steps 2 and 3 she helped them maintain focus by asking questions about the specifics of their roles, such as “How do you maintain security?”

Teaching-in-role is a good way to validate and support students’ ideas, using them as a driving force in the drama. As Vygotsky and Bruner have pointed out, scaffolding the work into manageable units, focusing attention on the important parts, and making effective use of more able peers in the group can develop the confidence and understanding of less able students (Simons, 1991). The teacher-in-role can facilitate this from various status levels, drawing out the students’ knowledge as she withholds her own. In her lowered status role in step 7 (as second-in-charge of Management) Ms A manipulated the tension by being apparently in sympathy, but opposing and blocking the group when she says:

Ms A: I agree with you that we need more security, but I don’t have the power to change it. I’ll have to ask Mr X first. I’ll get back to you, but it may take a while.

This stance forced them to rely on their own combined resources; they could not look to her for any practical help.

Of the teaching-learning techniques used in this playbuilding model, hotseating involved the most risk-taking for the students, because individuals were separated out and became the focus of
attention as they improvised. However, the students volunteered for these roles and the hotseating did not occur until step 5, after the students had developed more confidence and were steeped in the PTC drama world.

**Gathering resources**

The use of objects is important in drama. As in real life, objects accumulate meaning and grow in significance as they are used, and they can act as symbols in the drama. In Ms A’s drama the slow creation of the PTC map was important in establishing space as an element of drama. The map identified just what PTC looked like for the whole group, and so the spaces in the drama room could become places in the plaza map. Thus one section of the room was understood to represent the stage where the dancer fell; another corner became the butcher’s shop where his finger was cut off.

The way the group uses space is significant in drama. For example, setting a character physically apart from the others can make it clear that he/she has an important function. In step 5 of the model, setting five chairs at the front of the room established that the panel of disgruntled workers was to be the focus for the questioning in role. That is, they were in the hotseat, and their responses to the questions helped to develop the content of the drama.

Gavin Bolton has used the term ‘metaxis’ to refer to the ability to be simultaneously an actor and a detached observer. It is the double-knowing of metaxis that makes learning possible in improvised drama, because ‘what is submitted to passively is also actively construed and reflected upon’ (1984 p162). Sometimes the use of a symbolic item of clothing helps to strengthen the students’ double knowing by strongly signalling the dramatic fiction within the everyday world of the classroom. In Ms A’s drama, wearing the spectacles in step 2 made it clear when she was not speaking as the teacher, but was in role as the PR person trying to decide on suitable promotional material or scenes. In Step 5 the students in the hotseat wore symbolic items of costume (Fire chief’s helmet; butcher’s apron) to support their role-taking and to signal their changed status to
those asking questions of them.

Creating a play for performance

Not every process drama will go on to become a full-scale performance, but sometimes students agree to develop a script which they rehearse and perform for other people. The class could choose scenes and techniques that an audience will understand and enjoy and perhaps challenge them. Putting the scenes together is like piecing together a jigsaw puzzle. When the impact to be made on the audience is considered, the order of scenes in the performance will probably vary from the order in which they were developed in the process. Like actors in rehearsal, the students will know more about the characters than they will show to an audience. Not every part of the process drama will become part of the script.

The playbuilt scripts can range from simple dramatic outlines to detailed texts containing dialogue, action and information about set, lighting and costume. Music can be used to enhance the drama, for example signalling shifts in time, place and/or mood. The scenes in the script may not all contain dialogue: there can be movement sequences, and the students may integrate video clips with the live action in creating a mixed media piece. The final creation depends upon the particular students, the classroom context and the drama learning outcomes.

The playbuilt piece, 'Shopping', remained a piece of process drama, but could easily have been transformed into a script and presented at a school assembly, or perhaps developed further for a drama festival. However, if it were to move from process to product the content would need to be frozen, re-written and polished. For example, the content arising from step seven (where the teacher in role questions the shop owners) might be turned into a scene between different characters interacting in a different way; the role taken on by the teacher in the process would probably not appear in the scripted version at all. In Step 7 the head of security was questioned about the use of inadequate surveillance cameras. In a playbuilt script that information may be revealed in a scene where two security people discuss these inadequacies as they position the cameras
in the mall before the opening day, or by a "news" item presented on TV about a Dodgy security firm. Students writing scripts need to be taught the text-type. They can learn this by exploring play scripts written for young people realising how dialogue is set out on the page, and that a script includes such things as stage directions and setting.

Performing a playbuilt piece

The performance need not be highly polished. The students may simply share their play with another class, or present at an assembly. However, when students are going to perform they do need direction and the chance to rehearse. A significant difference between process drama and performance is that the latter is fixed, and the performers know what to expect and how to react. Students move from spontaneous improvisation to what Gavin Bolton calls "the repeatability" of performance. Performers rely on knowing what the other actors will do and say, though "the actors' artifice lies in making the event appear new to audiences night after night" (Bolton 1989 p 129).

Usually in primary schools the teacher directs the performance but, with the teacher's help, students may take on some of the director's roles. One function of the director is to anticipate the audience reaction; it is important to communicate, to evoke the required response from the audience. For that reason the work needs an outside eye, to view the performance as an audience member will. Even when the teacher is directing very young students, he/she can discuss with them how they want the audience to feel during different scenes, and what they might do to evoke that response. The students can help put the jigsaw pieces together. For instance they may consciously manipulate drama elements such as timing, mood and silence. A character who suspects that the guards at PTC are corrupt may show that he is perturbed by turning aside as the group discusses placing the surveillance cameras and hesitantly, silently, walking away from them.

Responding

Students involved in playbuilding increase their skills of
appreciation in several ways. In the early phases of the drama, students are simultaneously ‘participant’ and ‘percipient’: that is, they act and watch themselves acting at the same time. They develop an early form of the audience function, and are in fact their own audience.

As students move from process to product, scripting their drama for presentation to an outside audience, they make deliberate choices about the best way to present the material: about the most effective forms to choose. Initially, the teacher will strongly guide these choices, but will also assist the students to understand why the choices are made, and will also promote independent selection of drama forms. As students become more experienced at manipulating drama elements like tension and symbol, as they choose and assemble the most appropriate forms to communicate their ideas, they arguably increase their aesthetic learning.

Reflecting

Bolton suggests that reflecting is the most important part of learning in drama “for experience alone means nothing unless the participants reflect with integrity on what has happened in the drama” (1989 P 134). In playbuilding reflection can occur before, during and after the drama. It can take many forms: discussion, journal writing, artwork, in-role narratives and so on. It is usually important to spend some time after the drama in de-roleing young students, especially if they have been engaged in a fictional world for some time. Just getting students to put into words what it felt like when they were being a corrupt guard, or an incompetent waiter can help them underscore the differences between acting in the fiction and their actual world. Reflections can also be important to the teacher as sources for evaluating the learning.

Conclusion

In playbuilding teacher and students collaborate to create scenes which can be put together to create a drama world. If the student interest is high, playbuilding can last over several sessions. When students choose to present their play to an
outside audience, they do so with pride and commitment because it is their own creation. Playbuilding involves the bringing together of many different drama forms and teaching techniques, in such a way that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. Playbuilding is an exciting drama experience which contributes strongly to the development of collaborative creativity.

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Chapter Three

Knowing in Drama

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Preface

This article is collaboratively written but the genesis of the research is mine and I did most of the writing. The paper was developed from a presentation delivered in Kisumu in Kenya at the third IDEA conference. My collaborator, Peter Bateman had been a student of mine in Sydney many years earlier. We had kept contact during his teaching experiences in Jordan, Tanzania and Namibia and were both interested in how cultural difference impact upon teaching.

The Research

Peter Bateman is a senior lecturer at the University of Namibia in Africa, working cross-arts with trainee teachers at Windhoek, often living a long way from their tribal villages. My own students were completing a post-graduate degree at Sydney University, specialising in Drama, usually after majoring in Theatre and often after other careers such as acting. Peter Bateman and I were interested in the concept of collaboration, and our professional conversations showed that this seemingly ‘universal’ term had quite significant differences for teacher training in our different institutions. Over letters and emails, and meeting in Africa several weeks before the IDEA congress we compared and contrasted our work with our students. When originally presented in Kisumu our paper generated a lot of discussion, because we were asking questions about whether the group nature of Drama teaching altered the nature of the creative processes, and how understanding these processes could help teachers develop their craft knowledge. As a result of this presentation Christine Comans, the editor of Drama Australia (NJ) requested that we publish our work for wider dissemination of our findings. After further collaborative exchanges, this refereed journal article is the result. This paper focuses on how students develop knowledge in the Arts. It combines our exploration of theories to do with creativity,
combined with our different praxis related to working with groups in our different cultural contexts
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DEVELOPING
“COLLABORATIVE CREATIVITY”

Jennifer Simons and Peter Bateman
Sydney Namibia

This paper has developed from the initial presentation at the IDEA conference in Kisumu, Kenya in 1998.

Abstract
The teaching of Drama/Theatre is partly concerned with the development of creativity and, since ours is a collaborative artform, this really requires the development of a special state which we have called 'collaborative creativity'. Because we work in quite different cultural contexts, this concept can, at times, have quite different implications for how we work with our students. This paper sets out to explore the concept and its implication for our work with pre-service teachers.

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Keywords: COLLABORATION; CREATIVE PROCESS; CULTURAL CONTEXTS;
PRESERVICE EDUCATION

Most research acknowledges that it is difficult to arrive at a general definition of creativity and that it is usually only recognisable as a product, that is, after the fact. Nevertheless, teachers wanting to bring out the best in their students are particularly interested in identifying the processes of creativity and one useful line of research has been to investigate the processes of individuals identifiable as 'genius'. What is it that people like Einstein or Tchaikovsky do as they create? Recently theorists such as Csikszentmihalyi (1998:41) have rejected the elevation of the individual genius.

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arguing that creativity should be seen as part of a social system because recognition by others of the importance of a creation is the only real indicator we have of creativity. He argues that a crucial part of the creative process is persuading others that the new creation is important, and that therefore status or access to the domain or interpersonal skills are important traits. Many 'creations' of unimportant people have probably gone unrecognised because they do not have access to the relevant authorities.

Recently, through awards such as the Nobel Prize, new attention has been focussed on the creativity of groups — people working together in teams to invent or develop significant contributions to fields as different as Astrophysics and Film. Usually the teams themselves acknowledge the importance of each person in the group; it is common at Academy awards, for instance, to hear Oscar-winning actors recognise the contributions of collaborators (such as the writer or director) to their success. It may be that collaborative creativity depends upon interpersonal skills operating right through the process, not just at the end point as has been identified for individuals. At least one of the collaborative creators seems to be able to facilitate the ability to build upon other people's ideas. This understanding has underpinned our work in our separate countries.

In Australia, Jennifer Simons works with students enrolled in the Master of Teaching program, preparing to become drama specialist teachers in secondary schools. This Master's course centres around enquiry-based learning, using cases commissioned from teachers in the field. The cases involve difficult professional decisions and actual scenarios from the schools, and student questions arising from these cases become the basis of collaborative research. The whole Master of Teaching program seeks to promote collaborative learning in the prospective teachers as well as developing them as facilitators of collaborative learning in their school students. The curriculum part of the program particularly addresses the 'group project' — a section of the HSC syllabus in NSW where each student learns to collaborate with a group to devise and perform in a piece of original theatre. They are assessed by itinerant external examiners. The teacher is expressly instructed not to direct, but rather to facilitate the creative process.

In Namibia in Africa, Peter Bateman is preparing teachers to use an adaptation to the classroom of the concept Ngoma. In the African cultural context, Ngoma is more than the western concept of integrated arts — the connections between music, dance and drama are more subtle, are deeply rooted in the cultural identity of individuals and groups and have profound meaning.

Peter Bateman had been chairperson of the curriculum panel for the performing arts for the National Institute for Education and Development (NIED) in Namibia. In this capacity he was involved in the reconstruction of the curriculum in the context of the changes in Namibia following independence in 1991. Ironically, the earlier displacement of autochthonous (meaning 'indigenous') arts education by the imposition of a western education system had resulted in the exclusion from many African schools of education in the Arts (they were not seen as important) at exactly the same time as the Arts were gaining increased recognition in the West. During the

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eighteen months of its meeting up to 1998 the curriculum panel at NIED devised an integrated performing arts curriculum based on Ngoma. The new syllabus made clear the distinction between the real experience of Ngoma and the classroom integrated arts, nevertheless suggesting that some aspects of Ngoma could be adapted — for example:

- including the whole community in an active arts experience;
- providing a secure environment for learning skills over time; and
- developing knowledge of the self and others at a spiritual / values level.

Collaboration in the African context, then, involves a much broader group of people, a deeper, more spiritual approach and, in attempting to relocate arts education within both Namibian culture and a postcolonial education system, is generally a more difficult task than its western counterpart.

Each of us has a different slant on collaborative creativity. For Simons, the task is primarily assisting teachers to facilitate the creative processes of groups working in Drama and, perhaps, also using other art forms. For Bateman, the focus is upon ways of integrating the arts with an awareness of the wider community and, within the framework of Ngoma, realising that:

... morality is a strong sense of connection, that it is built in, as are the connections themselves, and that moral imagination may be awakened as the sense of wholeness is awakened. Our moral eye is the organ which understands connections between things, understands consequences, and attempts to maintain its commitment to the life of nature and humanity. (Richards, 1996)

It is important to recognise why collaboration is becoming more important as we move into the next century. Since the information explosion and the rapid pace of change, an important concept for understanding how we develop knowledge is what Bruner (1996) calls 'distributed intelligence' — what any individual 'knows' is stored not just in his / her own mind but in social habits, computers, books, other people’s memories and so on. Retrieval and development of knowledge then may depend upon interpersonal skills. Howard Gardner (1996) sees these as one of his (now) eight intelligences; he describes interpersonal skills as the ability to understand, act on and shape other people's feelings and attitudes. Keeping in mind these two concepts — distributed intelligence and interpersonal skills — the question needs to be asked: in what ways are group creative processes different from the processes commonly employed by creative individuals?

Some theorists, such as Sharon Bailin, dispute that there is a common creative process, but we feel that there is sufficient commonality derived from the processes of creative individuals for it to act as a practical guide for teachers to use in the classroom. We both believe that models, adapted in the field by the reflective practitioner, are useful devices for teacher training. The most basic description of a creative process model is probably that given by Bertrand Russell. He said he was unable to describe his process other than that he "simply filled up with relevant information, went about his business doing other things and, later, with time and good
luck, he found that the work had been done' (cited in Gilhooley, 1996:218). Tchaikovsky elaborated a little more metacognitively on his processes:

... generally speaking, the germ of a future composition comes suddenly and unexpectedly. If the soil is ready — that is to say, if the disposition to work is there — it takes force with extraordinary force and rapidity. Directly a new idea awakens in me and begins to assume a definite form, I forget everything and behave like a madman. Everything within me starts pulsing and quivering; hardly have I begun a sketch ere one thought follows another. (cited in Vernon, 1970:57-60)

Many researchers have identified the importance of motivation (the 'disposition to work') and disequilibrium ('pulsing and quivering thoughts'). Stein (1971) believes creative people have a capacity to tolerate ambiguity — Schiller called it a 'momentary and passing madness'. Perkins (1990:419-20) believes that creative people are strongly motivated, wanting to solve a problem, bringing conflicting thoughts into a new synthesis.

Of the final phase in the process (Russell merely said 'the work had been done'), Tchaikovsky further elaborated: 'what has been set down in a moment of ardour must now be critically examined, improved, extended or condensed ... one can mercilessly erase things thought out with love and enthusiasm' (Vernon, 1970:57-60). Linus Pauling, twice winner of the Nobel prize, when asked how he had initiated so many epochal discoveries said, 'It's easy ... you think of a lot of ideas and throw away the bad ones' (cited in Csikszentmihalyi, 1998:60).

Albert Einstein also saw a division between the intuitive and rational parts of the creative process. When creating his theory of relativity, Einstein described an initial feeling of direction, of going straight towards something concrete. He experienced this feeling state earlier than, and separate from, a final cognitive phase of logic and systematisation as he strove to make his theory more accessible to others. Convincing the 'gatekeepers', as Csikszentmihalyi calls the community of scholars he needed to persuade, was important to the recognition of his genius.

As early as 1926, Wallas named four stages in the creative process; these fit neatly with the reflections of creative geniuses, and our own observations are that they still hold true as a broad brushstroke description of our students' work. It is important to note that Wallas saw these phases as overlapping — the process is not linear.

1. **Preparation.**
   This involves conscious, systematic work – reading, researching, observing; generally, building up the field.

2. **Incubation.**
   There is perhaps no conscious work – it may be experienced as a rest period or playing around with ideas. There is fluency, flexibility and divergent thinking.

3. **Illumination.**
   The general direction is felt; the 'happy idea' occurs. It is experienced as a feeling that the solution is nigh, but that distractions need to be cut out.
4. **Verification.**

This is similar to the first phase — conscious, rational work is done to develop and test the inspiration, which is then shared with a wider community.

When these phases are applied to groups working together, similar processes seem to be at work. However, group cohesion and how the group tasks are distributed can add to the complexity of the processes.

**1. Preparation**

The ability to create partly depends upon the 'cultural capital' available to the person. In the case of creative geniuses, what they already had was enormous expertise, access to the domain and intrinsic motivation to avail themselves of what was available. Two highly important traits of creative people are discovery orientation and divergent thinking — they can find or frame questions, and organise ideas in a fluent or flexible way. For groups of students, these features may need to be cultivated. In drama classes, teachers facilitate the building up of cultural capital by 'informing the drama' through techniques like teacher-in-role or brainstorming or parallel improvisation. They establish topics that the group is motivated to explore and gather stimuli (maps, pictures, information) that could be used as a pretext to launch a fictional world. Students can be taught to reflect metacognitively, becoming aware of their own processes and those of their fellow students; they must learn to seek and value what is available to them in 'distributed knowledge'.

The Namibian students have a similar starting point but, for working within Ngoma, building up the data base also means drawing from the wider community — consulting, seeking permission, guidance and advice from elders for shaping the teaching and learning experiences. In some instances, this involves travelling long distances back to the village. Some African educationalists would go so far as to say that this knowledge is stored in the collective consciousness of a community and, as such, the students need to tap into this part of themselves during this initial phase.

**2. Incubation**

This phase is the least tested quantitatively by research because it is not really accessible to an outside observer. However, its existence is strongly affirmed by the reflections of many creative people. In collaborative creativity the group has loosened its concern with outcome; time is given for minds to operate unrestrictedly. To use Bateman’s metaphoric explanation to his Namibian students, the mind is flipping through ideas filed in its filing cabinet. In fact, working with metaphors is a good technique for this stage. It is important not to censor ideas. Even seemingly irrelevant concepts can be played with; students often find ‘happy accidents’. For example, one group of Sydney students, exploring the concept ‘sacred spaces’, began to play with shadows formed in a square of light serendipitously shining through a window onto the carpet. In a later phase this led to a complex performance, shifting between ‘real’ world actions and their shadow reality.

Catherine Patrick, applying Wallas’s phases to some visual artists, found as a common phenomenon that an idea occurred early, along with others, then recurred
frequently whilst the artist thought or talked about other things, then finally emerged as the major theme. She saw this frequent recurrence as an example of incubation (Gilhooly, 1996:221). In Sydney, the logbooks of student groups in HSC drama performances often reveal a similar phenomenon. An idea that they abandon early will return after they have worked on other material and will be incorporated in a new and more exciting way than in its original conception. A similar process is evident in the Namibian students' journals. However, when it is a group that is creating, another difficult element enters this incubation stage. An individual creating does not need to make public the ideas he/she ultimately abandons, but in a group many ideas are rejected and the possibility of public humiliation may be inhibiting to the flow of ideas. Students may need to be specially supported through this time. Perhaps even making them metacognitively aware of this stage will be useful in countering the phenomenon.

3. Illumination

This is often experienced as a feeling that 'the end is nigh'. Csikszentmihalyi uses the term 'flow' to describe a heightened state of mind which is clear and highly focussed and where consciousness is harmoniously ordered. In groups too this is often palpable, similar to what Artaud called 'contagion'. The group suddenly gels when an exciting idea takes hold. Beginning teacher Jon Lane, working with a year 11 playbuilding group, stated in his journal (1997): 'Because I was discovering along with the students, I wasn't sure what I was looking for and so I was able to be surprised at what I found'. Sharon Bailin suggests: 'the attitude most conducive to creativity is an openness to surprise, a receptivity to the uncertainty which is thereby entailed, and a commitment to learning from the new developments' (1988:128).

4. Verification

Morris Stein sees this as the ability to explain the concept to significant others — those with sufficient background in the field to have the capacity to understand or appreciate the creativity. Csikszentmihalyi links this ability to 'cultural capital' and refers to the experts as 'gatekeepers'. The number of gatekeepers vary with the accessibility of the domain and some creations are more ephemeral than others. For example, creativity in popular arts such as television may have a broader audience to convince but be shorter lived than discoveries in science. In drama, verification is by performance to an audience rather than explanation. In this final phase students adapt their initial inspiration, re-expressing it in ways to make an impact on an audience. The performers seek to bring about a cognitive and/or affective shift in the spectator. In Sydney, the HSC students perform their group-devised plays before external examiners who use connection with the audience (in this case the combined responses of the three examiners) as one of the criteria. In Namibia, verification needs to be immediate — so much so that, in the context of Ngoma, a performance that does not make the audience connection may be halted midstream.

We continue to pursue ways that each of us can assist our students in becoming effective teachers. Because we seek to nurture the creativity of students working in groups, the more we can identify how collaborative creativity is developed, the more
we can plan and implement good teaching / learning practice. The cultural context in which the artwork is created needs to be considered as an integral part of this process.

Works cited


Article 2 published as:


Preface

This publication is one of several collaborative enterprises I have completed with my colleague Robyn Ewing. We have often chosen to teach together over the past ten years and have collaborated to write several publications, including the textbook Beyond the Script: Drama in the classroom (Cusworth & Simons: 1995) which is used in several tertiary institutions, here and overseas. When we were approached by editor Joy Higgs to write this chapter for the book Practice Knowledge and Expertise in the Health Professions, we accepted the challenge of making what we do in Drama accessible for readers from many different professional fields, including the Health Professions. As Michael Eraut states in the forward of the book:

Given that the general ethos is that of challenging the perceived hegemony of propositional knowledge, the book could well have been subtitled ‘Practice fights back’ (in Higgs J & Titchen A, 2001: vii).

The Research

I wrote over 60% of this chapter, drawing from my own individual praxis as well as that completed collaboratively with Dr. Ewing. This chapter explores theories related to the knowledge processes involved in Arts learning and builds on several concepts developed in my earlier writings: Habermas’s different levels of knowing, the double knowing of metaxis, distributed intelligence, collaborative creativity, ambiguity and reflection in action. It supports the theory by citing many different examples of practice and knowing in the body. The chapter begins by interviewing three practicing artists: a dancer, a writer and an actor, who reflect knowledge in their chosen art forms. It also deconstructs the art form of teaching, and the craft knowledge of the Drama teacher.
Practice Knowledge & Expertise

in the Health Professions

JOY HIGGS & ANGIE TITCHEN
Using practical knowledge of the creative arts to foster learning

Jennifer Simons and Robyn Ewing

Professional practice today is quite different from the traditional model, where the client was knowledge-limited and therefore a passive recipient of knowledge transmitted by the in-command professional. Current practice involves knowledge-sharing between the professional and the client, with each developing metacognitive awareness of the learning process. This chapter takes a unique slant on the role of the professional in fostering learning. Learning in the arts prioritizes the practice knowledge of the professional and the life experience knowledge of the client. We recognize the often tacit, frequently non-communicated nature of this knowledge. This field is highly complex and incorporates both intuition and body language as part of the communicative process between professional and client.

In this chapter we place professional artistry under scrutiny. In our roles as educators, we use the creative arts to foster learning about learning, knowledge and professional practice. We explore two dimensions of knowing and the creative arts. One is knowing in the creative arts, the way practising artists come to know about their art. This form of embodied knowledge is illustrated in three cameras in which the nature of knowing in the creative arts is portrayed through the eyes of artists. The second way of knowing explored here is knowing through the creative arts. We argue that the arts (e.g. drama, which is used as an exemplar) enable learners and teachers to engage with topics in a different way from other learning strategies, enabling a deeper form of embodied knowing to occur. Knowing through the arts can be used to learn the art itself (such as with music and drama students preparing for a career in these fields) or to learn about other topics (such as learning about complex issues related to living in society). In addition, the creative arts can be used to foster the development of generic skills such as interpersonal skills and creativity. Whether learners are coming to know in or through the creative arts, or whether they are learning about the arts, or about other knowledge or skill areas, what these activities have in common is embodied knowledge and embodied learning. This embodied knowledge, we argue, is the essence of knowing in drama particularly, and in the creative arts in general. Embodied knowledge is also a core dimension of the caring professions including teaching and health care. Titchen (2001), for instance, talks about graceful care, where grace, being a physical as well as an emotional, intentional attribute, is lived in professional practice.

The bulk of the chapter is presented through the eyes and minds of teachers (in this case primary school teachers) who are using the creative arts (particularly drama) to foster the development of embodied knowing and embodied knowledge. This strategy has provided a closer look at the essential connections between knowing and the creative arts. In preparing to help students learn about and through drama, the teacher has first to understand what it means to know in the creative arts. The teacher needs to learn from artists themselves what it is to know and practise in the creative arts. The following cameras bring this knowing to life.

Valda Craig: knowing as a dancer
A great dance book has the title 'knowing in my bones'. Knowing occurs when you find
the focus, the idea, the intention of the dance. You go into a studio and from an empty space play with music for images or an idea or even nothing and let the intention come. When it comes you just know - you feel it... I think the knowing is inside you - both head and heart; intellect and emotion have to come together. You know if it is 'there' or 'not quite there'... All the steps mean something to the dancer/choreographer; all belong to the focus or the theme or the feeling or the idea of the piece. Each movement belongs - it's not just a pretty step, not just a gap filler. (If it is a gap filler, there's a knowing that it is not quite right.) There is honesty and integrity. The colleagues, the dancers working with you, give material and ideas and the choreographer uses their material, adapts, adjusts, uses the techniques or the elements of composing, selects the spatial, temporal, dynamic according to the theme or intent - and refers back to them. Between them they know when it gels, when it belongs, satisfies, serves the intent. So I guess intuition is part of it as well... I guess feeling and knowing are as one. Playing with, taking risks, trusting self and the dancers, allowing changes, having guts to edit and to edit and edit, knowing that it has to be streamlined, not self-indulgent...

Libby Gleeson: knowing as a writer

I think that I am somebody who is hooked on the notion of story - I think it's a fundamental thing that we do. I'm hooked on language. I actually believe that we can promote worthwhile reading and I want other people to share that so I write stories to make them read. If I have a mission at all it's to make readers think and to share the storymaking process with other people. Now I also happen to be a fairly moral person, I think, so a lot of my own personal ethics and so on are in the stories but I certainly don't set out to say: 'I want to write a book about "x" and that's my only purpose'. Issues and other ideas certainly are invested in all of those works but the most fundamental issue is about my need to explore my ideas through story and language. So much of my writing has come out of family life or a personal experience and at the same time I think none of it is autobiographical because it's all been fictionalised. So many ideas are generated by the writing process itself. To get these understandings you have to watch and watch. I think I agree with Kate Grenville that the difference between a novelist or a writer and those that don't write is that we all see the same things but the person who's writing sees the potential of a story in them. You see I think everyone's got stories to tell but it's a question of plucking it out and then fictionalising and constructing and putting a certain edge on them. I mean the birth of a baby in a family is both an ordinary, everyday event that happens to millions everyday as well as being the most significant thing that can happen in the life of that family. It just depends how you want to construct that story whether or not for a book or a poem or a play. There's a long phase where I edit. I rewrite as I go along the whole time and so much of this is intuitive, a type of knowing...

Camilla Ah Kin: knowing as an actor

It (knowing) seemed to emerge slowly as I became conscious of the power and responsibility and ordinariness of this particular vocation. In terms of 'knowing' technically, perceptions of what is a good and edgy performance constantly develop and change; some of the acting produced from the Lee Strasberg school in the 60s would be considered old-fashioned now. What remains important is being conscious that one is in the middle of a process. When I first began my training and career as an actor I was able to saturate myself in the art form, its history and current content. Suddenly I became capable of assimilating much more, and at a faster rate than I ever had at school or in tertiary education. I found a 'language' that touched me profoundly, that took on a sacred quality. Instinctively I knew what to do with the language; I discovered a natural awareness of what various compositions of stage elements might give to an outcome, i.e. the story. Moreover this ability (though raw) was valued and nurtured in this environment. I finally unlocked my capacity to learn. A revelation of this type probably
happens every couple of years; it may be a particular actor I work with, or a writer whose work I 'understand' or a political fury. I become aware that I am being bumped onto a new level of understanding humanity, a compassion, and for me that is the power of the storyteller, illuminator, actor, artist.

Learning about knowing in the creative arts

There are different kinds of knowing just as there are different kinds of intelligence. Habermas (1972) has conceptualized three kinds of knowing: broadly, they are:

1. that which is scientifically provable and is technical and analytical;
2. that which is related to hermeneutics and negotiated through language;
3. that which is learned by experience and is self-reflective (Lovat and Smith, 1995).

Writing from a psychological perspective, Gardner (1993) has identified eight intelligences, several of which entail the concept of the body operating in space (e.g. kinaesthetic, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences). Each of the artists quoted above reflects primarily Habermas's second and third types of knowing, and all see intrapersonal reflection as crucial to their art.

Educational institutions, however, continue to overvalue scientific and technical ways of knowing and linguistic and mathematical/logical intelligences. Learning in the arts is often treated as a mere exercise of skills rather than developing a particular type of knowledge. Knowing in the creative arts encompasses the three kinds of knowing described by Habermas (1972), although it may not always be useful or even possible to compartmentalize knowledge in this way.

Learning content through the creative arts

Knowing in the arts, and especially in drama, involves the whole person: body, mind, feelings and spirit (Morgan, 1998). As Peter Medway (1980) argued, all good teaching validates pre-disciplinary knowledge or 'knowledge we have acquired from the unsystematic processes of living' (p. 8). However, it is a feature of the arts that they take this knowledge, make it more conscious and help students reflect upon, understand and possibly change their relationship with the world.

Teaching and learning, particularly in drama, not only validate pre-disciplinary knowledge; they also validate the processes by which we accumulate this knowledge. This is especially true of primary age students, who learn so much through play. Their earliest knowledge is embodied knowledge. They use their story-telling or improvisations to make sense of an event or feeling from two to three years of age. They re-enact what they have observed and experienced in their past interactions with significant others, or project forwards with what they fear or hope might happen in the future.

Drama education often begins with dramatic play, where children simply act as themselves in an imaginary situation. For example, using Stanislavsky's 'magic if', they might visit in imagination an environment such as Antarctica to project how they might avoid environmental pollution. Older students might engage in different levels of role, enacting points of view not necessarily their own. This enactment may simply be sustaining the point of view of 'the other' in the face of challenge during improvisation, or it may entail presenting a different external appearance for some type of audience. The students may need to adopt costume, or accent, or different ways of moving in order to communicate this difference.

Trying out new possibilities in fictional contexts where nothing real is at stake is very important in learning to take risks and learning from mistakes. As Freire (1972) wrote:

Learning begins with the learners in the here and now, the situation in which they are submerged, from which they emerge and in which they intervene .... They must perceive their state not as fated and unalterable but merely as limited and therefore challenging.

(p. 57)

With Freire, arts education rejects the 'banking' metaphor of knowledge, i.e. the concept of the expert knower, the teacher, transmitting his or her understandings and knowledge to the empty vessel learners. Rather, in arts education the teacher is more readily a facilitator of learning. How students learn is as important as what they learn. Typically, in drama, a problem is posed which teacher and students co-investigate, using content derived from the students' perceptions of the world. Often in drama the teacher adopts a low status role in an enactment where the students' status is elevated, helping them to consider the impact of power relationships in life.
Most forms of education seek to promote cognitive understanding, abstracting from examples of life frozen in textbooks, and reflection tends to be reflection after the event. However, in drama the classroom activity oscillates between enacting students’ ideas and reflecting upon them, with knowledge being a pivot between action and reflection. Instead of freezing the processes of living, drama allows students to engage in reflection both in and upon action whilst they react spontaneously to other drama participants and to chosen stimulus material.

The creative arts encourage learners to deal with the ephemeral, entering into the feelings and experiences of others. In drama this may be done directly (adopting the role of ‘the other’) or indirectly (as an audience analysing as they watch others in role). Sometimes students do both, entering into the state that Bolton (1984, p. 162) describes as metaxis, where they are simultaneously in the action and detached from it. They experience feelings and reactions as a character, but also note and analyse what is happening in a distanced way. Drama thus develops metacognitive awareness while blending cognitive and affective learning. Knowledge is gained in all three of these areas.

Knowledge about metacognition is crucial. According to Bruner (1996, p. 161) ‘going meta’ includes students:

- becoming aware of intersubjectivity, i.e. knowing ‘how people come to know what others have in mind and how they adjust accordingly’ (p. 161);
- developing collaborative learning skills;
- being able to explain their beliefs and revise them in light of exchanges with others.

Another concept of Bruner’s which is important for drama is ‘distributed intelligence’ (p. 154). The information explosion of recent times is so great that what any one person ‘knows’ is stored not only in his or her own head, but in books, computers, body habits, other people’s minds and so on. We could say, for instance ‘I’m content not to hold particular parts of family lore in my own head because Grandpa knows it and I can retrieve it from him when I need it’. Working as part of a social group is a way of developing this distributed intelligence.

Learning in drama

In drama, as well as learning about content, students develop broader knowledge and ways of knowing, and also generic (e.g. interpersonal) skills. This section deals with the achievement of these outcomes by exploring learning to work collaboratively and creatively and by examining the notions of learning about self and aesthetic learning. Many of these skills and perspectives have wide application. Health professionals, especially, need to learn to work collaboratively, to use creative problem-solving, to address real world challenges and to understand self and others.

Learning to work collaboratively

Almost all learning in drama involves a collaborative process. Students work as part of a group, and the material that is processed often involves ambiguity. The teacher may deliberately introduce material that is open-ended and unfinishèd in order to evoke from the group ‘pre-disciplinary knowledge’, which may be extremely diverse, depending upon the mix of people. The question for the teacher then becomes how to hold together this diversity. An important technique in the history of drama education has been the notion of ‘universalizing’. Dorothy Heathcote (1988) pioneered this technique of looking below what seems to be dissimilar in situations and actions, to reveal common areas of meaning. The teacher structures activities, focusing firstly on a general idea of interest, narrowing to a particular and then universalizing to draw in the unique experience of the group at work on the idea.

So, for example, a group might appear to be investigating coach travel in the Australian colonial tradition (the general), focusing on a particular incident in the journey (e.g. an attack by bushrangers), but will really be testing the limits of a ‘universal’ trait, such as loyalty as it is understood by the drama group. Most often, the content of the drama work involves a concept that all group members hold in common. Sometimes, however, they may work with a point of view recognized as different, or arising from a perspective of one individual set against the usual view. Depending upon how the teacher structures the class, the knowledge developed may be a cultural value, may relate to minority views, or may be an evaluation of both dominant and minority perspectives.

Learning to use our creativity

Young children begin life with vivid imaginations, which they learn to separate out from the ‘real’ world. As they are socialized into their own
cultural traditions, many unfortunately also learn to bury their imaginative skills. The arts help students rediscover their imaginations and explore the many contradictions of the world in which they live. These abilities are vital for their successful negotiation of constant change in the world, enabling them to envision possibilities, ask new questions and solve difficult problems. In fact, Bruner (1996, p. 4) asserts that our ability to use our imaginations is pivotal to our capacity to create in both science and the humanities.

The drama class is very much about collaborative creativity, where it is the group rather than an individual who creates the art work. It involves risk-taking, because adding new ideas and directions in improvisation is a public act. As Boomer (1992, p. 35) writes, ‘we will only take risks in a supportive and conducive environment – one in which we are challenged, but encouraged; we can feel the tension of the struggle, but not the fear; we can strive to get things right but not feel shame if we get it wrong’. An important decision for a drama teacher is balancing a level of ambiguity against the level of risk involved. Cutting back on ambiguity reduces risk, because students then become surer of ‘the answer’ or of what the teacher wants. A certain level of ambiguity is needed, however, to elicit unusual or creative responses. The more active students are in cognitive constructions, the higher the level of learning achieved, the more they come to know. Of course, this involves a high level of risk for the teacher as well as for the students. Beginning teacher Jon Lane (1998) commented in his journal about his improvisation class:

My directions were intuitions only, and at the time I couldn’t have expressed them as I can now. It is an advantage of open ended improvisation that the teacher has to work out what the richest meanings are, along with the students. I wasn’t consciously looking for anything in particular, so I was able to be surprised at what I found.

Learning about self and others

At the core of the drama process is the concept of enactment or walking in someone else’s shoes. When a particular point of view becomes embodied, not only do students dispassionately analyse, they experience in the body what it feels like to engage with others while holding that particular perspective. Entering imaginatively into someone else’s life or experience in this way not only facilitates the development of empathy; relatively it helps us learn about ourselves and our lives with new eyes (Patterson, 1991).

At the same time, oral storytelling or narrative drama forms enable us to define who we are and celebrate our own lives. We tell stories to illustrate or understand or explain critical moments in our journey. Stories also help us understand the particular cultural group and family experiences in which our lives are embedded. Narrative is closely linked with our thinking, dreaming and being.

Learning about aesthetics

Drama, dance, visual art, music and literature evolve differently in different cultures and social systems. The arts can reinforce the mores of those cultures and societies or can challenge their values. Often the artist sets out to question stereotypes or the way things seem to be. Knowing in and through the creative arts includes learning how to critique performances or works of art, and learning to become a connoisseur of different art forms, of how they heighten awareness or create a particular effect.

Gavin Bolton (Davis and Lawrence, 1986, p. 159) argues that raising a student’s consciousness of form, of how a particular concept is expressed, begins a student’s aesthetic education. When students structure their drama improvisations, the process of considering the form of expression moves the work into art. This awareness of form can be heightened with informal reflections upon their own work or that of their peers. They can also be taught to apply a more semiotic analysis, with an organized consideration of the signs employed by the artist to communicate with the audience.

Drama operates mostly through metaphor: the drama contexts are understood as representations of reality, not reality itself. Very young students engaged in role play will initially seek reassurance from the teacher: ‘This isn’t real, is it?’ ‘You’re not really a witch, are you?’ Ironically, the very question is evidence that the student holds the double world in mind (albeit shakily when beginning drama), the fictional context and the real world of the classroom.

Teaching drama

The teaching of drama raises a number of pedagogical concerns for the teacher. Students are
engaged in actively creating their own meanings (Wagner, 1995, p. 62) rather than guessing what the teacher has in his or her head, seeking a correct answer. Drama teaching is about letting go of the more traditional classroom interaction patterns in which the teacher controls the talk and activity. Effective management of learning in a drama class, where the talk and activity are less predictable, involves careful pre-planning but also rapid reflection-in-action, adapting to what the students actually do. Often a teacher abrogates the usual controls such as higher status, spatial organization and even a textbook. These controls need to be replaced by arrangements such as rules negotiated with the class, rituals (e.g. beginning with warm-ups or games), the formation of a focus circle, and strictly observed time constraints.

These teaching skills are best learned in practice; the teacher's knowledge needs to be embodied. Beginning teachers usually discover that even though they adopt a lower status role, their students (through metaxis) respect them as the teacher, and rarely need stronger management. When they do, the teacher can often do this in role, or can step out of role, and direct behaviour as the teacher. Usually, however, the freedom of their raised status role is sufficient to compensate for students within their agreed classroom rules.

It is difficult to learn how to run a group enactment; it is best discovered by reflecting in and upon action. Beginning teacher Felicity Northcot (1998) commented in her journal on her growing confidence as a teacher:

I was really starting to understand the distinction between direction and facilitation of students. It is a fine line... I was learning that the best, and really the only way, was to ask questions with embedded clues, to stimulate their thoughts and the development of their ideas.

She did this in role, and also through side-coaching from outside the improvisation. She also wrote responses in students' journals, warmly encouraging them to pursue ideas she saw as having creative potential.

Conclusions

Knowing in the creative arts is a form of craft knowledge which is at once pragmatic, metaphorical and social through its use of semiotics and imagination (Morgan, 1998). It is embodied, holistic knowing. The notion of embodied knowing links knowing in the creative arts to other disciplines' professional craft knowledge, as examined in other chapters of this book. Through the eyes of learners and of the teachers helping them to know and to learn creative ways of knowing, we have sought in this chapter to make the embodied (craft) knowing of the creative arts come alive for readers. The creative arts can be used across a range of ages and learning situations to promote an understanding of many forms of practice knowledge including the nature of professional artistry, practice wisdom and embodied knowing.

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Practice Knowledge & Expertise
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Informative, analytical and stimulating – this book examines the relationship between professional knowledge and clinical practice. It provides the reader with a contemporary review examining the notion of practice knowledge gained from professional experience and its relationship to professional practice expertise.

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Chapter Four

Professional Craft Knowledge in Action

Article published as:


Preface

This publication was developed primarily from my close observation of an expert Drama teacher, Brad Haseman, during his workshop at the fourth IDEA conference in Norway. I am very familiar with Haseman’s work; we first met when we were co-participants in Gavin Bolton’s course How do you train a drama teacher in 1987, and we have been professional colleagues ever since. I have been an interested observer of his developing praxis over the past fifteen years, and we have participated in each others’ workshops at different Drama conferences.

The Research

This article is developed from several sources of data: observation notes taken during the workshop, feedback from Haseman on my observations, an analysis of his written anticipation of the workshop which he distributed before the class, and my discussions with several of the participants about their experiences. My intention in this paper is, like Haseman, to draw attention to the importance of flexible planning, tacit knowledge and reflection in action in the teaching of process drama. My article compares his concept of ‘leaderly Drama’ with the concept of ‘professional craft knowledge’, and is the first time I have used this term in print in a Drama publication.

This article was selected for publication in Playing Betwixt and Between: the IDEA Dialogues, the refereed IDEA Publication which followed the conference.
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Following the Leader
An Observation of the Work of Brad Haseman on ‘Leaderly’ Process Drama

JENNIFER SIMONS

My paper records and reflects upon Brad Haseman’s workshop at IDEA in Bergen in 2001, and also refers to his paper “The Leaderly Process: Drama and the Artistry of ‘Rip Mix and Burn’” published in these IDEA dialogues. Haseman’s intention in the workshop was to re-affirm that the teaching of process drama should be about working in the moment, taking risks, and not re-playing (as a type of script) dramas that once were spontaneously created by other people. Since my research interest is to do with the same issue, related to pre-service teacher preparation, I was one of over sixty people who attended the workshop he had planned for thirty.

Haseman (2002) defines leaderly drama (a term he derives from Roland Barthes) as neither leader-led nor leader-less. In his paper he elaborates: “At its core it involves detailed and thorough ‘before the event’ planning but final decisions about structuration are deferred for as long as possible”. He states that these decision-making moments may be marked by “breaking the action to discuss preferred options, listing possible options for review and even discussing outcomes, making time for everyone.”

Knowing how to lead a class is part of a teacher’s craft knowledge and professional practice (Higgs and Titchen 2001). In the field of process drama this sort of knowledge is difficult to explain, and yet mastering it is crucial to teaching our art form. In this workshop Haseman demonstrated one way of facilitating its development in pre-service and in-service education. Before the class he shared his own flexible over-preparation in a printed outline, specifying a wide range of possible resources and practices. He intended to use some and discard others in his own act of what he calls ‘reactive creativity’. Then he led the group in drama, allowing us to reflect in action and reflect on action later, comparing what happened in the class with the possibilities anticipated in the printed lesson outline. This evidence of teacher preparation before the event showed us that the actual drama was neither accidental nor totally magic.

Some of the intangible teaching abilities that Haseman listed and demonstrated in action were: managing energy, laying trails, weaving ideas together, sensing what the group wants, withholding in order to maintain tension and surprise, and ‘smelling’ emerging scents. Each time a teacher uses these abilities, he/she develops connoisseurship: we come to know in our
own bodies as we collaborate with our students in our contexts. This development is what we risk losing if we only ever replay other people’s dramas.

In the earliest phase of Haseman’s workshop all sixty participants were active, but at the point where the session moved from what he calls in his paper ‘climate setting’ into the more open ‘leaderly’ section, we were given the option of participating or observing. Along with about thirty others I decided to watch. This division into participants and observers seemed just a pragmatic step to make the class size feasible: as it turned out, it was integral to the drama. As part of creating the fictional context Haseman used the real context of the workshop.

The following are my observations and impressions. In an attempt to capture the ephemerality and tenuousness of this ‘leaderly process drama’, in this paper I shall now write in the present tense and refer to Haseman in his role function as ‘the leader’. I am aware of the irony that in freezing this workshop in print I run the danger of facilitating its reproduction by other people. To counteract this I have broken my description at the moments in the drama where it seemed to me that Haseman was reflecting in action, and I have tried to point out the several possibilities he could have followed. His intention was never to do the “Seeking Asylum in Australia Drama”; the one that eventuated was only one of the possibilities in the topic.

The Workshop
Haseman’s paper details the easier early stages, so I will not reproduce them here. The ‘leaderly’ section of the drama begins with the leader changing the space and re-focusing. He gathers the 30-odd participants in the centre of the room.

Leader: Where do we go from here?
P1: I want to know why these people are refugees – what led to it?
P2: I’m interested in how countries can espouse Christian values, yet ignore the plight of the refugees.
Leader: That could ground the work.

He goes on to feed into the drama some specific details about the camp. It is in a harsh desert landscape, it has a cricket pitch, two phone lines and there are 780 people.

Leader: Would you like to create a group of refugees?
P3: Well, I realise (from an earlier workshop) how little I know about refugees. I don’t think as a teacher I could set up a realistic drama as refugees. I’d rather meet the family of the man who guards the refugees – how does he speak to them?
P4: I’d like to look at the policies behind locking up the refugees – those of the people in office. What brief are the guards given?

The leader, reflecting in action, now changes direction away from enrolling the participants as refugees, and tests out the strength of this new suggestion.

Leader: So we could frame it (the drama) in terms of the people who run it (the camp)? There’s some interesting individual characters in the town that we could use. There’s an idea that women and children could be sent to Woomera, but there’s some residents against it.
P5: Why here? Why us?

Still trying to sense what the majority wants, the leader feeds in information that participants could use in role as guards or perhaps as people in Woomera.
Leader: The detention camps are privatised – there are Government contracts with private companies. The refugees protest in several ways – tunnelling, hunger strikes, placards for the media to televise, self-mutilation, violent riots – one set fire to himself. As guards, how would you implement government instructions with these protests going on?

However, the participants are not yet ready to take on role.

P6: Can I just ask? What's the argument? Why do you have these centres?

At this point the leader is faced with an interesting problem. Caught up by the material used to lure the participants into the drama, one of the observers (an Australian who knows the facts) attempts to answer that question, breaking the frame between the 'invisible' observers and the participants.

Leader: (in a slightly 'miffed' tone:) Are you in or out of the drama? Do you want to come and join us? You're welcome to.

Observer: This isn't about the drama.

But of course it is. Content is not just content here. The leader's artful informing of the drama provides the group with material they may use in role, and their conversation with him is part of their bonding with him as leader. That this outsider is caught up testifies to the success of the drama trail he is laying, and his success in withholding expertise.

Leader: (Joking with her:) You could become a resource? You could sit up here on the table with these things.

Observer: Never mind.

The leader then returns to Participant 6 and the question she had asked.

Leader: Would you like to come up here to the table and read the UN Regulations? Use the document. What if you become the representative of the Government? Announce yourself as the Government immigration official?

He walks with P6 to the table at the back of the room, gives her the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of refugees, leaves her and returns to the group, picking up where he left off.

Leader: In the camps there are 1200 about to be deported.

P3: (still fighting for her drama idea:) Could we look at the families of the people who did this?

Leader: We have those observers sitting around out here. Perhaps we could use them?

(Pause)

Observer: Or they could be refugee bodies?

(Pause.)

Leader: We could be a new intake of correctional guards?

P3: Are we the guards, or are we...?

P7: We could be half guards or half officials...?

At this point the leader takes stronger control of the direction of the drama by assuming a role.

Leader: Why don't I take on the role of the Australian official? The business manager of the Detention Centre? Bob Brownlow. Let's get up, go and sit around the TV – I'll use a clip that shows us a little more about these people.
He changes the drama space, moving them to a corner of the room around the video, and shows an ABC news report of the breakout of seven asylum seekers. Immediately afterwards he steps into role.

Leader: I suppose you heard X block was trashed yesterday? We really need you people — how many are on secondment from the jail? (Hands go up). Military? (Hands go up). I guess the rest of you are just beginning, new to the job.

The group is quickly enrolled as guards, and the leader uses another planned resource: he passes around pictures of the weapons created by the refugees, which he now frames as having been discovered by the guards. The guards discuss the effect of these weapons on their job. P6, the "government official" (embodying another resource: the UN convention) has been waiting on the edge of the group. The leader now calls her into the drama. She speaks in a calm, confident, reassuring tone of voice; in role she feeds in details of the rights of the refugees. She and the leader respond in role to questions from the guards.

An interesting improvisation evolves where the high status participant P6 and the leader spontaneously engage in an exchange with the guards about how to deal with the asylum seekers. The leader has to balance his leadership against another high-status role player steering the drama in a slightly different direction.

P6: Why don't we separate the troublemakers?
Leader: Personally, I don't know why we don't just deport them.
P6: They're difficult to process... it's ephemeral... their papers are hard to find... It takes time.

At this point for some participants the drama has become a little static, and they too try to steer the work. As yet there is no clear direction.

P9: I'm perhaps in metaxis? I just want to get on with the job. When will we get the roster, and our specific duties?
Leader: Frank's doing that. We'll give you mace, capsicum spray to help do the job.
P8: Now; these criminal elements. If they do something wrong, can we arrest them?
Leader: We have to go carefully. The Church is involved, people like that. But in my view, if they commit a crime we go hard on them — possibly given them medication.
P 10: (perhaps slightly out of role): I don't understand — isn't this a prison?
Leader: It's more like a holiday camp. We've given them lots: air conditioning, rudimentary leisure equipment.
P 6: They're only dangerous if they are left alone. We need to establish good relations.
Leader: But be careful. It's best to go in pairs. Most guards have found it best to keep a distance. Try not to intervene. Smile, just get through it. But some ratholes will have a go at you. If you feel trouble, call on your radio and we'll send the dispatch squad.

At this point the leader comes out of role, changes the space and re-forms the group into a circle. He changes the tempo, and makes the negotiation more explicit.

Leader: Where do you want to go from here?
P11: We could do something with the envelopes.

This is a reference to what Haseman calls in his paper "Pretext 3". Earlier in the workshop each participant (in role as an asylum seeker) wrote an emotional message to his/her child, and put a real 'treasure' into a sealed envelope. I, for example, had placed jewellery into mine.
P8: I'd like to see a guard compromised.
Leader: (checking group consensus:) With the envelope?
P7: We'd have to search them

The leader allows a pause. He seems to be both managing energy and giving them time to think. Then he sets out several possibilities:

Leader: We could take the letters and read them as guards?
Pause
Leader: Or ... the guards could have been given one for safekeeping by the people?
Pause
Leader: Or we take .......... Would there be a way to have a guard get this envelope?

Here he appears to correct himself, to hand back control to the participants, with a question rather than a suggestion.

P12: The letter could have been message passing. Like, in code. Why would we trust them...
Leader: Where could we take this?
P9: (gesturing at the table of stimuli:) I want to use some stuff.
P3: It's just a collection of stuff till we use it, make something of it.
P8: (returning to the leader’s idea:) I like the distinct roles we've been creating in the guards. If we all read the letters for fun, we lose the distinctions in the roles. We need to keep the shades of colour:
Leader: (supporting this possible line of action with his tone of voice:) That's a lovely idea – (gesture: he spreads his arms:) Keep the range of reactions in the guards.

Out of role the group discusses possibilities amongst themselves.

P1: After 2 years being there, will the guards feel different?
P2: After 3 months. After 6 months.
P4: After 12 months, some guards will have veteran status. Get a higher salary.
P10: (to the leader) A question – do the guards live outside the camp?
Leader: Yes, they have compounds themselves.
P13: If seven people escaped, there’d be seven envelopes left behind, wouldn't there?
Leader: So, do we select seven envelopes?

The discussion has no direction or energy, so the leader cuts it short and energetically moves everyone into action instead. He gets the bag of envelopes, and passes it amongst the guards, who select individual letters to read. Meanwhile the leader plants an important suggestion in the minds of the observers, who have been involved in watching the class for a long period now.

Leader: (To observers:) You outside, if we choose one of your letters to read out and you don't want us to do so, feel free to interject – throw in something. You could use one of the poems from up here on the table, or just call out – anything.

The guards (out of role) are opening and reading the letters, trying to agree on seven to use in the drama. The leader cuts this short, and moves them into action. He asks them to go on patrol, find an envelope and bring it to the table "just to get some movement into the drama". The guards move to the outside circle and 'plant' the letters on the outside group. In the meantime he directly addresses the observers again.
Leader: You outside – I know you have just been watching, but you are complicit in what we have been creating. I don’t mind if you interject. (Now addressing both guards and observers:) Can we start with the guards walking? You outsiders be still as they inspect you. walking and watching.

We outsiders have had our instructions, almost unnoticed by the participants because they’ve been busy planting the letters. The ‘outsider’ near me holds her shoe in her hand; I reflect that I’m not sure why. Soon the fact that we outsiders are actually a very multicultural group, like the asylum seekers themselves, will work for the drama.

Leader: (forcing the pace:) Those envelopes are there – dig deeper! Find them!
The guards all call out: “I’ve found one”, etc. They bring the letters to the table, open and begin to read them aloud.

Suddenly the guards’ voices are swamped by shouts from the ‘outsiders’ (now in role as the asylum seekers). Surrounding the guards, we shout, stamp, bang the wall with a shoe(!), call out in different languages, use different cultural sounds (a surprise!) of derision and protest.

Even though I’m in that group, and heard the leader’s suggestion, I did not anticipate this happening. It is frightening, though as an outsider I quickly join in. It must be more overwhelming for the Guards now in the centre of a hostile mob. Perhaps they now realise in the body the impact of their lack of respect on the asylum seekers?

The leader stops the drama and de-roles. We take a few minutes to share how we felt. As Bob Connell has pointed out:

People who have not taught can have little idea of what it is like to have taught well, to be buoyed up and swept along by the response of students who are really learning. One reaches for the metaphors: chemical reactions, currents, setting alight, taking fire. But however difficult it is to describe, let alone explain, the experience is a real one, and it is something that most teachers, in whatever part of the education system, have at least some of the time.

(Connell 1985 p. 127)

Haseman’s intention in this workshop was to supply the fishing rod, not the fish: to help the participants ‘teach well’ in Connell’s sense. We participants, mostly teachers, learned through professional metaxis how to lead a process drama class. That is, we were inside the drama as participants at the same time as we ‘lived’ it as a teacher, empathising with Haseman. For me the strength of this workshop was that it exemplified in action aspects of drama practice knowledge that are difficult to define verbally. One aspect is creativity. In his paper Haseman discusses the importance in this postmodern world of ‘redactive creativity’, which involves making selections from a wide range of possibilities: we “rip, mix and burn”. But perhaps the actions of selecting and rejecting have always important in creativity. Linus Pauling, twice winner of the Nobel Prize, when asked how he had initiated so many epochal discoveries said, “It’s easy, you think of a lot of ideas and throw away the bad ones” (Simons & Bateman 2000: 96).

Haseman’s class pushed me to ask questions which I shall continue to research. When it is a group of students doing the creating, whose ideas do you use? What gets left out? What is a teacher using when he/she decides on a particular direction for process drama? How do you make sure that elements like tension and symbol are intrinsic to the work, not layered on?

I suppose the simple answer to this is ‘intuition’, but perhaps because I work with beginning teachers (as does Haseman), I would like to define this a little more. For me Haseman’s
workshop is an important step in naming the unnameable. He identifies some elusive teaching practices (the awareness of the trails and timings and body movements and stillnesses and words that cue us to what the participants may be thinking/feeling) and teaching skills more easily isolated and taught (anticipate many varied responses; prepare more resources than you could use). He pre-states these abstract abilities, and then exemplifies them in action, embodying the practice knowledge. Of the many resources Brad Haseman had prepared, I was aware of his use of five in this ‘leaderly’ section of the drama: the TV news extract, photograph of weapons, UN extract (embodied in a participant), a poem, a range of protest behaviours.

These resources ("just stuff until we use them") became part of the “Detention Camp Guards Drama”, which, as he said, was only one possibility amongst many dramas which could have emerged. Of all the possible themes he had anticipated, the actual drama he pursued in collaboration with the participants came in obliquely as "the conditions in the detention camps". The focus of the drama was apparently on the guards, but with two adept "trail-laying" instructions, and a leaderly perception that was literally outside the square to include the observers, Haseman threw the switch to focus on perhaps the last right of the asylum seekers: the right to protest at the loss of human dignity.

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This volume adds to the growing number of IDEA Publications, and to their quality. In July 2001, a thousand of the world’s leading drama/theatre educators met in Bergen, Norway, to share theory and practice, and contribute to the aims of IDEA: to be a space for inter-cultural dialogue about and through drama and theatre, to develop lifelong education through drama and theatre, and contribute to their use in the empowerment and enfranchisement of young people, especially those in situations of disadvantage and threat. This book collects thirty-three of the most significant and pungent presentations, encompassing a diversity of practice, viewpoints and paradigms spanning all continents, linked by their adherence to those aims, and by the quality of the work described and analysed in the chapters.

Its playful and elegant title aptly captures the paradoxical nature of drama and theatre, and its sometimes marginalised position in society, which is both its strength and its weakness. The playfulness of the title should not be mistaken for superficiality (a misreading that a true scholar of drama and theatre would not make). Certainly the practice described is rich and fascinating, frequently occurring under the most difficult circumstances. The contributions also share either a conscious research focus, or a shrewdly critical stance to the eminently practical projects most are describing. Some are more general reflections on the nature of education through drama and theatre.

The editors are among the foremost scholars in the field, not only in Scandinavia but globally. They have chosen with care and flair from the many fine Congress presentations, to create a whole book that combines a coherent vision with cutting-edge contemporary ideas and practice in drama and theatre applied to educational needs and contexts.

John O’Toole
IDEA Director of Publications
Chapter Five

Teaching as a Moral Enterprise

Article published as:


Preface

This article was commissioned as one of the lead articles for the prestigious journal Melbourne Studies in Education in a special edition dedicated to Drama. My brief was to address the central role of the learner in Drama. In this paper, which draws primarily on my research related to using the picture book The Great Bear, (Gleeson & Greder, 1999), I have been interested in the concept of emancipation, which is a central metaphor in the book as well as a crucial feature of critical pedagogy.

The Research

This article draws together research initially explored in two earlier conference presentations One, Reading Pictures and Knowing in the Body was presented in September 2000 at the Reading Pictures Symposium at Homerton College, Cambridge, and the second, Reflecting and process drama, was my keynote address for the New Vision Conference: Drama Theatre and Education, Asia Link, Taipei, Taiwan July 2001. (See Appendix 6) Re-conceptualising the theory and further refining practice have led me to explore what Nell Noddings sees as “caring occasions”. In this paper I see such caring as the ends for which professional craft knowledge is the means.

The paper draws strongly from my use of Drama using the picture book The Great Bear as a pretext. Robyn (Cusworth) Ewing and I have had contact with the writer Libby Gleeson over several years. In 1995 she had launched our book Beyond the Script: Drama in the classroom and an interview with her had been part of our article 'Using practical knowledge of the creative arts to foster learning'. In 2000, after hearing her talk about the genesis of her picture book The
Great Bear I contacted Libby Gleeson and told her of my plans to use it as the basis of my new research. We kept up a correspondence and she supplied me with information about her own background thinking and that of her illustrator, Armin Greder. I incorporated this information into the paper, supporting my argument that ambiguity allows individuals to make their own meaning and that gaps in a story can be highly motivatory in both Drama and literacy learning. As a result of this paper I have been invited to be the keynote speaker at the Drama Victoria state Drama conference in November 2002.
Drama and the Learner

Jennifer Simons

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Abstract: This article views teaching as a moral enterprise which promotes the welfare of individual learners and society. To do this teachers draw on professional craft knowledge and engage in critical pedagogy, freeing the learner from dependence on the teacher. This article is a discussion of my understanding of these theories, exemplified by details of my own praxis. This article shows how similar Drama lessons in fact differed significantly because of the different learners involved.

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Drama And The Learner

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*When we care, we accept the responsibility to work continuously on our own competence so that the recipient of our care... is enhanced. There is nothing mushy about caring. It is the strong, resilient backbone of human life* (Noddings, 1992: 175).

Although teaching is increasingly recognised as extremely complex work, any useful analysis of education will have the learner firmly at its centre. Recently many researchers\(^1\) have returned to the position that teaching is a moral enterprise, and believe that teachers should focus primarily on promoting the welfare of the learners and of the wider society. Noddings argues that every human encounter is a potentially 'caring occasion'. Speaking of the nurse-patient relationship, but equally true of teacher-student, she says that the very moment they meet is important:

> It is not just that (the teacher) will provide care in the form of physical skills... Rather it is a moment in which each must decide how to meet the other and what to do with the moment. This is obviously very different from defining a (teaching) encounter as a problem-solving event. Problem solving is involved of course, but it is preceded by a moment of receptivity - one in which the full humanity of both parties is recognised - and it is followed by a return to the human other in all his or her fullness.\(^2\)

At the start of a teacher’s career recognising potentially caring occasions with individual students can be a difficult task. Beginning teachers tend to stick to the security of rules and lesson plans, and often do not look beyond surviving the lesson. However as they become more experienced teachers become more flexible, developing an extensive body of highly context

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2. S. Strom, W Tennyson, Developing Moral Responsibleness through Professional Education *Journal of Counselling & values* 1990, 23, 3;
3. A. Tom *Teaching as a moral craft* New York 1984
specific craft knowledge. As Schon\(^3\) has pointed out, professionals do not operate by directly applying theoretical knowledge to practical problems, but rather by applying, modifying and re-applying this context-specific craft knowledge to problems which arise in other contexts in their professional life.

Many different terms have been used in the literature of the past twenty years to describe the knowledge base of a teacher: pedagogical content knowledge, aesthetic knowing, ethical/moral knowledge, knowing-in-practice, intuitive and embodied knowing, as well as empirical and scientific knowing all have been used. However, I prefer the term 'professional craft knowledge' for drama teaching because to me it has connotations of artistry, uncertainty and context specificity. Developed during day-to-day exercise of these skills and values, the professional craft knowledge of a Drama teacher is a blend of formal content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and the personal knowledge that comes from living life in a culture. As teachers reflect in action in their own classes, the lines between these forms of knowledge are blurred, and it becomes embodied, tacit or unconscious knowledge. It becomes 'a repertoire of examples, images, practical principles, scenarios or rules of thumb that have been developed through prior experience'\(^4\).

As drama teachers become more expert, their practice is characterised by fluency and they more easily manage unexpected events, such as surprising contributions from individuals in the group: the shy child who suddenly pushes herself forward, or the outgoing student who suddenly withdraws. The elements of teaching that expert drama teachers manage are often abstract, hard to put into words. For example they manage energy, lay trails, weave ideas together, sense what the learners want, withhold expertise in order to maintain tension and surprise, and 'smell' emerging scents\(^5\). Each time a drama teacher uses these abilities, he/she

\(^2\) Noddings N The challenge to care in schools: an alternative approach to Education New York 1992: 24


\(^4\) R. Cervero 'Professional practice, learning and continuing education; an integrated perspective', International Journal of Lifelong Education 10, 1992, pp 91-101

\(^5\) B. Hazeman,'The Leaderly Process: Drama and the Artistry of "Rip, Mix and Burn"'- a workshop and paper presented at IDEA Norway in 2001
extends what Eisner calls 'connoisseurship'. Teacher and task become inseparable: teaching becomes a form of artistry in which it is hard to tell the dancer from the dance.

As teachers move towards developing this sort of expertise it becomes possible for them to recognise the diversity of the learners in their class, and to take steps to empower them. Critical theorist Jurgen Habermas\(^6\) suggests that empowerment involves understanding the causes of powerlessness, recognising systemic oppressive forces and acting collectively to change the conditions of life. Critical pedagogy has as its aim the detection and unmasking of beliefs and practices that limit freedom. In the drama classroom this can mean becoming aware when our teaching practices suppress difference and silence those individuals who do not feel able to share the group's values or interests. Often teachers perceive disengaged students as trouble makers and employ generalised methods of discipline which fail to take into account the person being disciplined. We teachers use impersonal grading rather than specific feedback to the individual; we lose the opportunity of exploring a 'caring occasion'. We treat students as an undifferentiated group, and do not read the bodies of the individuals who comprise it.

Learning in and through the body is intrinsic to drama. As Helen Nicholson\(^7\) has argued

> 'the body is not an instrument of the mind nor secondary to it; it is central to the development of understanding and very literally how we interact with, and experience the world'.

The direction of a drama lesson is often determined by the way that participants (both learners and teachers) read each others' bodies, interpreting and responding to the perceived attitudes. They do this in and out of role. Like our lived life itself, drama is immediate and ephemeral. Teachers look for ways

> "to involve young people in this elusive present moment in a way where something significant is happening to them, where they are contributing to what is happening and

\(^6\) J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Cambridge 1987  
where they are to some extent conscious of the experience in a way that takes them into
and beyond that present moment "8.

Teachers look for potential metaphors in the drama topic, so that several layers of meaning can
be built in. It is important that the self-esteem of the learners is not endangered or private
aspects of the participants’ real lives unintentionally made public. The teacher anticipates
possible risks and facilitates the learners into ‘role protection’, framing them so that the ideas
they volunteer can be seen as emanating from the characters they adopt. The teacher guides the
learners as they select a focus, research and reflect on a topic, choose settings, enact roles,
employ resources and engage with each other in improvisations which tap into the everyday
knowledge of their lived lives.

According to Mayerfeld Bell9 our life in our culture is based on
‘the conversations we have and which we expect to have with various people in various
places and various times; it is also the conversations... which we did not expect to have...
in conversation we discover our boundaries and transcend them as we interact with
difference... in a collective act of dialogic improvisation’.

Drama students in role in a fictional world also engage in both types of ‘conversations’. During
those they expected to have, they tend to reproduce behaviour from television or stereotype, but if the teacher leads them to encounter the unexpected, participants are pushed into spontaneous action. As individuals respond in the moment to subtle cues in voice tone, body
posture or proxemics the drama is likely to be more creative and emotionally charged, with a
greater learning potential.

Bakhtin10 points out that when we communicate in every day life we choose words that take into
account what we believe the other person thinks. Their facial expressions, intakes of breath,

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9 M. Mayerfeld Bell, M. Gardiner (eds) Bakhtin and the Human Sciences London 1998 p52
pauses, overlaps - are all significant when we try to work this out. Bakhtin suggests that when we try to communicate, we are in continual tension between contrary forces: *centripetal* (where we seek unity with other people's ideas) and *centrifugal* (where we seek to disagree). Communicating as part of a group, drama students are able to draw from a pool of distributed intelligence, and as they discuss the drama ideas they increase their awareness of how other people think, and try out their ideas in intersubjective acts. Often individuals make meaning whilst only partially sharing understanding of other people's ideas, but it is this partial sharing which leads to real learning. What can develop in drama is what Gardiner\textsuperscript{11} calls 'radical tolerance': not just putting up with what other people say, but aiming for mutual recognition and understanding.

Geoff Gillham\textsuperscript{12} has described Drama as a

'*unique pedagogic situation,* where a teacher sees himself (*sic*) as teaching but the participant does not see himself as learning*.

The drama teacher is alert for the learning potential of the 'fun' activity, helping the students firstly to create and then to decipher drama metaphors. At the outset of the lesson the drama teacher may not know what the outcome will be, because what is learned partly depends on the learner's contribution. In drama (as in actual life) it is more usual for the participants to sense or apprehend a range of unfurling meanings as the metaphor develops, and puzzle out these meanings more fully after the event.

The teacher usually launches a drama lesson by using a 'pre-text', the name given by Cecily O'Neill\textsuperscript{13} to a stimulus chosen for its ability to suggest quickly a range of characters, contexts and themes. There is never just one lesson which will emerge from exploring a pre-text; what unfolds depends on the teachers and learners who explore it, and the context in which it is used.

\textsuperscript{10} M. Bakhtin, *Towards a Philosophy of the Act*, Austin 1993

\textsuperscript{11} M. Mayerfeld Bell, M. Gardiner (eds) op cit p6

\textsuperscript{12} G. Gillham cited in G.Bolton. *Drama as Education*. Essex. 1984 p 157

\textsuperscript{13} C. O'Neil *Drama Worlds: a Framework for process drama*, New Hampshire 1995
In my own praxis, working with three groups using the same pre-text resulted in three quite different learning experiences. What occurred in each lesson depended upon what the students brought to it, how they related to each other, and how I interpreted what they wanted (or did not want) to explore.

The pre-text that I used was a picture book, *Great Bear* by Libby Gleeson and Armin Greder\(^\text{14}\). Gleeson has described the starting point of her writing:

"One morning in 1995 I woke with a series of images from my dream strong in my memory. So strong that I wrote them down, pondering their meaning. The sequence was a huge dancing bear in a medieval village, somewhere in mountainous Central Europe. The bear was tortured and tormented and finally broke free. She ran to the centre of the village square, climbed the flag pole and balanced on the top. I knew she could never climb down but I was unafraid for her. Then she launched herself into the stars and I thought of Ursa Major, the Great Bear constellation. It felt very satisfying; I knew there was a story there and so wrote out the sequence of events. It was an aid to memory not even a first draft\(^\text{15}\).

She collaborated with Armin Greder, the illustrator, who creates foreboding from the front cover onwards. The colours are firstly autumnal, and then dark but the recurring image of a starry night becomes more prominent as the story unfolds: there is always the suggestion of hope, however dark things become.

Gleeson says:

'Making meaning from a good picture book is like playing in an adventure playground.

The nature of the game played is strongly influenced but not wholly determined by the structures available. We can't play just any game around the structures but there is also not just one game we are allowed to play'.

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\(^{15}\) L. Gleeson. ‘Writing for Children’ Presented at Sydney University  April 2000
Greder believes that a good illustration in a picture book should never just duplicate the words but raise questions and create gaps

‘and if a reader... trusts in imagination to fill these gaps, the story opens up and spreads out like when that particular piece is found which links two seemingly unrelated chunks in a puzzle and turns them into an achievement which makes the puzzler exclaim "Oh! Look at this, will you!".

The ‘particular piece’ which can open up an exploration of meaning is often from the learner's own repertoire of experiences which they may be encouraged to share.

There are many different ways in which learners can respond to this book, and each learner is surely richer for seeing the different meanings that people make from it. Bruner\(^{17}\) points out that

‘Although meanings are in the mind, they have their origins and their significance in the culture in which they are created. It is this cultural situatedness of meanings that assures their negotiability and ultimately, their communicability’.

Giroux\(^{18}\) has coined the term ‘border pedagogy’ for the sort of teaching/learning which helps the learner to recognise boundaries between different beliefs and customs, and then to cross them. As we facilitate the expression of ideas, we must never forget how fragile identity can be as it moves across borders. Drama teachers have long known this and techniques like trust building exercises, role-protection and de-roleing are important in our work as we care for our students.

The following are description of my use of the pre-text *The Great Bear* with three different groups of learners. The first was a group of Year 10 High School drama students whom I taught as a visiting teacher. My intention was for these adolescents to explore the world of the

\(^{16}\) A. Greder Talking with CBC 1999
\(^{17}\) J. Bruner The *Culture Of Education* Harvard 1996 P 3
book, learning through drama. The second group were pre-service teachers at Sydney University, specialising in a course in Primary drama. They had studied drama pedagogy over a period of two years, and were interested in understanding the concept of craft knowledge. My intention was for them to analyse what is involved in reflecting in action, focusing on the moments in the lesson which determined what happened next as we explored the book. The third group (at a Conference in Taiwan) were experienced teachers, but were new to drama as a subject. My intention was for them to learn about drama by doing it. These different intentions, and my awareness of the different natures of the learners led to three very different lessons.

My intended outcome for the Year 10 lesson was roughly for the students to interpret the book's themes as they saw them unfolding. Therefore, rather than reading the whole book first, I preplanned where I would make breaks in releasing bits of the text for the students to explore. I used several illustrations as springboards: one showed a crowd of medieval villagers waiting for the bear to perform. In small groups the students examined it closely, discussing who the people might be, the mood of each character and how this has been conveyed to the reader. Then the groups chose and duplicated characters from the picture. I placed a range of props (shoe, hat, belt, basket, bag, stones, a stick, a scarf) on the floor, and asked students to choose and integrate some of these into their chosen images. After some preparation time, each group shared their image and brought it to life. We heard what each character was expecting, and why they were carrying the props they had chosen. After each group had presented, the students reflected on how they had interpreted the task. Several talked about paintings they were reminded of, such as Van Gogh's Starry night, and Munch's Scream, and how that had affected their interpretation.

We then returned to the book. The double page after the bear turns on the tormentors shows a giant shadow of the Bear and eight objects (the props I had brought and which they had used

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earlier) dropped onto the ground, presumably as the crowd fled from the bear. There was emotional shock evident in the students' faces as they registered "their" props, and their identification with the tormentors was brought home. As a whole group they threw in spontaneous comments, still half in role: "Oh no!" "there's my belt!" "Oh, I get it",

From this point the book has no words, only coloured pictures on double pages. In the next five double pages we see her real, gigantic size in context: images of the Bear running through the village in darkness, as the people huddle in fright. Finally she climbs a pole and leaps into the starry night. Without the words what is interpreted from the pictures depends on what the reader brings to the reading.

Initially several publishers rejected this book, reluctant to take it on because they said that the Bear's leap could be interpreted as suicide, though this had not been the authors' intention. Given the disturbing numbers of youth suicide in Australia, the publishers' concern is understandable. I believe that a teacher working with adolescents has an ethical duty to safeguard them in the roles he/she allows them to take, so to cut back on a possible emotional identification with suicide, I asked the Year 10 students: "if the bear does not die in making this leap, what could it mean? Show me, in any drama form you like, what sort of metaphor it could be, and how it could be interpreted." Students negotiated and presented improvisations and still images aimed at interpreting the leap into the sky. They presented images that showed freedom, release and triumph over adversity. Some had the bear reaching a Christian heaven; some tapped into the myth of the Great Bear constellation. At the end of the lesson we spent some time debriefing and talking about the drama experience.

Two student teachers were on practicum at the school and observed the lesson. They had come to know the students, whom they had taught History and Maths, and were particularly struck by the level of engagement that is typical of drama.

10 Drama was about to be made compulsory in their National Curriculum and I had been invited to introduce Process drama methodology.
Observer 1 (the Maths teacher) wrote: *They are totally engaged, participating with a sense of fun. They seem totally absorbed when other students talk - they are intensely interested in what the other students have to say, in how they feel. When you turned the pages with no words, silence descended totally and suddenly; when someone spoke it was a thrill. These kids really impressed me in the way they were able to focus!*

Observer 2 (the History teacher) wrote: *The students were totally absorbed by the story and the way you released it to them. Especially when the words ceased. Turning the pages without commentary, and allowing them to look at the pictures and make up their own interpretations had them completely wrapt.*

The Year 10 students themselves reflected on what they thought they had learned, displaying different levels of understanding.

A  Reading the book you could form your own ideas, but when we started acting them out you could actually see what other people thought, and you could present your own ideas to the class.

B  You are able to maintain your attention span longer, when you're actively involved with bringing the book to life.

C  Physicalising parts of the book made us see the depth of the illustrations, and working as characters within the confines of the book caused us to take on many different views.

D  Animating helps me to realise the potential of the moment. Feeling is better than seeing

E  It caused me to think about myself and how I treat others.

The learning focus for the second group, the beginning teachers, was not so much on the content of the book, but rather on the processes of the drama. The whole lesson was framed by metacognition. As well as asking the learners to try to be aware of their thinking, I asked several volunteer observers to keep detailed notes on what they saw happening. This is what they wrote and shared with the group:

1. *The faces are all sombre as Jenny reads the story. Then they choose props and characters, and start to make up stories about why they have the props (eg scarf, for*
warmth and to hide - she's a bit scared; one has a belt for protection from the bear, another has it because he's the belt-maker and just happens to be carrying one) Liz is silent, sad smile.

2. Rae knows which prop she wants- she goes straight to the stick. Ann isn't sure what she wants- she links up with Ben who has picked up the bag. Marian is happy with her group's image; she says "good!. Tom & Charlie have finished their planning and now they're talking about something else, not the story. OK, now they're back on task.

3. The final impro (interpreting the ending) that Jenny gave them was very open ended, allowing for personal interpretations. This shocked some people right off, and they couldn't work out what to do, but it improved with time. It took a while to get into movement; a lot of time spent on talking about their interpretation. That's not necessarily a bad thing, though.

4. One group is talking about Polanski' Macbeth - the time limit now pushes them. "How will we do it?" They go with one person's idea - lie on the floor to represent the stars: they use their bodies to become the Bear as a constellation seen from a distance.

Two of the participants reflected in their journals an unhappiness with the lesson that was not evident in the group work. Both students resisted the learning structures that I put in place, for different reasons. Each learner, of course, is always free to refuse the teacher's offer; sometimes they do this defiantly and noisily. Sometimes the refusal is silent, and the processing is in the mind. The fact that they don't do what we expect or want doesn't mean they're not learning, and sometimes individuals are willing to share these moments through journals addressed to the teacher. These for me were 'caring occasions', leading to a one-to-one follow up.

Participant 1 "The story was about a topic I feel very strongly about. Listening to it and seeing the pictures stirred up strong emotions. I found it difficult to participate wholly in the activities. I chose a character (from the illustration) that I saw reflecting my feelings and could think of nothing else but anger. I felt very sad because of this story. I found it difficult to accept the ending and kept insisting in my mind that the bear really died as it was its only means of escape. This is all I could really think about this whole lesson and I know I'll keep thinking about it tonight".
Participant 2 "After we read the end of the story it was difficult to share my thoughts (in my group) of what had happened because of the connotations of death and ascendance: it invites argument or disagreement about religion beliefs etc. I think we found it much more effective to select and act out our thoughts, because actions can be more powerful but thoughts remain safe in your mind. The stars still intrigue me because they remain quite dull in the story, but to see them close up could be different. Stars are almost a symbol of another world."

For the third group of learners, the teachers in Taiwan, the learning focus was the methodology of process drama. They agreed to have a drama experience first, and then reflect and discuss the teaching implications of the techniques. I had prepared a summary sheet of these techniques (also translated into Chinese) so they did not have to take notes. I decided not to work with the whole book because I was not familiar enough with Taiwanese culture to be confident of all of the implications of the metaphor for them. Moreover my focus was primarily on developing the skills of drama teaching, rather than exploring the book. Most of the learners were bilingual, and when we began grouping I made sure that each had at least one person confident about speaking in English. I set up the tasks in English (which unfortunately is my only language) but the learners worked together in Chinese.

I chose as my pretext the second illustration in The Great Bear. It is a middle distance illustration of a group of people heading for a walled town. People from different cultures can identify with the characters because we see the group from behind; we can't see their faces, often the marker of a particular ethnicity. Without the book's written text there are several unsolved questions: who are these people, where are they going, and why? The Taiwanese teachers suggested some answers, and together we chose one as a focus to explore: they were a group of entertainers headed for the town. Each person in the group decided what sort of entertainer they were, and took up a spatial position relative to the preparedness of their character for entertaining in the walled city: near the wall for the most eager, and stretching across the drama room as the confidence diminished. Quite a bit of metaxis was involved in this, I'm sure! Each adopted a
stance representing their performer: for example the jugglers juggled imaginary balls. When I tapped them on the shoulder, the participants spoke out the fears or the excitement of their adopted characters. Next, out of role, they found entertainers who could group with them to form a wandering band (so for example we had acrobats, unicyclists, animal trainers and dancers). They discussed the nature of their performance group, and then adopted a still image to represent the photograph they would use to advertise their group. Then they introduced themselves, telling us who they were and how they related to each other. A panel of volunteers agreed to be hot-seated, questioned as people who lived in the town. (What was life usually like in the town? What were they expecting about the entertainers? What sort of group would they prefer to see?) Absorbing this information, the entertainers re-grouped, tailoring their performance to suit what the townspeople preferred. Then each group came alive, improvising a performance aimed at gaining admission by the Minister of Arts.

We broke the drama here to reflect on the processes, giving the participants a chance to talk about the learning and how they believed their own primary and secondary students would respond to these techniques. Most teachers were excited about the possibilities of this type of teaching, and were keen to know more. I introduced them to teaching in role, becoming Minister for the Arts: I could not allow every group to enter the town to perform. In role they protested, attempted to persuade, demonstrated some aspects of their performance, discussed its benefit for the town, agreed to submit to inspection, or turned away. We de-rolled and they critiqued my teaching. Because they wanted this try using this technique themselves, I abandoned my next planned step. Instead, with their own real students and teaching topics in mind, these Taiwanese teachers planned drama lessons in groups; then some of them put their lessons into practice, and they critiqued each other’s performances.

As Paolo Freire\textsuperscript{20}, the source of most critical pedagogy thought and practice, said in an interview not long before his death:

\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{20} Friere, in an interview with C A Torres \textit{in Education, Power and Personal Biography} 1998 p101
\end{center}
"For me, teaching is a form or act of knowing so that the student will not merely act as a learner. In other words, teaching is the form that the teacher or educator possesses to bear witness to the student on what knowing is, so that the student will also know instead of simply learn. The act of teaching and the act of learning (are) fundamental moments in the general process of knowledge, a process of which the educator, on the one hand, and the educatee, on the other, are a part."

Critical pedagogy has as its centre a concern for the emancipation of the learner, a freeing from dependence on the teacher. As we drama teachers become more experienced, and more confident about drawing from our professional craft knowledge, we are able to care for our students, recognise where individuals are coming from, and how they relate to other individuals in our classes. We can help the learners to become aware of the learning processes, so that they contribute to their own development of knowledge, and are not just receivers of transmitted information.

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Chapter Six

Conclusion

Is teaching a science or an art? The question, in one form or another, has long intrigued educationists. In essence the debate is about whether teaching is an activity where some general laws or principles can be identified, and which can be understood in scientific terms, facilitating planning or prediction; or whether it is largely an individualistic, intuitive, spontaneous process, involving so many factors that it is impossible to specify general lines of direction, and producing works of creative imagination (Woods 1996: 14).

The research in this portfolio relates to professional craft knowledge, a concept which emphasises the artistry involved in teaching. This is not to deny the 'science' of teaching, what Woods (1996: 30) calls the 'wealth of rigorously acquired and tested knowledge' developed over centuries and available for use by each new wave of teachers. The articles in this portfolio argue that Drama teaching involves both art and science: it comprises complex skills learned from both study and experience. Teaching is 'personalised' by individual teachers but it also has 'certain overarching generalisable features which are common across teachers' (Brown & McIntyre 1993: 19).

I have argued in this portfolio that improvisation and immediacy are at the core of process drama. Collaboratively the participants establish

"an imagined world, a dramatic 'elsewhere' created by the participants as they discover, articulate, and sustain fictional roles and situations" (O'Neill 1995: xvi).

Because of its ephemeral nature, process drama requires that teachers remain 'in the moment', responding immediately to student input. As Eisner has said

"responses to the 'music' of classroom discussion are often a matter not of reflective practice - reflection here is much too slow - but a matter of instantaneous response to the qualitative immediacy of the events themselves" (cited in Woods 1996: 24).
I have argued in these research articles that such an 'instantaneous response' is possible because of the teacher's professional craft knowledge.

In this portfolio I have used the term professional craft knowledge to subsume several other terms used in the literature of the past twenty years to describe the knowledge base of teaching: pedagogical content knowledge, aesthetic knowing, ethical/moral knowledge, knowing-in-practice, intuitive and embodied knowing, empirical and scientific knowing. Developed during day-to-day classroom teaching, the professional craft knowledge of a Drama teacher is a blend of propositional knowledge, knowledge about pedagogy and the knowledge that comes from everyday life experience. It is learned in action as they go about teaching their own classes, and becomes embodied, not always immediately available as cognitive knowledge. Mostly it is tacit knowledge, implemented intuitively, but usually after reflection a teacher can describe why they acted as they did.

As is exemplified in most of these articles, process drama begins with lesson planning of the type that Stenhouse (1975) has called 'procedural' planning. That is, it is focused on the management of processes and materials rather than on pursuing a particular outcome. Roughly sketched plans are implemented by teachers who reflect in action, rapidly choosing between the structures, resources and techniques that they have anticipated using. Many of the teaching skills described in this portfolio in these articles are quite abstract. For example teachers manage energy, lay trails, weave ideas together, sense what the group wants, withhold expertise in order to maintain tension, and 'smell' emerging scents.

The actual direction of a drama lesson is chosen as the teacher senses which of the potential actions hold most appeal for a majority of the students. Once the collaborative work begins, suggestions from the students that appear to the teacher to be fruitful are re-inforced, and unproductive work is re-directed. Sometimes the teacher's intervention is unobtrusive, done in role or by coaching from the side; at other times it is out of role, in the teacher's own voice,
explicitly inviting the students to collaborate in the decision making. What the teacher does depends upon his/her experience and craft knowledge.

The research articles in this portfolio all suggest that as they grow in experience teachers progress in skills from neophyte to expert. Their professional craft knowledge is enhanced by reflection in and upon action in their specific contexts, and can be learned in pre-service education by reflecting on 'case studies'. Studying cases based on real teachers’ real experiences is a way of freezing a problematic aspect of teaching at a crucial moment, giving pre-service teachers time to understand why a decision needed to be made in that context at that time, and to think about alternatives they themselves might have chosen. Using the case-based approach helps beginning teachers become metacognitive about reflection in action. This method also helps to ease them into more holistic learning, incorporating the planned and unplanned aspects of real teaching.

Pre-service teachers can develop craft knowledge by engaging in "live" case studies: they re-enact documented drama lessons in order to understand in the body how a teacher thinks on his/her feet. Drama ‘cases’ are re-enacted in class, and laid open for deconstruction and reflection during and after the enactment. Most of the drama classes described in this portfolio have been used as live cases, or are potential cases. Through the meta-cognitive analysis of a “live” case-based study neophytes can develop a professional metaxis: they experience as 'students' but at the same time they identify with what the teacher does. Their external observance of the practitioner, combined with reflection by the leader and other participants on their internal processes can help to deconstruct the craft knowledge involved.

The final research article in this portfolio rounds off my exploration of professional craft knowledge by examining the ends being pursued in process drama teaching. This article re-asserts teaching as a moral enterprise. As drama teachers become more confident about drawing from professional craft knowledge, they develop critical pedagogy aimed at emancipating the
learner from dependence on the teacher. Learners can be made aware of the learning process, so that they contribute to the development of their own knowledge.

Each article in this portfolio is published in journals or books which have a national or international audience: the research has been accessible to the Drama teaching profession both in Australia and overseas. Several of the articles were commissioned by editors who had heard my presentations or observed my workshops, and invited me to distribute my research more broadly through their publications. I have been invited to deliver keynote addresses at conferences, most recently in Taiwan in 2001 and in Melbourne 2002. Several of my Drama models described in these publications (such as ‘The Baby on the Train’ and ‘Shopping’) have been successfully adapted by teachers in other contexts. Through my work with pre-service Drama teachers at the University of Sydney over the past ten years I have been able to put my research into practice, enhancing the development of professional craft knowledge.
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Appendices

1. List of Delegates at British Council Course 1987 "how do you train a drama teacher"
The British Council

How do you train a drama teacher?

Course 742

6 – 18 September 1987
Newcastle upon Tyne

Programme
Members of the course

Australia
Elizabeth Darvell, Speech and Drama Adviser, Goodwood Arts Centre, Goodwood, Tasmania
Liz Davis, Drama Curriculum Consultant, Department of Education, Studies Directorate, New South Wales
Brad Haasman, Lecturer in Drama, Brisbane College of Advanced Education, Queensland
Jennifer Simons, Lecturer, Catholic College of Education, Sydney

Austria
Professor Horst Goldemund, Teacher Trainer, Teacher Training College, Graz-Eggenberg

Belgium
Hugo Boets, Lecturer, Teachers Training College, Antwerp
Erik Vanhee, Staff Member, Flemish Folk High School, Brussels

Canada
Juliana Saxton, Theatre/Drama in Education, Theatre Department, University of Victoria
Dr Patrick Verriou, Assistant Professor, Language Education Department, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Denmark
Claus Jantzen, Research Fellow, Royal Danish School for Educational Studies, Århus
Torenn Kjelner, Lecturer in Drama in Education and Theatre Arts, Bergen College of Education and Århus Institute of Dramaturgy
Janek Szatkowski, Head, Drama/Theatre Department, University of Århus

Finland
Tintti Karpinen, Free-lance Drama Teacher, Helsinki

Federal Republic of Germany
Professor Herta-Elisabeth Renk, Chair of German Literature and German Language, Catholic University, Eichstätt

Iceland
Anna Jeppsen, Drama Teacher, Theoretical and Experimental School of Education, Reykjavik

Ireland
Patraig O'Cleirigh, Divisional Inspector of Schools, Department of Education, Dublin
Hugh O'Donnell, Lecturer, Department of English and Drama Studies, Thomond College of Education, Limerick
Patrick O'Dwyer, Psychologist and Inspector of Guidance Services, Department of Education, Dublin

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Ayala Yisrael, Director of Social Environmental Projects, Centre for Educational Technology, Tel-Aviv

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Hans Boekel, Drama Adviser, Institute of Education through the Arts, Rotterdam
Eline Boscha, Drama Teacher, Secondary School, Almere and Teacher Trainer, D'Witte Leil Centre, Amsterdam
Nelleke Douw, Drama Teacher, Institute of Education through the Arts, Rotterdam
Ank Meyer, Teacher, Drama School, Amsterdam
Paul van Engelen, Fellow for Drama, National Foundation for Curriculum Development, Amsterdam

New Zealand
Sally Pearce, Lecturer in Language (Drama), Auckland College of Education

Norway
Roger Humphris Avestrup, Head, Department of Drama, Teacher Training College, Elverum
Stig Eriksson, Lecturer in Drama, Teacher Training College, Bergen
Kari Mjøland Heggetad, Lecturer in Drama, Teacher Training College, Bergen
Aud Bergraf Sande, Lecturer in Drama, Teacher Training College, Stevanger

South Africa
Bernadette Ismail Mosa, Director, Educational Programmes Centre, Johannesburg
2. **List of presenters at first IDIERI 1995**
Research Paradigms and Presenters

1. Documentary/Theoretical

Cecily O’Neill, The Ohio State University
John O’Toole, Griffith University

2. Historical

Lowell Swartzell, New York University
Angela O’Brien, The University of Melbourne

3. Action Research and Reflective Practice: The Case Study

Brian Edmiston, The University of Wisconsin-Madison
Philip Taylor, Griffith University

4. Narrative and Artistic Research

David Booth, The University of Toronto
Rod Wissler, Queensland University of Technology

5. Longitudinal and Experimental Research

Lin Wright, Arizona State University
Jennifer Simons, The University of Sydney

6. Critical, Emancipatory and Feminist Research

John Carroll, Charles Sturt University
Sharon Grady, University of Texas

Cost: A $280 (Australian Dollar) registration fee, includes lunches but not accommodation or any expenses incurred through further studies.

Register early as numbers will be restricted to the first 35 who apply. Checks should be made payable in Australian dollars to Griffith University and sent immediately to:

Dr. Philip Taylor
Faculty of Education
Griffith University
Nathan QUEENSLAND 4111
AUSTRALIA
3. Preface to the NADIE Phoenix Project which I conceptualised and instigated in April 1996, during my term as the NADIE Primary Projects Officer
Phoenix Texts: A Window on Drama Practice in Australian Primary Schools

Edited by Tiina Moore
FORWARD

Jennifer Simons

This project originated from a request by primary teachers in NADIE that 'more should be done for primary.' In 1995 at the NADIE AGM during the IDEA conference in Brisbane, the office of Special Projects Officer (Primary) was created and I was elected to that office. My first task was to circulate a questionnaire to establish what the primary members had found most useful in the past. The common response was that publication of good lessons and networking during conferences was of most use. In this way primary teachers could share and discuss good drama practice, both in cross-curricular work and as an art form in its own right.

At that time the first NADIE research monograph had been published, documenting Master Classes taught by Cecily O'Neill and David Booth (1995). The format of this publication had made a big impact because it made these practical examples of drama work available in detail to people who were not at the sessions. It contextualised the issues which Philip Taylor, the editor, then discussed in the monograph. At the same time researchers such as Kate Donelan had helped promote ethnography and reflective practice as ways to unveil and refine classroom drama work.

The primary project sought to combine these two things: to publish examples of what good primary drama teachers in each state and territory of Australia actually did and to use ethnography and reflection-in-action to deconstruct that practice. In order to highlight similarities and differences, it was decided that each teacher would begin with the same "pre-text", a concept which Cecily O'Neill had introduced at the 1993 NADIE conference in Melbourne. Driving the Project was an intriguing question as to how different types of students in different places might be taught by drama teachers with different beliefs about drama and idiosyncratic responses to the same pre-text.
I sent a letter to each state asking every drama association to nominate at least one teacher whose work they admired, who would be prepared to lay bare their practice. I also asked that these teachers use ethnographic methods of reflecting on their work. We agreed to meet at the next NADIE conference, in Launceston to decide how this ideal might be realised. At this meeting in a Mexican restaurant, over a couple of Margaritas, we were all inspired by Tina Moore's suggestion that we use *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* (Van Allsburg, 1984) as the *pre-text*. It was clear then that creative and imaginative possibilities had begun. I stepped out of the picture at this point and am very excited to see this final product.

Jennifer Simons
Faculty of Education
University of Sydney
New South Wales
INTRODUCTION

Tiina Moore

Background

I first heard the term pre-text at a NADIE conference at the University of Melbourne in 1995. Cecily O'Neili was giving the keynote address and she described a drama lesson which developed from the inaccurately overheard concept of 'love in a bottle'. I can barely remember the lesson which eventuated, only the irony of a successful lesson from a bit of misinformation. As she spoke I can remember mentally scanning 20 years of drama resources in an effort to come to terms with those that might fall into the realm of a legitimate pre-text. I also remember a vague reassurance that my own insistence on returning to tried and tested story pre-tests, was not due to an inherent idleness but because particular stories like Jack and the Beanstalk and now a much larger collection of old favourites had something about them that enabled me to frame the drama more effectively, and perhaps more intensely than other resources I might have chosen.

Since that keynote address, Cecily O’Neill has conducted several workshops, cooperated with a monograph, finished a book, and 'launched a drama world' (Taylor, 1995) at an intensive Research Institute following the IDEA Congress in 1995. Australian teachers have had numerous opportunities to test their own 'old favourites' against the understandings that they have accumulated about pre-text. So how far have we come in our five years of exploration? The struggle to come to terms with the usefulness of the notion of pre-text takes us into the realm of: 'What is appropriate drama content?' and 'Is some content, by its nature, more conducive to good drama than others?' The primary project, with its special interest in pre-text was born from such fundamental concerns.
PHOENIX TEXTS: A Window on Drama Practice in Australian Primary Schools

One could be forgiven for suggesting that the only thing new that was required of participating teachers was the use of the word pre-text. As Cecily herself has publicly pointed out, it is easier to discuss what pre-text is not. (Focus and stimulus to name two)

Many Australian teachers have indeed been using headlines, pictures, stories, postcards, script excerpts, fairytales and the like to kick start their drama. Like me, they will have discovered that certain resources will have been more successful than others, more often. The notion of pre-text is not to be confused with stimulus in the way that a teacher may for example play a soundtrack of 'Romeo and Juliet' and ask students to devise a scene on the theme of violence. That is not to say one should never approach drama this way; indeed this approach may be quite useful in particular circumstances, but it is not (as I understand it) what Cecily O'Neill is examining.

Where Cecily O'Neill takes us further is in her thinking is in the analysis of what makes certain 'points of departure' more likely to 'work' in order that we can consciously recognise the characteristics that open those doors for cognitive and aesthetic understandings.

At one time I believed that almost any material or stimulus could be used as a springboard for exploration. It has become obvious to me that pre-texts must be selected very carefully. Not all potential pre-texts will easily evoke a dramatic world. The pre-text must be chosen, not just for the kind of story, theme or issue it contains, but also for specific characteristics .... in which appearance and reality, truth and deception, and role and identity may be contrasted and explored. (O'Neill, 1995, p. 136)

The Project

It was within the year of the IDEA Congress in 1995 that Jennifer Simons combined an interest in pre-text with an awareness of a lack of research in primary education in Australia. In her role as
Special Projects Officer for NADIE she collected a number of volunteers, nation-wide, who were willing to combine their primary level teaching practice with research about pre-text. She was interested in a 'warts-and-all' approach centring on the diversity, rather than the universality, of teaching practice. I was one of those volunteers. What excited me particularly in speaking to Jenny about the loosely conceived project was that, to my knowledge, never before had a range of teaching practices been examined from a single common denominator which we were coming to know as pre-text. The starting point had yet to be chosen. As it happened, it was not long afterwards that my own enthusiasm as a project participant evolved into that of project coordinator, when Jenny had occasion to take long service leave.

When the volunteers met in Launceston in 1996, they accepted the recommendation that The Mysteries of Harris Burdick (Van Allsburg, 1984) be the common pre-text for their drama work. Indeed, to fully appreciate the experiences of the teachers in this monograph, it is advisable for readers to obtain a copy of this major resource from a library or a quality bookshop. What a surprise to discover then, while in the report writing stages of this project, that Houghton Mifflin Co., the publishers of the picture book, had printed a portfolio version of the text 12 years after the original. An extra illustration was added in the folio edition and the mystery of Harris Burdick's disappearance, as introduced in the book, is deepened. As a story pre-text, it asks more questions than it answers yet provides a framework within which to operate. We are offered tantalising choices of characters, worlds and time frames.

Jenny's recommendation of an 'outside eye' was retained for the project although it was more practical in some teaching situations than in others, especially considering that initially all teaching practice was to be completed within a semester of reports and Christmas commitments. While all states and territories are not represented in this document, they were all invited to contribute.
The mandate for the work was purposefully broad. The volunteers were asked to choose:

- the age and class levels within the primary sector
- the distribution of the 3 hours of drama work
- the drama emphasis (from dramatic play to production)
- the nature of the record keeping
- the narrowness or breadth of the pre-selected pre-text
- an 'outside eye' (where possible)

The Outside Eye

The role of the co-researcher (student teacher, colleague) was to relieve some of the burden of analysis that would be necessary alongside the practice. It was advised that volunteers choose someone with whom they felt comfortable, someone sympathetic to drama practices and variables rather than someone who would carry out an 'educational commando raid' (Eisner, 1985, p.145) as an external researcher. The 'eye' could help with documentation and in several instances a third party (usually a student) was additionally recruited to assist with videotaping. It was felt that the 'eye' might also assist with planning, debriefing or role-play, where appropriate. The expertise concerning the work derived from what Philip Taylor (1996), recognising the prior work of Schön (1983), calls the 'reflective practice'. This view of the teacher reflecting on her own practice is central to this study.

One Victorian school democratised the process most effectively. Two teachers, both interested in the project worked as practitioners and researchers for each other. As a result, while the state of Victoria had already started out with two volunteers, you will discover that there are in fact three reports due to the fact that one school was generous enough to provide two teacher-researchers. If for that reason Victoria's entry seems to outweigh the other states in their contributions, it was due to the enthusiasm of the participants from Deepdale Primary School.
The Voices

It was heartening to observe from the seven reports received (from five states), the variety of drama practice evident across the country. Not surprisingly, the device of using tableaux with limited language, which was subsequently developed into fuller scenarios, was a common starting point for drama practitioners. The Van Alsburg illustrations themselves steer our thinking in this direction with the use of still images and provocative titles and captions. The project results also reflect the influence of Augusto Boal on Australian teachers particularly his work on Image Theatre and Dynamisation.

Within the parameters of process drama to production, three teachers have included story or script writing, one has set up news report writing, two have explored Mr. Burdick’s disappearance, all have included story building structures and tension creation, and one has used a TIE (Theatre in Education) model as a paradigm for classwork. There is an impressive balance in the performance/process drama classwork submitted. At the production end, the work that was started in the Drama Club in New South Wales became a search for the character of Harris Burdick. The ultimate major production used an entire school building as the setting in which to collect clues regarding an artist’s disappearance and provided a means of saying farewell to the school which was undergoing a significant move.

I can only regret that the report from Western Australia which suffered at the hands of the technology gremlins was not able to be included. It started with children who adopted the point of view of artists. While that practice rests in the mental filing cabinets of the participating teachers, the concept has intrigued me enough to pursue a collaboration with my own art department in an attempt to unlock some of the mysteries of Mr. Burdick’s life through the medium of charcoal drawings.
I should mention that in Drama Worlds (1995), O’Neill mentions pre-text solely in terms of its relationship to process drama, and indeed in most instances this is the context within which it would be found to be most useful. However, in a primary aged setting we were acutely aware that teachers would use an effective pre-text for a broader range of purposes than process drama alone, particularly as a way of generating oral and written language. Larry Swartz (1988) uses this wider notion of pre-text most effectively in Drama Themes, encompassing a broad-based language and arts curriculum which includes process drama as one of many choices, not an exclusive one.

Needless to say, it has been very difficult to find the balance between a consistency of format for each state and to honour the individual voices and styles of contributors. While report guidelines were provided, each writer decided whether the guideline categories were appropriate or useful. Each report therefore, has been very broadly divided into the three headings of: Setting the Scene (contextual information), Building the Story (lessons and structures), and Reflections. There is a final section, that draws together conclusions and considerations of our understandings of pre-text to date.

Finally, I have chosen the metaphor of the phoenix to introduce each chapter. O’Neill refers to the artists in theatre who make flexible use of classical plays:

The texts are not treasured as guardians of a specific meaning to be found, interpreted, and transmitted. Instead, in the light of post modernism, these plays are ‘matter awaiting meaning.’ They are points of departure, phoenix texts (my emphasis) that become material in a new art work and are played with and explored like objects in a game. (O’Neill, 1995, p.36)
As a practitioner who favours story drama as a 'point of departure' in class work, I am particularly drawn to the image of the phoenix rising from its ashes only to find new life in the effort of creating art. It is an image that helps me come to grips with the concept of pre-text and its shadowy attempt to take a new shape, and to provide a framework for a new story.

For others, who may prefer different sorts of clarifications to sharpen the lens on pre-text, Cecily O'Neil serves us well. The following characteristics and imagery have been extracted from the first Nadie monograph, Pre-text & Storydrama: The Artistry of Cecily O'Neil and David Booth (Taylor, 1995), and from her book Drama Worlds (1995):

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRETEXT

* provides a firm base for the dramatic encounter

* activates a dramatic world by a word, a gesture, a location, a story, an idea, an object, an image, a character or a script

* defines the nature and limits of the dramatic world

* implies roles for participants

* switches on expectation and binds the group in anticipation

* launches drama worlds with economy and clarity

* hints at the past and suggests the future within a firm dramatic present
Extract from letter & from article acknowledging the effectiveness of my drama model 'The Baby on the Train' when used with young offenders by teachers from the University of Reading in England.
23rd July

Dear Jenny

I really want to tell you about the way some of my PGCE students have been using your chapter in Helen’s book in schools. A few of them made excellent use of your ‘Baby on a train’ scheme with Year 7/8 pupils (11-13 year olds), adapting it to suit the needs of their various classes very well. Two of the students went on to do a placement in a young offenders institution and told me that they wanted to try the idea out with the boys there. Frankly, I was sceptical but they were both excellent students and reasoned their own way – good for them! I thought you might be interested to see how they wrote the project up. This isn’t a formal assignment but just an example of their diligence in wanting to make sense of their experiences. I’m delighted that one of these students, Tori, has got a job at Sarah and Rachel’s school in September. She is intending to follow up her link with the young offenders’ institution in the Autumn to produce an essay which will give her an ‘Advanced Standing’ qualification to add to the PGCE. The other student, Noelle, is also working locally and intending to do the same. If, therefore, you have any comments to make about the way they have taken your idea on I would be delighted to be able to forward them to the students and know that they would be very grateful to hear what you think about their work.

In the meantime, I’m in the process of sorting out the last few bits and pieces before taking a break myself. We’re off to the Greek island of Zante in a couple of weeks which we’re looking forward to.

Hope you are well.

Lots of love

Andy
Evaluation Sheet - "Baby on the Train"

FIRST NAME:Hamam Mohamed
AGE: 16

How did you feel about introducing yourself at the start of the session?
I did not really mind. I knew a majority of people who were in the class

In your opinion, what is the biggest problem that parents face?
Babies walking in the middle of the night
Crying needing attention.

List three skills needed for good parenting.
• Patience
• Be able to care and provide for child
• Be able to know what the baby needs and the signs.

Why do you think the baby was left on the train?
I think the baby was left on the train because the mother could not have been able to care and provide for the baby and probably be having a mid-life crisis of some sort.

What did you like about the character you created on the train?
It reflected me in a way because I also talk on mobiles and travel on trains to west end with friends, to go shopping in sports shops and designer shops.

In the improvisation between Tor (the mother) and Noelle (the daughter), who did you support and why?
I supported Tor because she has been caring for the baby most of the week and Noelle is just taking advantage of what her mother is doing for her.
Foreword
V. Worsfold

Before I came into teaching I had worked at Warleigh Manor School for EBD boys, and this is where my interest for working with disturbed adolescents stems from. At Warleigh Manor I taught drama to boys aged 11 to 13 and also helped as a care assistant with boys up to 16. Warleigh also awakened the interest for teaching and became the reason why I decided to take up the challenge of a PGCE. I have always been interested in working with EBD children and the PGCE course at Reading University seemed the prime opportunity to learn about teaching so as I could build a fool proof grounding in secondary education in order to see me in good stead for a further career in specialised teaching.

When the opportunity came up to work for four weeks in a young offenders institute I was obviously very interested. This seemed to be the perfect opportunity to solidify and develop my existing teaching skills and also to learn from those who teach in the unit full time.

I was naturally a little apprehensive about the prospect of working in a prison. My main concern was the age of the inmates in comparison with my own age; the eldest inmates would only be four years younger than me. I felt that this would have a direct influence over the way the boys would respond to me. I felt that I would not be able to gain the same amount of trust or authority that being older could have achieved without any conscious thought.

I expected the prison to be a very strict regime, with tight schedules to be met and rigid rules to work by. I was intrigued by the notion of how drama with all its possible creativity would work in this dictated institute.

I was also very interested to know exactly what these boys would be capable of in terms of drama now that I would be able to facilitate the drama in many more approachable ways (since the PGCE).
All the trainees were engaged in the lesson but the quality of understanding from the majority of the group was fairly limited, only two boys offered sensitive and valuable comments and answers to my questions. This makes apparent the vast amount of teaching that needs to be done with boys such as these, in order for them to function successfully in society.
This lesson is the very first lesson that Noelle and myself taught at Huntercombe young offenders institute. Before our visit, we had discussed whether this lesson was appropriate or relevant to the inmates we would be teaching. I had pushed for the lesson to be kept in, as I believed that the discussion of the difficulties brought about by childcare would be an interesting and valuable experience for the boys. I was aware that it would not have been unusual for many of these boys to have children of their own, and in the first lesson we were proved right. One out of the six ‘trainees’ (the drama studios more tactful description for the inmates) did indeed have two children even though he himself was still only the tender age of 17.

I felt quite anxious and apprehensive before the lesson began but I had learnt very quickly from my first day, that confidence is every thing. If any of these boys detects that you are uncomfortable or unsure (and their skills for this are acute, often these are the only skills they have, these skills have got them through their difficult lives so far: will this person kill me, or feed me, or love me, or beat me) they will work on this weakness until they have broken you. We began the lesson over-confidently, over-exaggeratedly and over-the-top, the boys were stunned (probably by these two mad women) and intrigued and found themselves joining in with the lesson.

Learning the names of these boys was equally as important as showing your confidence. The fact that Noelle and myself learnt the names of the boys so quickly showed that were interested in these boys as individuals and that they were important enough for us to take interest in. It was immediately apparent that this had happened and we could use this as a re-engaging tool: “you remembered my name miss”.

All the same behaviour management techniques applied to this lesson as would apply to a secondary school lesson: e.g. stopping speaking to stare at the culprit who interrupted etc... except for one vital thing, you could not exert authority at all. If at any time one of us had said “stop interrupting, it is very rude” the reality is we would have probably been violently attacked or at least verbally abused. Therefore the skill comes with your persuasion tactics: “could you come and sit down because I have something important to ask you/ I would like to know what you think” and coupled with that the ‘hook’ of the lesson: engaging tasks that are interesting and diverse.
5. Letter from Curriculum Directorate
Dear Jennifer

Thank you for your contribution to the arts action project.

Teachers are finding that the extensive range of materials, particularly the videos illustrating classroom situations, is especially valuable for developing teaching strategies. arts action is practical, informative and addresses real needs.

Your contribution to this cooperative venture has been extremely important.

In appreciation of your expertise and generosity, please find enclosed your complimentary copy of arts action.

Regards

Reg Newitt
CEO Creative Arts
5 November 2002
6. Invitation from Taiwan
Invitation

2nd April, 2001

Dear Ms Jennifer Simons:

We are very happy to invite you to be a keynote speaker and hold a 「Drama in Education」 workshop for our conference on July in Taipei. Enclosed, please find the more detailed conference timetable.

Everybody here is expecting and glad to meet with you soon.

Sincerely yours

Cross-Border Educational & Cultural Foundation
Director

Chung Chiao
7. Selection of publications not presented in this portfolio.


Simons J 1997 ‘Drama Pedagogy and The Art of Double Meaning’ in Research in Drama Education vol 2, 2 (September)


Simons J 1998 Dramatic Art, Ambiguity and recruiting Difference Nadie Journal Vol 22 no 1

Simons J & Ewing R 1998 "Using Drama to promote Critical Literacy in the primary Classroom" in Australian Drama Education Magazine no 4 pp18-21

Simons J, 2000 Creativity Processes and the Primary Classroom The Primary Educator vol 6 no1

Simons J 2000, Literacy and Drama: 'Intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic', ADEM (Australian Drama Education Magazine) no 5, Drama Australia Publications

Ewing R & Simons J 2000 The Great Bear: A Unit The Primary Educator Vol6 no 3

Simons J 2001 in Voices of Australian Women Working in Drama, Theatre and Education compiled by Christine Comans and Penny Bundy NJ vol 25, 1, 2001
Publications following invited Keynote addresses


Simons J. 1994 Keynote for Association of Independent Schools Conference ‘Whose Text is it Anyway?: The Impact of Post - Structuralism upon the Selection and Teaching of HSC Drama Texts; Educational Services Directorate Sydney

Reviews


Simons J 1998 Review of How to Research Blaxter/Hughes/Tight in Research In Drama Education Vol 3 no 2

Simons J 1998 Review of Como Querem Beber Agua by Morelos R in NADIE vol.22 no.1


Simons J 2000 Review of "Hooked on Drama" K Warren, Drama Australia, vol 24 no 2

Scripts

Simons J & Ewing R 1999 "Navigating Drama K-6" script for DETYA video

Simons J 2001 CD ROM Drama K-6
Enhancing the use of Professional Craft Knowledge in Process Drama Teaching

A portfolio submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

Doctor of Education
from
University of Western Sydney

by

Jennifer Margaret Simons

B.A., Dip. Ed., University of Sydney
M.A., University of Sydney
M.A., University of NSW

November 2002
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
Abstract

The research articles in this portfolio describe and analyse how process drama teachers use the special combination of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and knowledge gained in ‘lifeworld’ experiences (described in this portfolio as their ‘professional craft knowledge’) in order to promote learning. These publications also provide a detailed description of methods used in pre-service teacher education at the University of Sydney to enhance the development of professional craft knowledge in beginning teachers.

The studies in the portfolio are framed within an interpretive research paradigm; the subject matter of the research is the way that teachers and learners in process drama collaborate to construct meaning. The methodology is primarily reflective practitioner research, recently described as one of drama’s ‘own innovative recommended research designs’ (Rasmussen & Ostern 2002: 10). Qualitative methods have been used to collect and analyse relevant data. Separate sources of data are used to check the trustworthiness of the findings, through the process of crystallization: the alignment of sources such as reflective journals, outside observations, video records and oral reflections.

Professional craft knowledge is developed by individual teachers as they reflect in action on the choices they see as available to them, as they work with their own classes. Often teachers are not conscious of the expertise they are developing; it quickly becomes tacit, embodied knowledge. However, reflecting upon their actions, teachers can usually explain why they acted as they did.

The research articles in this Portfolio make use of reflection in and upon action in order to deconstruct the work of process drama teaching. As a collection these articles also examine how the use of reflective practices in pre-service education can facilitate and enhance the development of craft knowledge before teachers enter the profession.
Dedication

For my children
Ben and Lisa
Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the many people who have contributed both personally and professionally to the completion of this Research Portfolio.

I acknowledge the importance of my friends and peers within the drama teaching community, both Australian and International scholars. I owe many people a debt of gratitude for their intelligent discussion, constructive criticism and continuing support.

I wish to thank colleagues at the Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney for their friendship and scholarly support. Thanks especially to Dr Robyn Ewing, an inspiration and a good friend. I also wish to acknowledge my drama students at the University, for the many ways they have contributed to this research, and to the school students in NSW who have been such an important part of my work.

Special thanks is due to my supervisor Dr Janice Hall for her support and guidance, and unfailingly cheerful dedication. Thanks also to Mary Mooney, my co-supervisor, for her helpful feedback and support when I needed it.

A special thanks is due to my family who have always believed in me and supported my work. My late father, Frank Montgomery, instilled in us all a love of learning and a belief in the emancipating power of education.
Certificate

I certify that the material in this portfolio, except where otherwise acknowledged in the text, is my own original work, and that it has not been previously submitted towards a higher degree at any other university or institution.
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Introduction

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time*

*T S. Eliot: Little Gidding (from The Four Quartets)*

The research publications in this Portfolio arose from questions about how expert drama teachers develop educational connoisseurship (Eisner 1977), and whether tertiary educators can enhance its development in pre-service teachers. These questions led to my research of ‘professional craft knowledge’, a concept emerging from Schon’s work on the reflective practitioner (1983, 1987) and explored extensively by researchers over the next decade (eg Shulman 1986, Brown & McIntyre 1993, Calderhead 1996). Schon suggests that professionals do not simply apply academic knowledge to practical problems, but rather they develop

‘an extensive body of highly context specific craft knowledge that enables them to relate their past experience with current problems, attempt to define these problems and test out possible solutions to them’ (Calderhead1996: 11)

As a result of research that I conducted 1999 -2002 it is my contention that a teacher’s ability to draw on his/her professional craft knowledge is crucial for effective teaching/learning in process drama, and that this ability can and should be promoted in pre-service education. The six publications that emerged from this research form the core of my portfolio: three are chapters in books and three are articles in refereed journals. Two of the publications are co-authored, though I am the chief author of each. As a body of work, this portfolio marks a change in my research perspective since 1996, when I moved away from quantitative analysis towards my current research stance, which is more qualitative and uses self-reflective methods. The reasons

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1 The first person is used throughout this portfolio. This personal genre is appropriate for reflective practitioner research, and for expressing my growth in critical understanding.
for this change are discussed in the next section of this introduction, (i) ‘arriving at the research question’.

The overarching statement in Chapter 1 explores the ways that each publication relates to my overall research question: ‘how can tertiary education enhance the development of professional craft knowledge by teachers of process drama?’ Each publication is placed in context and analysed in terms of how the research has affected my own drama praxis and impacted more broadly on the drama teaching profession.

(i) Arriving at my research question.

The first stage of this research journey began in 1987 when, after seven years as a tertiary educator, I took my first study leave in England. I was invited to be part of a course led by Gavin Bolton entitled *How do you train a drama teacher?* involving thirty drama educators from fifteen different countries (see Appendix 1). Over two weeks of intensive work we participants explored ways of ‘training teachers’ (as it was called at that time) by enacting and analysing practices from our own countries. Over the next six months of my leave I continued to work with practitioners like Gavin Bolton, David Davis, David Hornbrook, Malcolm Ross and Ken Byron and became convinced by their methods that learning to teach must start with critiquing modelled practice, and coming to know in the body. My belief was that critically reflecting on what really *does* happen in practice is more enabling for teachers than a theoretical explanation of what someone feels *should* occur, and that learning to trust one’s own somatic response is important for reflecting in action.

Upon my return to Australia I put my beliefs into practice. Working with University students, as well as more experienced teachers attending drama conferences, I modelled ‘Drama in Education’, and invited participants to deconstruct the teaching/learning processes, both during and after the sessions. I wrote reports reflecting on my practice and its underpinning theory and these were published in journals and books. For example, one such publication (Simons, 1989)
detailed the processes in a piece of playbuilding that I called 'The Sinking Island'. It explored the 'universal' of 'having to leave the place that you love'.

My own teaching in the eighties was based upon Dorothy Heathcote's contention that drama is a medium for social learning. Following her methodology I sought ways to combine individual students into a group, mainly using her planning technique of 'universalising'. I understood this to mean linking the students' ideas to timeless 'truths' about 'humanity', and facilitating the group to achieve the same outcomes. At the time it did not occur to me that some of these concepts were problematic.

The second stage of my research journey began in 1993 when I studied semiotics as part of a Master of Philosophy course in Performance Studies. Unpacking the construction and interpretation of the sign systems of Theatre strengthened my belief that drama too could be researched as a series of phenomena which can be specified, observed and perhaps even measured. I was particularly interested in using semiotics to understand how young audiences make meaning from what they see. In 1994 I completed a longitudinal research project in Theatre in Education, following performances by Zeal Theatre at three schools. I asked audience members to choose from 120 photographs (taken during the hour-long performance) those moments that they thought were significant. Audience choices which matched the actors' choice of photographs were interpreted as 'significant moments', where the intended dramatic impact was realised. The research was published (Simons 1994) and I was invited to run workshops with ZEAL Theatre in Melbourne and New Zealand.

Because of the success of this research I was invited in 1995 to be a key-note presenter at the first International Drama In Education Research Institute (IDIERI), which explored a range of research paradigms (see Appendix 2). Feeling uncomfortable with the label 'empiricist' which had been applied to my research, I was forced to reflect on my methodological stance. Whilst it was true that my project had involved empirical research features (the use of photographs and a quantitative analysis of responses) I had also used qualitative methods (observation and in depth
interviews with the students and with the actors) and I felt that the latter had yielded more interesting and useful information than the statistics. I didn’t believe that my statistical report described the complexity of the theatre experience, merely one aspect of it. Struggling to find an acceptable way to explain my work, I began my IDIERI presentation by stating that I didn’t believe that I fitted into the empiricist paradigm, and invited the audience to decide for themselves. The challenge was readily accepted by the international participants.

This presentation (Simons 1995) was an important catalyst for a change in thinking about my teaching practice and my research methods. In discussing my project with the international participants I realised that by focussing on the students who had ‘successfully’ matched the actors’ intentions, I had ignored different or aberrant responses. These could have been a richer source of information about learning in Drama. The research could have explored the diversity hinted at in the interviews, reflecting that a wide range of meanings was being made by the audience during the play. I was challenged to rethink my understanding of the concept ‘universals’, and to consider whether some student interests and attitudes are repressed by the dominant paradigm. Perhaps seeking commonality is not what a drama teacher should be doing. I felt a need to re-think my research methods, and my research question itself.

In 1996 I completed a second study leave, this time in UK, Canada and USA. The focus of my research was whether a group of people could work collectively on concepts which hold different meanings for different people. At a Sydney University seminar before I left I heard anthropologist Gillian Cowlishaw describe her research into Central Australian Aboriginal culture, using the metaphor of a palimpsest. She reported that, beneath the State’s apparently successful erasure of Aboriginal systems of belief, they mostly remain intact, like the covered-up painting in a palimpsest. Occasionally there is a break in the surface of conformity and then the hidden beliefs shine through. Applying this to my own research, I realised that semiotic analysis may not account for all the important elements of how people think: not everything is available to an outside observer.
In England I attended the *Dimensions of Literacy* conference, and heard the New London Group (Bill Cope, Mary Kalantzis, Gunther Kress et al) argue that teachers should promote ‘a cohesive sociality, a new civility in which differences are used as a productive resource and in which differences are the norm. When learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, styles and approaches, they gain substantively in meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic abilities and in their ability to reflect critically on complex systems and their interactions’ (New London Group, 1996: 69). The idea that teachers should actively recruit differences, rather than ignoring or trying to erase them, fitted with Cowlishaw’s discovery that they cannot be totally erased anyway.

In Canada several personal experiences increased my interest in forms of knowledge that are less easily accessed and observed. I had been invited to give a key-note address at a drama conference at Niagara-on-the-Lake. From 1967 until 1969 I had in fact lived in Canada but I had not been back in nearly thirty years. I had forgotten that I had spent time in this very town, and it was not until I walked into Fort George for a workshop that I recalled it. Being there released memory stored in the body, and strong visual images of my younger self came flooding back. I recalled being present in this space thirty years ago with my husband and new baby. I was almost overpowered. How could I have forgotten?

Prior to the conference I was struck by a newspaper article¹ where Shields described how after many visits she (and others) developed the ability to communicate with a road-accident victim who could only ‘speak’ through her expressive use of the eyes. This connected with my interest in cultural studies, especially with Bruner who argues that, since meaning is culturally situated

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¹ Shields wrote "I had to look at her, had to acknowledge that in that motionless flesh sits a person who sees, thinks and understands." She reflects on the nature of eye contact as a means of communication: "When we are young our eyes strike up conversations with cats, they tell trees about wonder, they seduce our mothers. Then we learn words and we trade the clean speech of our eyes for the endless corridors of English. As we grow up our eyes shut down. Their vocabulary narrows until they speak only the simplest sentences - those of love and hate. Even then we generally reserve these visual declarations only for those closest to us. We are unsure of eyes. We read them poorly, tentatively, then stumble over believing what we see there. The power of eyes lies uncomfortably beyond easy explanation" (Globe & Mail 2/11/96)
and knowledge distributed, learning will increase through the development of metacognition and intersubjectivity (Bruner 1996). I felt both a personally intuited and rationally convinced acceptance that drama teachers must not only develop in their students ‘body knowing’ and metacognition, but they must also broker with their students a collaborative form of intersubjectivity that goes beyond the surface.

My keynote at the Canadian conference (Simons 1996) presented the idea that ‘functional ambiguity’ could be an alternative to ‘the universal’ – that is, planning could be based on an idea or metaphor chosen as the starting point of a drama specifically because it could give rise to different meanings for different individuals. Teachers could deliberately use open, ambiguous themes and resources in order to elicit a range of responses, and then support students as they risk the negotiation of meaning.

However, this led to more questions to explore: if teachers invite repressed voices to speak out, how do they help those students manage the risk of going public? How can teachers find a direction for a collective piece of drama in spontaneous, open-ended teaching? How do they know what participants really think; what sort of observations are useful? Are expected outcomes realistic in drama planning? My exploration of questions like these has led to my research of professional craft knowledge through qualitative methods, which have proved to be effective in producing the data articulated and explored in these studies.

(ii) The Methodology of the Portfolio

Because drama occurs in a negotiated reality it throws the taken-for-granted structural limitations of the school social context into high relief. It is this social context of education, the institutionalised group nature of the encounter between teachers and students, that constitutes the reality of the day-to-day classroom teaching that drama illuminates (Carroll 1996, 72)
The research in this Portfolio emerges from an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism is based on a belief that knowledge is socially created, and that the researcher's task is to interpret the subjective meanings operating within the group being researched. Interpretivism takes "everyday experience ... as its subject matter and asks how meaning is constructed and social interaction negotiated in social practice" (Scott & Usher, 1999: 25).

The particular social practices which are the subject of investigation in each of my publications in this Portfolio are the practices of specific teachers and learners engaged in process drama classes.

Within this paradigm the task of the researcher is "to get inside the person and understand from within" (Cohen & Manion 1989: 3). In order to do this I have used the methodology of reflective practitioner research, recently described as one of drama's 'own innovative recommended research designs' (Rasmussen & Ostern 2002:10). This methodology requires that the researcher is able to scrutinize the immediate context, accepting that reality is multiple and shifting (Taylor, 1996). Reflective practitioner research is not about proving an 'objective' reality as much as establishing and clarifying what the researcher comes to understand as a result of his/her investigation. Reflective practitioner research begins with a broad question (making it different from action research which begins with a particular hypothesis). Moreover, in my chosen methodology it is accepted that the starting question itself may change as observations are made and data is gathered. The researcher modifies his/her actions in response to changes in the context, the participants and the activity.

The methods used to collect and analyse data are qualitative and descriptive. In addition to the researcher's own observations, data was gathered from journal reflections, outside observers, video records and interviews with the participants. Multiple sources of data were used to balance the practitioner's own observations, in order to minimise the possibility of errors in interpretation. These sources were aligned and analysed, in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. In some of these research publications I myself am the reflective practitioner; in
other articles I am primarily an outside observer of other people’s reflective practice. In some publications I am a co-researcher combining other people’s practices with my own in order to develop theory.

Richardson uses the term 'crystallizing' to describe what happens when different sources of data are aligned to check reliability:

"Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose” (Taylor 1996: 45).

Each researcher needs to declare his/her subjective positioning as part of the research: their 'angle of repose' is important. Using qualitative research methods “demands a discovery of self, a recognition of how one inter-acts with others, and how others read and are read by this interaction” (Taylor 1996).

My earlier description of my own background in drama is intended as an indication of how I arrived at my own current angle of repose. As this description shows, the research question of this portfolio: 'How can tertiary education enhance the use of professional craft knowledge by teachers of process drama?' derives from the question that first interested me in 1987: ‘How do you train a drama teacher?’. I find that as a researcher I have come full circle; hence my use of the T.S.Eliot quotation at the introduction to my portfolio.

(iii) How the Portfolio is Structured

Chapter 1 is an overarching statement which explores my research question. It also describes the relationships between the individual research studies and the ensuing publications. This chapter is organised around three core questions which relate to process drama, professional craft knowledge and pre-service teacher development.
Chapters 2-5 contain the publications and their contextualising prefaces. The articles are not ordered chronologically by the publication dates; rather they are organised to develop a cohesive argument that the professional craft knowledge of a drama teacher can and should be fostered in tertiary education. The chapters which contain the publications move from simpler descriptions of process drama to more complex explications of the theory and practices underpinning an effective use of professional craft knowledge.

Chapter 2 is entitled **The Nature of Process Drama.** It contains two publications, placed first in the portfolio because both describe and analyse process drama teaching. The first, entitled ‘Walking in another person’s shoes: storytelling and roleplay’ was commissioned by editor Helen Nicholson to be the opening chapter in the book *Teaching Drama 11-18*. This was a prestigious invitation: I was the only Australian writing for a book used extensively by an international audience of secondary teachers. My brief was to address year seven teachers, focusing on two key drama concepts - role and story. I used these to help define the nature of process drama, giving examples of some Australian research, including my own. The second publication, entitled ‘Playbuilding: more than the sum of the parts’, was written for the book *Drama Pathways in Primary School* which supports teachers using the NSW Primary Creative Arts syllabus. Commissioned by editors Mooney and Nicholls, my chapter draws on my own praxis, giving a detailed example of process drama, described here as an important first stage in the Playbuilding process.

Chapter 3 is entitled **Knowing in Drama.** The two publications it contains are grouped together because they explore what the participants in process drama come to know, and how they arrive at this knowledge. The articles also describe how drama teachers maximise the benefits of collaboration and aesthetic learning. Both of these publications are co-authored. I wrote the first, *Developing ‘collaborative creativity’* with Peter Bateman, a teacher-educator from Namibia. The genesis of the research came from me, and I am responsible for over 60% of the writing. We explored the concept of creativity in the Arts, and tried to define how group creativity was differently understood in our two countries. This article was published in the
refereed journal Drama Australia, in January 2000. The second publication is entitled 'Using practical knowledge of the creative arts to foster learning'. It was commissioned by the editors of the book Practice Knowledge and Expertise in the Health Professions which explores craft knowledge and professional practice in several fields. I wrote this chapter with Dr Robyn Ewing. I am first author, with Dr Ewing's agreement, because I did over 60% of the writing. This chapter introduces my application of the phrase “professional craft knowledge” to the knowledge base of a drama teacher. The research for this article led to a break-through in my own understanding of how a teacher decides mid lesson between alternative paths, an ability that is crucial in process drama.

Chapter 4, entitled Professional Craft Knowledge in Action, contains a single publication which exemplifies the use of professional craft knowledge in process drama. This article, Following the Leader: an observation of the work of Brad Haseman on 'leaderly' Process drama, records and reflects on my close observation of an expert at work. This occurred at the IDEA conference in Norway in 2001, where Haseman explored what he calls 'leaderly drama', the concept that I call the 'professional craft knowledge of a process drama teacher'. I observed and recorded Haseman's session, and analysed this particular example of professional craft knowledge in action. I was the sole author of the subsequent refereed article, which was published as a companion piece to Haseman's theoretical exposition of 'leaderly drama'.

Chapter 5 is entitled Teaching as a Moral Enterprise. It contains a single article, 'drama and the Learner' published in the refereed journal Melbourne Studies in Education. I was invited to write this article as a lead for the November 2002 special edition, dedicated to drama. Using examples from my own praxis I articulated how the use of professional craft knowledge promotes critical pedagogy. This article completes the research cycle contained in this portfolio. It focuses on the purpose of education, seen here as a moral enterprise, dedicated to the emancipation of the learner.
Chapter 6 reviews the Portfolio as a whole. It analyses the sum of the parts, and assesses the impact of my research on drama praxis and research in Australia and overseas.

(iv) **Summary Diagram of the publications**

Figure 1 is a brief pictorial overview of the research articles in this Portfolio. It tabulates the focus and professional impact of each piece of research, as well as the chronology of each publication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article/ Date</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Simons J  
"Walking in another person's shoes: storytelling & role-play"  
*September 2000* | An exploration of the use of role and story in process drama; it also gives examples of praxis, showing the balance between planning and dealing with the unexpected. It cites examples of my own and other Australian research. | This is the opening chapter in a book *Teaching drama 11-18* (ed. Nicholson H) aimed at an international audience. | My chapter uses Australian praxis to exemplify the teaching of process drama in junior years. I was the only Australian writer in this book, used as a text by tertiary educators around the world. |
| 2. Simons J  
"Playbuilding: more than the sum of the parts"  
in *Press* | Playbuilding (a term used in the NSW syllabus) makes use of process drama techniques to create a play. My chapter draws on my own praxis; it offers an example of process drama teaching and describes its underlying theory. | This Chapter was commissioned for the book *Drama Pathways in Primary School* (ed. M. Mooney & J. Nicholls) Currency Press | This book is a major support document for the NSW K-6 Creative Arts syllabus. My chapter demystifies Playbuilding, the most sophisticated form of teaching/learning in the book, and deconstructs a model that teachers can adapt. |
| 3. Simons J & Bateman P  
"Developing collaborative creativity"  
*January 2000* | Adapting theories of creativity to the facilitation of group creations in process drama; comparing African and Australian examples It also explored aspects of aesthetic learning. | Refereed Journal Drama Australia (nj) vol 24 no. 1, 2000. | This research was itself an example of collaboration across cultures - putting the theory into practice. It was selected for publication after it was presented at the 3rd world congress of IDEA in Kenya, Africa |
| 4. Simons J & Ewing R  
"Using practical knowledge of the creative arts to foster learning"  
January 2001 | In the light of the concept 'craft knowledge' this publication re-frames the skills, knowledge and attitude needed to teach in, through and about process drama. Knowing in the body, and other less observable aspects of knowing are explored. | Chapter 24 in the book *Practice Knowledge and Expertise in the Health Professions* edited Higgs & Titchen. This book is aimed at people working with 'clients' in a range of caring professions. | This chapter describes & explores the professional craft knowledge of a drama teacher. Because other chapters were by researchers in other professions it reached an audience broader than arts teachers. |
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| 5. Simons, J  
"Following the leader: an observation of the work of Brad Haseman on 'leaderly' process drama"  
August 2002 | This article is a detailed observation & analysis of the specific processes used by an expert: it details his craft knowledge in action. It is published as a companion piece with Haseman's article. | The refereed journal *Playing Betwixt and Between: the IDEA Dialogues* followed the IDEA conference in Bergen, Norway 2001. | Thirty-one articles only were selected after the 4th IDEA world congress for this most prestigious drama journal. My theorising uses 'craft knowledge' to analyse Haseman's demonstration of 'leaderly Drama' |
| 6. Simons, J  
"Drama and the Learner"  
November 2002 | Using examples from my own praxis, this article focuses on critical pedagogy. It explores craft knowledge as a means to an end: the emancipation of the learner. | Published in special edition of refereed journal, *Melbourne Studies in Education* vol 44 no 2 November 2002 entitled "Powerful Pedagogy: Drama and Learning" | This publication was commissioned as one of the lead articles for a special drama edition of *MSE*. It is a recognition of my status in Australian Drama. |

Figure 1