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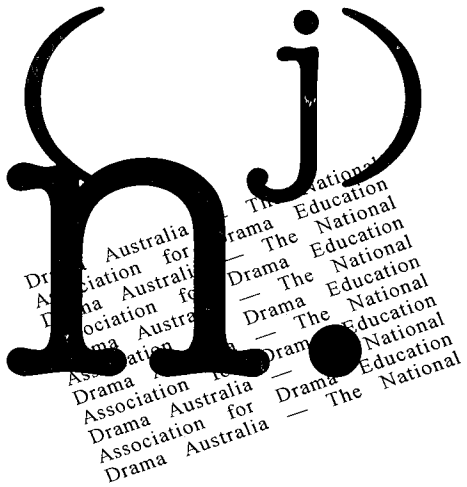

Drama Australia — the National Association for Drama Education

Volume 28 Number 2, 2004

A refereed publication of Drama Australia — the National Association for Drama Education

NJ (Drama Australia Journal)
NJ is a refereed publication of Drama Australia
the National Association for Drama Education
ISSN 1445-2294

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CONTENTS

Editorial 3
Prue Wales

Illuminated texts: From Home to the Home-Page 5
John O'Toole

Cooking Drama and Drama Education in the Global Kitchen 15
Brad Haseman

Glamorous Thinking — Positioning Drama as a Means to Enhance Different Thinking Purposes 25
Julie Porteus

Drama Futures: Possibilities for Research, Advocy and Policy in the 20th Century .. 31
Michael Anderson

Unpacking the Drama Process as Intellectually Rigorous — "The teacher gives you the bones of it and we have to act the muscles" 41
Margery Hertzberg

Competency in Australian Drama Teachers: Mapping the Terrain 55
Peter Wright and Rod Gerber

Obituaries

Peter Slade: Child Drama Pioneer 68
Kate Donelan

Lowell Swortzell: Pioneer in Educational Theater 70
Philip Taylor

REVIEWS

Review Editor: Kate Donelan

Title and Author	Reviewer	Page
Into the Story: Language in Action Through Drama by Carole Miller and Juliana Saxton	Joanne O'Mara	71
Creating Frames: Contemporary Indigenous Theatre by Maryrose Casey	Angela O'Brien	74
Instant Shakespeare: A Practical Guide for Actors, Teachers and Directors by Louis Fantasia	Deborah Field Farago	76
Children, meaning-making and the arts Susan Wright (Ed.)	Sandra Gattenhof	78
The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama W.B. Worthen (Ed.)	Richard Sallis	80
The state of our art: NSW perspectives in educational drama Christine Hatton and Michael Anderson (Eds.)	Robin Pascoe	81

NJ (Drama Australia Journal)

NJ was established in 1976 to enable drama teachers across Australia to exchange ideas on the theory and practice of educational drama. **Drama Australia, the National Association for Drama Education** is a federation of eight state and territory associations and is a founding member of the International Association for Drama/Theatre and Education (IDEA).
Membership of Drama Australia provides access to drama and arts education across Australia and internationally. Drama Australia is represented on the National Education Forum, the National Association of Arts Educators, and is affiliated with the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association.

NJ has become in recent times a leading Australian and international refereed publication in the field. All articles in ***NJ*** **(Drama Australia Journal)** are peer reviewed. The peer review process involves assessment of the publication in its entirety — not merely an abstract or extract — before publication. The assessment process is conducted by appropriately independent (assessors are sent no information concerning the authorship of the article) qualified experts. Referee guidelines and criteria for evaluation are available from the editor. ***NJ*** is published twice a year.

NJ welcomes the following types of contributions:

papers presenting a variety of research methods
scholarly pieces of writing exploring theory
reflective analysis of practice
position papers on significant issues
accounts of a significant drama phenomenon
reviews
interviews
letters

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Notes for Contributors on page 83

Deadline for 29:1	(special IDEA issue)	20 December 2004 for May publication
29:2	—	1 June 2005 for October publication

Book reviews on drama texts and related areas of pedagogy can be sent at any time to the Review Editor, Kate Donelan, Faculty of Education,
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Cover Design Claudio Mazzarella and David Recchia
Copy Editor Rod Lumer
Printer Goprint, Brisbane

EDITORIAL

I am sure those of you who attended the 2003 Drama Australia Conference *Coming Home* held in Brisbane will remember the challenging and engaging keynote addresses that stimulated considerable discussion amongst the delegates. For those of you who didn't make it, you are in for a treat! This edition of ***NJ*** opens with two of the keynote papers both of which explore how modern technology is changing worldviews and the resulting impact on drama education.

John O'Toole identifies the 'illuminating' qualities of drama in an inter-textual world. In his examination of oral, written and cyber texts, O'Toole discusses their powers and outlines how they can impact upon each other. He reflects on the dichotomous nature of written texts that have the ability to both liberate and oppress. Drama, asserts O'Toole performs an essential task in challenging and destabilising any 'assumptions' and 'truths' the written word proclaims. In this new world of digitalisation, however, the written word has found a competitor in 'cyber text'. O'Toole identifies some of the elements drama shares with 'cyber' technologies such as playfulness, anarchy and subversion. He concludes that drama plays a vital role in our changing world, not only as a 'fourth literacy' but also as a beacon of light, a powerful tool of deconstruction.

Brad Haseman highlights the role drama can play in reviving education in these changing times. Employing the playful metaphor of cooking, Haseman explores some of the serious issues challenging drama educators in a period of technological revolution. Reflecting on how gastronomy has been adapted and hybridised with the advancement of new technologies, Haseman identifies similar trends in drama education. Hybridisation of styles, he asserts, is part of twenty first century culture and drama educators need to understand these changes and be flexible, reinventing not only themselves but also education. Haseman attests that drama educators need to embrace a new paradigm and find new platforms from which to teach students.

As a leader in the education of pre-service teachers, **Julie Porteus** is in a strong position to explore some of these new platforms. Porteus examines Tasmania's new learning framework which centres around student thinking to demonstrate the role of drama as an 'intellectual activity'. Porteus explores modes of thinking and advocates drama's capacity as a thinking medium. She discusses how experiences in drama can heighten and advance skills in different forms of thinking and promote complex cognitive understanding. Drawing on much of the literature around the notions of thinking, Porteus take us through the types of thinking drama promotes to deliver an exciting, engaging and contemporary curriculum.

Michael Anderson attests that drama education has made some exciting and significant advances over recent years and challenges us to avoid becoming complacent but to continue to stress the importance of drama in the curriculum. In an age of accountability where teachers are more often required to demonstrate patent evidence of the benefits on student learning, Anderson believes that the key to advocating drama lies in research. Exploring ways in which to build a sustainable future for research in drama education, Anderson discusses some of the key documents impacting upon arts education research and identifies some of the challenges these papers raise for us as educators. He outlines some of the expectations of policy makers and examines ways to effectively respond to them. Anderson concludes that if we want to stay strong and continue to advance we need to work collaboratively building a future together.

Two articles in this edition discuss the outcomes of collaborative research projects, both examine quality teaching — one is classroom based, the other highlights the experiences of teachers. **Margery Hertzberg** reports on a collaborative research project she conducted within a Primary ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom where she explored the benefits of drama on student learning. Like Porteus, Hertzberg is interested in the ways that drama can enhance thinking and provide students with intellectual knowledge. In her paper, Hertzberg illustrates how the application of engaging drama pedagogy can assist students' literacy skills and general educational achievements. Moreover, she presents examples of the children reflecting on and articulating their learning experiences. Hertzberg's article displays some rigorous and fascinating research that not only elaborates on the intellectual demands of drama but also advocates the vital role it performs in quality teaching.

The final article in this edition focuses on a research project seeking to identify drama teachers' perceptions of teacher competency. **Peter Wright** and **Rod Gerber** attest that the current focus on accountability requires teachers to continually reflect on their craft. They questioned drama educators with a variety of experiences from around the country. They pose the question, 'what does it means to be a good drama teacher?' Reporting on their findings, Wright and Gerber reveal six notions of teacher competency that can also be applied to other areas of the curriculum. They conclude that this knowledge can assist in the training of pre-service teachers and the ongoing development of teacher professionalism.

Earlier this year the drama world lost two of its pioneers, **Peter Slade** and **Lowell Swortzell**. Kate Donelan and Philip Taylor reflect on the impact these men had on the drama education establishment.

Finally, my thanks to Kate Donelan who has once again selected an eclectic and interesting variety of reviews highlighting the vibrancy of drama education.

Prue Wales
Editor

ILLUMINATED TEXTS: FROM HOMER TO THE HOME-PAGE

John O'Toole
Griffith University

Abstract
This keynote paper, delivered at the Drama Australia Conference, Brisbane, September 2003, uses a metaphor drawn from history to compare the differences between oral, written and electronic texts. The paper explores the different skills needed for oracy, literacy and cyber- and media-literacy, and the way each can impact upon the others both to enrich and impoverish. In the gaps between, live drama is a vital fourth literacy, providing the world's first virtual reality, still one of the most potent. Examples are drawn from classic literature, a school drama classroom and a (very) adult performance.



John O'Toole *is Professor of Drama at Griffith University, Queensland. He was a founder member of Drama Australia, of which he is the 2003 President's Award recipient, and Drama Queensland, of which he is an honorary Life Member. Author of many standard publications on drama, he is currently putting together a monograph on research for Drama Australia. In 2001 he was awarded the Judith Kase-Cooper Lifetime Research Award by the American Alliance for Theater and Education. He is also a playwright for TIE and community theatre.*

Keywords: *DRAMA; ORACY; LITERACY; CYBERSPACE; ETHNODRAMA; EMPOWERMENT.*

In July, on a trip to the UK, I found myself in one of my favourite spots, Durham Cathedral, looking at the tomb of the Venerable Bede, an eighth century saint who wrote the first history of England[1] . . . and, not as surprisingly as it sounds, I found myself thinking of this keynote.

Like most people in this theatre, Bede was a great believer in the power of the written word and, indeed, in its power to do good. At a time when few could read or write, he envisioned a golden age when all men (you'll excuse the sexism, but he was a monk, after all!) would be able to read and write — to read good books (especially The Good Book) and be inspired to do good. In pursuit of this ideal, he and his colleagues made their manuscripts as attractive and appealing as possible — and the illuminated manuscripts of this period, including the *Book of Kells* and the *Lindisfarne Gospel*, created just up the road from Bede, are among the world's great artworks[2].

1. Bede, Venerable St. (1991). *Ecclesiastical History of England.* (B. Colgrave, Ed.) Oxford: Clarendon.
2. The *Book of Kells* is displayed in the Library of Trinity College Dublin.
   The *Lindisfarne Gospel* is displayed in the British Library, London.



Picture from the *Lindisfarne Gospel*

Bede would have been thrilled to hear about Gutenberg's printing press but that invention was further in the future from Bede than we are from Gutenberg — just to put the history into perspective. Yet maybe we are now in a similar situation to Bede in a way. His touching faith in the written word is in some ways not unlike our own in the potential of the computer and cyberspace, and he too understood the deep disadvantage for those who had not access to the new communication technology in which he gloried.

You might think that England did not have much history by the eighth century — and there's another similarity with ourselves. There were just a couple of hundred years of known history, Christian history, since a time that was different, not understood, remembered only in legend and story and believed to have been barbaric — plenty of Australians still think this about our earlier history. Bede's history is a great read. He wrote in stories, gripping narratives that are still accessible and inspiring, and that appealed to our need to create and recreate our reality and our moral codes in narrative, but that also appealed to our need for the security of the known. Though Bede wrote in prose, his stories are highly dramatic, and we too can use drama to both illuminate our history and encourage reading and writing.

More than that, we can use drama to deconstruct the spurious truths of writing. It won't have escaped you that Bede was more than a bit wrong about the coming golden age of universal literacy. We've nearly got that — in Australia, anyway — and the written word rules supreme. Progress and history are matters of swings and roundabouts, and Bede was in-between epochs — the ages of the spoken and the written word — just as we are in the interregnum between the printing press and cyberspace. Bede couldn't know what we can see but don't usually acknowledge — the all-conquering written word has become equally liberator and oppressor, inspiration and dumber-down of the human brain and imagination. Think about Bede's favourite text, the Christian Bible — how it has liberated, fortified and inspired individuals and whole societies . . . and how it has provided the means for enslavement and atrocity that would have horrified that quiet little monk from Jarrow.

Ten years ago I wrote a monograph called *Oracy, the Forgotten Basic*[3], a pinprick to stick in the backside of the written word's dominance in schools. We can see how forgotten that basic is, firstly by looking back past Bede to another classic of great storytelling — homing in on Homer. This ancient Greek poet created two epic poems on the siege of Troy and its aftermath, each of them as long as a modern novel and written throughout in flawless hexameters — a complex verse form.

Except he didn't. He composed them orally, the whole lot:

> I don't know if you've tried — in verse it's hard to speak . . .
> Hexameters like this . . . especially if they're Greek!

And then he had to remember them perfectly in order to recite them to his audiences. And then those audience members themselves had to remember them perfectly in order to recite them in their turn, down the generations, until they were finally written down long after Homer's death. To us any of this seems a mighty feat, quite impossible. That's the enfeeblement that our total reliance on the written word has brought.

3. O'Toole, J. (1991). *Oracy, the Forgotten Basic: a Provocation*. Brisbane: Ministerial Consultative Council on Curriculum.

Bede wouldn't have had any difficulty — he probably didn't know Homer — but he'd certainly have been able to recite most of the Bible by heart. Even in Shakespeare's day, it was nothing unusual to know by heart several of his plays and many epic poems — and his actors had to us an unbelievably short time to learn their parts. Also in Shakespeare's time there was a showman who pulled even bigger crowds — John Donne's sermons at St Paul's are now known as masterpieces of written prose[4] but he delivered them off the cuff to the two thousand who packed the church and street every Sunday. But through the next three hundred years, as universal literacy rose, universal oracy declined to our own impoverished levels, where (as the *UK Oracy Project*[5] found) children of five think of themselves as good communicators, but after only three years of schooling they think of themselves as poor talkers and that talking is bad because you're not supposed to do it in schools. If that's not a reason for re-establishing drama in the classroom, I don't know one.

This last finding is cause for deep concern, and action, because of course children can talk, spectacularly better than we either give them credit for, or provide them with opportunities for. I'll show you a famous example of this in a moment, that some of you already know.

One of the oppressive characteristics of the written word is that it carries a spurious truth and permanence. What is written down becomes permanent in a way the spoken word is not. It is shaped into **statements** — the '-ments' of a 'state' — and will be the same tomorrow, and the year after, and just as apparently positive and true, as when it was written down — especially if it is in print, which intimidates even more by its officialness. The invention of writing allowed the author (the speaker) to hide and a monologue to be created — you can't discuss with a book. That's why the passive voice is as beloved by official knowledge as it is by officials everywhere. "It is forbidden to . . . " hides the author so well, but so does "It can be seen that . . ." — and you can't argue with either. The written word created new power structures and oppression, ruled over by those who can both master the techniques of writing and control the outlets — they construct and control the truth, leaving a disempowered underclass of readers and, worse, non-readers.

The written word actually impoverishes the multiple layers of truth embodied (literally) in both action and the spoken word. Writing removes the visceral, the emotional, the kinaesthetic, the sensory, the visual from any action or utterance, and thus privileges the pseudo-science of the cognitive. And that's one reason why in most of the world's classrooms the arts are banished to the periphery.

Even now, millions are spent on developing the cognitive tools of literacy, and play and the emotions are still often ignored. Last month I was listening to a report of a literacy project for special education with students with minor learning difficulties, where over ten years two sets of interventions in reading and writing, one in early childhood, one with upper primary, had largely failed . . . so they were trying a third in early adolescence. The very distinguished cognitive psychologist making the presentation indicated that they did not have very great hopes of this intervention achieving any better than the first two but they were trying it anyway. One of the audience, another

4. Donne, J. (c.1610-1631). *The Sermons*. Published, inter alia: New York, Meridian Books 1958.
5. Johnson, J. (1991). *Talk and Learning 5-16*. Milton Keynes: Open University.

cognitive psychologist, asked, just to check, whether they were also using direct instruction in this intervention. The answer was 'yes of course' and then nobody else mentioned this apparently unimportant factor. I was out of my depth and intimidated among the literacy experts, so I wasn't game to ask why on earth they were still using direct instruction, instead of something indirect, like drama, or something contextualised meaningfully for them, like cooking or motor-bike maintenance. But specially like drama! I've seen those pitying glances of the educational cognoscenti towards the fringe dwellers of drama before, so I cowardly kept my mouth shut and maybe missed a golden opportunity to illuminate the experts and help achieve Bede's dream.

What drama can do is to help de-stabilise the spurious 'truths' and solidity of written chronicles, by appropriating and colonising them, illuminating them as vividly and playfully as those wonderful illustrations of the medieval monks.

In what for me is very much going home, I'd like us to re-visit one of the great recorded moments of drama education, now over thirty years old, which happens to be about home and defending one's home[6]. Here, a group of twentieth century children appropriate one of those written Biblical texts, the story from the Old Testament of how the prophet Elijah challenged King Ahab and Queen Jezebel about their plan to establish a new god and a new temple that would sweep away the people's homes. Of course, this very story was originally orally transmitted legend and only became Holy Writ later on when it was wholly written (and you'll notice we talk about Holy Writ — not Holy Spoke). These children had a very real stake in making the story their own — they all came from a slum-clearance estate and knew what it was to have their home and community displaced.

[The conference delegates watched this classic dramatic encounter, seeing and hearing how the children set out to illuminate the original text, through the richness of their spoken and physical language. This print transcript of an excerpt of what they saw is unable to give any sense of the poise, focus and dignity of the actors — especially the still, watchful presence of Jezebel, silent throughout the encounter — nor the passion and tension that still infuse the two-dimensional and grainy old video footage. However, a transcript does convey some of the power and eloquence of the language, the cut-and-thrust of the astonishingly mature argumentation, the rhythm of the interchanges and the colour of the metaphors.]

Townswoman 1: Jezebel, there's women in this city with babies – what do you think is going to happen to them?

Townswoman 2: They'll probably die.

Townswoman 3: What if they get a fever?

Townswoman 2: You don't care.

Townswoman 1: We haven't enough clothing. You should know that by now. Why do you think we need our houses. To keep them warm.

King Ahab: Yes, I realise that – you can't let them go, but you will.

Townsman 1: I wonder how you can call yourself a king.

Townsman 2: A king who doesn't care.

6. *Three Looms Waiting* (1971). Directed by Richard Eyre. London: BBC Films.

Townsman 1: Who doesn't care for children who might die in the streets if you pull down their houses.

King Ahab: They will not die.

Townsman 1: That is why we need our houses, to keep the children warm. Don't you understand.

Townsman 3: I wonder why you call yourself a queen?

Townsman 1: A queen that paints her face, And a thing like this happens.

(*there is a disturbance in the crowd, and murmurs of "Elijah! It's Elijah!". Slowly and calmly,* Elijah *makes his way through the crowd, to confront* Ahab*)*

King Ahab: Who are you? What do you want?

Elijah: And you know. I am Elijah. The Prophet. And the only prophet at that. I have been outside this crowd, listening to your arguments.

King Ahab: Listening like a spy — is that all you are good for? Or can't you do anything better with your time?

Elijah: And you call yourself a king. Doing this to my people.

King Ahab: And you call yourself a prophet – living in the mountains shut up in a cave — like a wild beast.

Elijah: I live in the mountains because I am nearer God.

King Ahab: Nearer God?

Elijah: Your Baal…

King Ahab: You call them your people – well, why don't you live among them? I'll tell you why: you could not live among them because you are frightened of them – you could not rule over them.

Elijah: *(holds up the scrolls)* Do you know what they are?

King Ahab: Yes I know.

Elijah: The Law.

King Ahab: My father's law.

Elijah: The Law. *(to townsfolk)* And your king is disobeying them. You call yourself a king, you call these your people – and you'd do such a thing to them. What have you got to say to that?

King Ahab: Not half as much as you have. But before we go any further, I would like to know why you are here. And, once more, what you want.

Elijah: To solve this problem.

King Ahab: It's none of your business. You aren't a part of these people. You don't live among them. Why don't you stop pretending? You're no prophet. Why don't you get it into your head…

Elijah: These are the Laws…

King Ahab: I'll tell you why. Because you want to keep on going. Never stop — until the world ends.

Elijah: Until you change the Laws they shall be kept.

King Ahab: Is that a threat?

Elijah: That is a threat.

King Ahab: You people, listen — as well as you. If Elijah interferes: I'll fill the well in. Collect all your belongings. I want you out of your houses by noon. *(to Elijah)* And as for you, interfere any more and I'll have your hands off. Guards!

That they got a few bits of the Holy Writ wrong, so what! It was now their story. And that raises an interesting issue about drama. Drama destabilises the 'truth' of the written word — makes other possibilities, creates provisional realities, makes state-ments negotiable . . . drama is the first post-structuralist art-form, by its very nature. And that's another reason why those who impose social reality and rules distrust the arts. As I've suggested elsewhere, drama is both rude and improper. The American educationist Patti Lather put her finger on this, disapprovingly, three years ago[7]. She had been watching some ethnodrama — where actor-playwrights research the life of a community or of an individual and then try to report it through performance and metaphor . . . (and isn't this what a lot of us do in our student-devised drama classes, maybe under another name?). Lather questioned the propriety of ethnographic performance for presuming to know and show how the original community or individual felt, for colonising and appropriating that 'other'. I've been feeling worried and guilty about that ever since. But of course . . . dramatic performance does colonise and appropriate 'the other'. YES and let's glory in it. Drama's double face allows BOTH empathy and distance — so that we not only identify with the written 'other' but also deconstruct and interrogate the 'other's' otherness — revealing and re-engaging with it and making it negotiable (the danger of stamping one's 'own' on it is there, yes, but that too becomes negotiable).

The very word 'appropriate' has acquired a derogatory ring of moral disapproval in contemporary cultural scholarship — to improperly make one's own, to steal. But of course it also means to make proper and appropriate — to give new life in a new age. Look at Homer – his texts have been appropriated and made modern from the word go. A couple of hundred years after Homer was finally written down, Sophocles was living and writing in the new, contested and not entirely stable democracy of Athens. So he borrowed the obscure story of *Philoctetes* from Homer's *Iliad* and turned it from a story of a victim of the gods into a debate on personal loyalty, personal feelings and political necessity that was entirely appropriate to his time and the political context of his audience[8]. Shakespeare took Homer's love tragedy of Troilus and Cressida and appropriated it into an entirely Jacobean exposé of disease and corruption and political chicanery[9]. And we're still illuminating classical texts for our times — witness St Peter's School's marvellous *Medea* at the Powerhouse three years ago[10].

And yes, drama is a politically incorrect and corrupting medium — it corrupts the certainties of received truths and identities . . . with both dangers and possibilities. It pokes into hidden business, plunders cultures, strips icons and drags out secrets

7. Lather, P. (2000). Reflective Keynote. International Drama in Education Research Institute, Ohio, July. (Unpublished)
8. Sophocles (409 BC). *Philoctetes*. Published, inter alia, translated E.B. Watling (1953) Sophocles, Plays Volume 2. London: Penguin.
9. Shakespeare, W. (c.1610). *Troilus and Cressida*. Published variously.
10. Euripedes' *Medea*. Performed by St Peter's Lutheran College, the Powerhouse Theatre, Brisbane, (2001).

for ironic examination. It blows the whistle on lots of so-called secret business, which is often just groups of people giving themselves airs. It even-handedly shows the commonalities as well as the differences — our common humanness within the very otherness. But of course, like the contents of Pandora's box, drama is powerful, and it is morally neutral — so we have to be careful how we use it. Just like the spoken word and the written word.

Now both oracy and literacy have a new competitor, a whole new apparatus for communication — and just as morally neutral — computer and cyber technology. Will they, as many fear, lead to the same impoverishment of the written word that we have seen the written word do to the spoken? If you look at emailspeak, or the new lingo in which our kids text to each other under the tables in our classes, you might well think so.

On the other hand, there's a boldness and adventurousness that the computer encourages, which we see our children adopting much more comfortably than many of ourselves. Children learn the computer through dramatic games where the strong emotions generated in play are an ally, not something to be left outside the door with the lunchbox. So it is often easier for children and adults to become computer literate than writing literate. Sure, a lot of what the children play with makes us nervous – all that graphic violence and extermination fantasy in computer games – can it be good for them? I don't know, but I do know that children's own dramatic play is just as full of graphic and gratuitous violent fantasy — as Julie Dunn's splendid study of pre-adolescent play vividly documents[11]. And so are the classic fairy tales of Western culture, like archetypal stories all over the world before nineteenth and especially twentieth century educators came and tamed them with happy endings and affirmative morality. In original form, Grandma and Red Riding Hood get eaten and stay eaten.

Writing transformed and fixed the slippery, evolving and evanescent constructions of spoken legend and story. Now cyberspace unfixes them. But cyberspace is not new. The oral world and the written world both have their own cyberspaces that we still have access to. Those who still retain oral cultures like some Aboriginal and African peoples understand the cyberspace of oral culture much better than I do — the shared social and cultural milieu of each community's dreaming, where the communal knowledge is stored and new imaginative connections made and, like the electronic cyberspace, where people can communicate their connections to each other. The cyberspace of the written word is different — the cyberspace of a society of individuals — it exists in the reader's head so it is at once freer, more imaginative but more solitary.

Our respect for those other cyberspaces make us fear this new one. From our oral, social dreaming we fear the loss of the direct, visceral contact. From our literary dreams we fear that our imaginative freedom will be lost, swamped in the welter of information and communication without rules. The new literacy of the computer can be liberating but it allows those who can master the technology and control the outlets to control the truth. From our knowledge of how both spoken and written language can be traduced and used for oppressive purposes, we fear the potential for oppression in cyberspace, for the power that seems to reside in all the wrong places — in the amoral US corporations that control the software, the Viagra manufacturers who clutter cyberspace with spam and the pimply geeks who make fortunes flooding children's lives with more and more luridly violent cybergames.

11. Dunn, J. (2000). *Dramatic worlds in play: a study of the changing play of pre-adolescent girls*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis: Griffith University.

Of course drama has a place in destabilising the new cyberspace as well. After all, the technology promises the potential of multiple interactivity — chat rooms, two-way video, shared fantasy games and a whole raft of new kinds of role-play. Many of you, and your students, are far ahead of me in finding ways of interacting with and through the internet. Six universities, including QUT and Griffith, are now heavily involved in a new research centre whose purpose, put simply, is to civilise and humanise the new technology.

And remember, drama shares some key elements with cyberspace: both are virtual and negotiable realities; both are fictions that blur the boundaries with truth; and both, potentially are ***playful*** — both reveal themselves as a game and through games. And in games, we can always subvert or change the rules . . . you don't have to look far into cyberspace to see the dangerous anarchy of ***carnival*** or the disruptive element of ***clowning*** — subverting and laughing at the realities we construct or have constructed for us. Isn't that the deep purpose and pleasure we get out of those email jokes and meta-jokes that keep going the rounds?

All this will be revealed, now, dramatically! I'm going to let drama itself — in fact ethnodrama — finish this keynote by making its own ironic illumination of cyberspace text. Earlier this year at my request, two brave souls ventured deep into cyberspace, to explore and reveal its slippery fantasies. Barb, an experienced teacher with a theatre background, and Lil, a theatre director with a strong community conscience, went where angels fear to tread . . . into the field of 'sex and intimacy on the internet'. Right into fantasy-land where fiction and fact, the virtual and the real, are nigh-on indistinguishable and slide into each other. Barb and Lil went with researchers' intent and open minds. They found the chat rooms and the images — and they also interviewed real people, the people behind the fantasies — and found . . .? They found the startling and the predictable, sick stuff and healthy stuff . . . they found some secret business, some otherness and lots of sameness. They found the human condition. And they found carnival and clowning. Now ***they*** have illuminated the cyber texts they collected in physical theatre, visceral, three-dimensional and direct.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the virtual on the virtual — theatre in education for adults only:

Lil Hassall and Barbara Hogan present ***Touchme@typeyou.org.asm***[12].

[To round off this Keynote, the two actors presented their ethnodrama, consisting of direct quotations transcribed from informants they had interviewed, live and on the internet, together with their own illuminations of that text – involving very physical and visceral use of their bodies, masks, candlelight, and remarkable manipulation of lengths of nylon panty-hose… the whole invoking vividly the themes of otherness and sameness, carnival and other aspects of the human condition. Sadly and significantly, this print text is entirely unable to convey any of the richness of that encounter between oral and cyber text . . . a limitation of print that would no doubt have disappointed Bede, as much as the performance would no doubt have startled the quiet and studious old monk!]

12. Hassall, L. and Hogan, B. (2003). *touchme@typyou.org.asm*. Performed at Drama Australia Conference,

Call for Units
ADEM 2005

DRAMA AND INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

With the rewriting of Drama Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy scheduled for 2004, it would seem timely to publish a collection of resources which support and extend the document into classroom practice. Many educators, including those involved in the field of drama can find it difficult to embed indigenous perspectives into the curriculum. Often this difficulty stems from misunderstanding, fear of doing the wrong thing or lack of resources. Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are alive and a strong part of contemporary understandings of what it means to be Australian. Embedding Indigenous perspectives into dramatic practice enriches students and teachers cultural participation and understandings.

ADEM seeks to publish school and classroom drama units/activities that support and investigate topics and practices that can be bannered under the broad heading of Indigenous Perspectives and drama practice. The publication will be circulated in both the Australian and international drama community through Drama Australia.

Contributions may include:

- description of collaborative drama-based projects
- artist-in-residence programs
- teaching activities used to support Indigenous-based drama projects and outcomes
- classroom units of work suitable for primary, secondary and tertiary students
- real life learning projects (using drama in real life and life like learning contexts)
- examples of group and individual assessment tasks related to syllabus and curriculum implementation
- teaching and planning materials (not subject to copyright).

The contribution must have practical application to school and classroom contexts, but may be supported by theory and other literature.

Please include photographs, samples of student work and or worksheets that were generated in teaching the unit.

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All submissions must include a short biography of the writer/s (50 words) and bibliographic references in Harvard style where applicable.

Units/practical articles should be a maximum of 3000 words or 6 A4 pages in Times New Roman 11 point.

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COOKING DRAMA AND DRAMA EDUCATION IN THE GLOBAL KITCHEN

Brad Haseman
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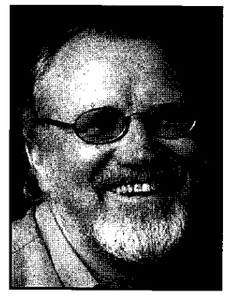
Abstract

The first version of this paper was presented as a keynote address at the Drama Australia Conference *Coming Home* held in Brisbane in October 2003. The impact of the digital and technological revolution is illustrated and from it five drivers of change are identified which are re-defining our understandings of the field of drama. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of these changes on drama education and concludes that, in our 'googling' world, drama education stands to play a key role in the renewal of education itself.



Brad Haseman *is an Associate Professor and Head of Postgraduate Research Studies with QUT's Creative Industries Research and Applications Centre (CIRAC). Formerly a drama teacher and consultant in Queensland secondary schools and Head of Drama at QUT, Brad was recently awarded a Vice-Chancellor's Outstanding Contribution award for Teaching at QUT because of his contribution to the scholarship of experiential teaching and learning.*

Keywords: *DRAMA EDUCATION; CHANGE; CULTURAL FORMS; TECHNOLOGY; FUTURES; GLOBALISATION.*

One hundred years ago in 1903, at John Dewey's *Laboratory School of the University of Chicago*, a photo was taken of students in French class about to eat the meal they had just prepared (Tanner, 1997:92). During the eight years he was with The Laboratory School, Dewey used cooking as a pivotal cross curricular activity. Children cooked and served lunch once a week because, for Dewey, preparing a meal was a fine example of how to embed learning in doing, an activity which clearly showed the interrelationship of one kind of knowledge to another. Dewey made sure these cooking classes incorporated arithmetic (weighing and measuring ingredients), chemistry and physics (observing the process and effects of combustion), biology (diet and digestion), language learning (students could only speak French during the meal) and geography (by exploring the natural environment of plants and animals in far off countries like France). Dewey recognised that cooking is a rich task — at once a goal-directed activity, a social activity and an activity continuous with life outside school.

As Drama teachers we are not surprised by any of this. Dewey's ideas have certainly informed our educational values and we know the power improvised drama has to create scenarios for cross-curricular learning and have all seen how the pressure of an

opening night can focus a group to achieve extraordinary things within and for their school community. Perhaps, if Harriet Findlay-Johnston — that pioneering village headmistress who used drama in her turn of the century English classroom — had worked at The Laboratory School in Chicago, then maybe Drama would have occupied a key role in Dewey's curriculum and be more roundly appreciated by educators around the world today.

If we take a metaphorical turn, we could examine the practices of cooking and how they have changed in recent years to illustrate and understand the influences and pressures which have been redefining the field of drama and drama education. There can be no doubt that cooking has changed radically over the last fifty years and there are some startling parallels with our own developments in drama too.

Cooking...then

Old cookbooks remind us of the way things used to be — and not so very long ago. After reading cooking classics like *Elizabeth Craig's Economical Cookbook* published in 1948 (Craig, 1948), it becomes immediately obvious that this is about knowledge transfer — it is an educational text in which knowledge is spread via the recipe. Recipes codify the tacit knowledge of cooks by writing it down for others to follow or adapt. This is the knowledge little girls gathered at the knee of Mummy or Grandmother.

This book is a print extension of the handwritten recipe books which were so common during most of the last century. Recipes were originally traded as part of the oral tradition — handed down from one generation to the next — often recorded on scraps of paper. Ordinary and everyday knowledge transfer without market value, characterised by anonymity and not for profit or glory.

Elizabeth Craig's cookbook promotes not just wholesome nutrition in difficult times but is designed to ensure the survival of readers. There is nothing unnecessary or frilly here. The name of each dish describes it — 'tomato honey', 'easily digested biscuits', 'cutlets for vegetarians'. There are sections on *Simple Invalid Cookery* and *Hard-Time Hints*.

As a cook, it was never necessary to throw anything away; not with meat recipes like 'braised sheep's hearts' and 'boiled cow's, sheep's or pig's head'. For the cook there was pride and a creative challenge in making the best of leftovers by turning them into fresh dishes and feeding a family well on a budget. Elizabeth Craig is unequivocal: 'Of all the crimes a cook can commit I think the crime of monotony is almost as bad as the crime of waste' (Craig, 1948:6).

Finally we witness the impact of technology on cooking practices and the kitchen. During the first half of the twentieth century the soup pot on the hearth became the wood stove and then the gas or electric cooker. These scientific and technological developments gave cooks the capacity to be more precise with quantities, cooking times and temperatures.

The cooks, dishes and practices I have described constitute what many of us would see as 'authentic' home cooking. Authentic ingredients, used by authentic cooks (with old wisdom in their sauces) to prepare authentic meals. Luce Giard, writing in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, sees 'doing cooking' this way:

> Good cooks are never sad or idle — they work at fashioning the world, at giving birth and joy to the ephemeral; they are never finished celebrating festivals for the adults and the kids, the wise and the foolish, the marvellous reunions of men and women who share room (in the world) and board (around the table). Women's gestures and women's voices that make the earth livable.
>
> (de Certeau, Giard and Mayol, 1998:222)

But what is 'doing cooking' today?

Cooking...today

We are surrounded by celebrity chefs. One hundred years on from Dewey's cooking class and fifty years on from Elizabeth Craig, cooking has been brought out of the domestic sphere. Now it is dominated by personable, though often quirky, experts who command a not inconsiderable slice of the public sphere. These chefs (not cooks any longer) are the leaders in the market of cookery knowledge. By turning knowledge about how to cook into a commodity, the cooking industry was born.

Perhaps, not surprisingly, this 'serious' business of cooking can no longer be left in the hands of women! Celebrity chefs are dominated by men — Jamie, Ric, Nic, Floyd, Aristos, Antonio, Ainsley and on and on. There are women of course but they seem to travel best if there is something a little odd at work — perhaps if they violate the rules of healthy, *nouvelle cuisine* (Two Fat Ladies) or present as a voluptuous, domestic goddess (Nigella Lawson).

These celebrities are highly watchable. *The Surprise Chef* was in the top 10 programs for two consecutive weeks earlier this year (OzTam, 2003) and the UK chef Delia Smith, through adroit marketing and branding, has sold 16 million cookery books including her first interactive cookery book (a DVD), launched earlier this year (good web guide, 2003).

As for the food itself, we see that standard, basic fare has been passed over and the emphasis is on fusion food where new flavours are jangled together in dishes like *Thai baked pasta of beef, ginger, water chestnut and lemon grass with green chilli sauce.* This fusion is about uprooting cuisine from its roots to mix, blend and hybridise and invent fascinating and fresh tastes. The language used to name dishes has changed. Language no longer describes the dish; rather it theatricalises and shrouds it in mystery and anticipation.

Cooking shows are part of the phenomena of reality TV shows and so, in a society besotted with spectatorship and travel, they have to be about much more than the exchange of cooking knowledge. A whole species of cooking shows has been brought to the boil. We see the 'cooking as travelogue' format, the 'cooking as challenge' format and the 'cooking as competition' format. One cooking show in the US, *You're the Chef*, received Emmy Award nominations in both 2002 and 2003 (You're the Chef, 2003)

The humble recipe and its wisdom, which has been handed down from one generation to the next, is now delivered in multi-media formats. Once the recipes are turned into TV programs and cookbooks, it costs very little to reproduce them. Cross promotional

opportunities abound. Jamie Oliver's book, *The Naked Chef* (1999) which accompanied his first television series, was a number one best seller for over five months and it was accompanied by DVDs and videos of the TV episodes. As well as a host of official and unofficial websites about him, Jamie writes a regular column for GQ magazine and a weekly article for The Times magazine on Saturday. He tours and 'performs' in live cooking shows, features in a series of advertisements about supermarkets, wine companies and the like, has released a record with his band and cooks for the British Prime Minister and his guests.

Finally, the contemporary kitchen has become a site of extraordinary technological sophistication. Our celebrity chefs introduce us to the technology which propels us into and beyond the 'frozen food chain'. New digital microwaves do much more than to shorten defrosting times and, in the digital kitchen, the internet fridge will track your purchases, re-order groceries, tell you when your food is going off and, when asked, can scan database of recipes — there were 68,690 of last week (Recipezaar, 2003) — then tell you what dish you can cook with the ingredients you have at hand!

Now the purpose of this anatomy of cooking is to demonstrate how forces beyond the domestic kitchen are transforming this fundamental aspect of human life in advanced economies. The global kitchen has wrought profound changes and I'm not sure John Dewey for one would think they have all been for the better. Just maybe, amid all the hype, amid all the fusion food, fast food, slow food, Dewey would feel something authentic had been lost?

Well, Professor Dewey, welcome to the 21st Century. But it is not only 'doing cooking' which is so different. The same forces making over the kitchen are transforming the way modern western societies are organising themselves, paying their bills, understanding themselves and teaching their young.

The Technological Paradigm Shift

In the year of the new millennium Manuel Castells wrote: 'We have entered a new technological paradigm, centred around microelectronics-based, information/ communication technologies, and genetic engineering' (2000:3) and drew our attention to the informational, global, networked, economic and cultural dimensions of this emerging paradigm. The shift is captured in many of the terms which have become familiar to us in recent years; the networked society, the new economy, the informational age and the creative industries.

The cultural domain, which includes both 'doing cooking' and 'doing drama', has seen a proliferation of cultural forms, tastes and patterns of creative production and consumption. An expanded and often extreme set of creative practices are subverting the trusted and known as borders are redrawn between the traditional and the innovative, the respected and the impudent, the polite and the rude, the everyday and the celebrity and the professional and the amateur. In Drama we see performance stretched to include the theatre of everyday life, performance spaces are constructed away from stages and venues and into the shopping malls and the landscapes of life. Celebrity and fame no longer necessarily follow from elite training and virtuosity but come as the prize at the end of the game show or video camera.

Re-Fencing the Field of Contemporary Drama

While the broad cultural dimensions of the paradigm shift have been well documented, its specific implications for drama are still emerging. However what is becoming clear is that there are at least five drivers which are likely to change what we understand drama to be in the future.

While some of these speculations will hardly surprise, others are likely to unsettle, for they seemingly lie far beyond the internal physics of our discipline and challenge the reassuring categories we use to order and define the field of drama.

However, Martin Esslin reminded us over twenty years ago of the danger of complacent absolutes.

> ...they become obstacles to the organic development of new forms, experiment and invention. It is precisely because an activity like drama has fluid delimitations that it can continuously renew itself from sources that had hitherto been regarded as lying beyond its limits. (1977:11)

So, what are the drivers shaping the 'fluid delimitations' of contemporary drama?

1. Increasingly Drama is being changed by hybridity

As we saw in the global kitchen, fusion and hybridity are attributes of this age. Fundamentally a process of unification, hybridisation is:

> the combination of materials, genres, period references to produce highly eclectic constructions, both in content and form (Owens, 1995:120).

Across the arts, the impulse to collaborate and produce hybrid works has been particularly strong in the contemporary period. For many theatre workers, along with other performing and visual artists, a priority has been to create original performance and multimedia work through the use of performance, installation, sound and digital art. The result is an amalgam of dance and movement, music, multi-media and design — hybrids which have become known as the 'slash arts' — music/theatre, dance/theatre and so on. For drama teachers this movement is well known and has been reflected in much of our curriculum design for over a decade.

However, like never before, the current period challenges drama teachers to design experiences that work out from our heartland discipline. With their understanding of human interaction and control over the symbolic language of Drama, our students need opportunities to practice what John Howkins calls 'collaborative creativity' (2001:184). This is a key generic attribute for all students and, in our 'converged world', there is value in students thinking of their work in drama as part of a broad coalescence of interests moving beyond the traditional arts to design, media, fashion and retailing.

2. Increasingly Drama is being changed by interactivity

For many in drama education it may seem odd that interactivity is now recognised as a major driver of change. For drama teachers, action and interaction is foundational and all improvisation is a study of interactivity. Interactive forms from *Commedia dell' Arte* to Forum Theatre regularly feature in what we teach, and Process Drama is the distinctive form of our own making which has most refined our use of interactivity with participants, or percipients (now there's an attempt to describe a special breed of inter-actors), able to take control of the very form of the work.

However, the strategies for managing interactivity well are in high demand by those disciplines and enterprises which seek to create on-line or digital dramas for entertainment or education. New industries are springing up around interaction design which 'entails creating user experiences that enhance and extend the way that people work, communicate and interact' (Preece *et al.*, 2003:v). Interactivity lies in the creation and integration of content into engaging, immersive environments, one species of which can be found in the process dramas which drama teachers have been building for over thirty years now. Across the new economy there is high demand for what we manage well — the poetics of process.

3. Increasingly Drama is being changed as it becomes an input to other industries.

It has long been recognised that European theories of art and drama, informed by enlightenment, consciousness and discussions of beauty and 'feeling form', fail to adequately account for the diversity of ways art is regarded in non-Western societies. Commentators note that art from Asia or Africa is often more about social, political or religious expression than it is about the artistic. While Clifford Geertz writes a meta-social commentary on the Balinese cockfight to show how it is a form of cultural affirmation for the Balinese (1973:443), Schechner concludes that such practices 'affect and cause life, not reflect or express it' (1993:21).

These observations demand an expanded understanding of the aesthetic to include the aesthetics of culturally bound objects and practices which occur in everyday life. While this has been addressed in sociology and cultural studies (Featherstone, 1991; Willis, 1990; de Certeau, Giard and Mayol, 1998), the current age sets a new relationship between aesthetics and industry. On the one hand it acknowledges the importance of the aesthetisation of everyday life by identifying the experience economy which creates income by explicitly engaging customers in personal and memorable ways — through experiential 'shoppertainment' or 'entertailing'. On the other hand, and more significantly, understandings of dramatic form are being applied to what are traditionally thought of as non-creative industries. Howkins explains:

> Perhaps the greatest impact of the creative economy is not only within the traditional creative industries but in the way their skills and business models are being used to create value in other areas of life (2001:xvi).

Consequently, dramatic work finds an application in surprising and new settings. Actors shape and perform innovative corporate training programs; dramaturgs work with health professionals to create narratives of healing; and interactive web designers work alongside theatre-trained directors to create the drama of the town's virtual heritage. For drama teachers these fresh applications are only the latest in a range of drama facilitated interventions in education, health and business known as applied theatre.

4. Increasingly Drama is being changed by new forms of cultural production.

New forms of cultural production are major drivers of change in re-defining drama. Firstly, what we understand as the traditional form of drama production — theatre — is being unsettled as the technical dimensions of production embrace projections of text, still images, animations and moving images. The ontology of the live is questioned

when it is blended with mediated data. Telematic and distributed performances which occur simultaneously across time and space, computer generated performance environments and the creation of 3D actors are all being actively researched and, while they seem a long way from the classroom, the issues they raise are altering what we understand drama and performance to be.

The power of the new technologies lies in the move to the digital with its capacity to flip and stretch binary digits in a way unimagined in the analog world. And at the centre of these changes lies the critical capacity of these digital media (radio, mobile phones, movies, TV, email, games, websites) to receive and transmit content. Mobile phones, with their capacity to read and send text, sound and image are the newest platforms for creative work. Similarly the creative potential of the computer screen, the third screen after the large screen of the cinema and the small screen of television, holds extraordinary promise, especially when connected to the mobile phone and television.

Along with these new forms and sites of cultural production come changes to established formulations of taste and value. For example, while *Big Brother Live* was the most watched show between viewers 16-39 years in Australian capital cities between June 3-9 2001, other demographic groups actively disliked the show and registered very low viewing figures (Carroll, 2002:204).

The challenge for those working in drama is to expand our notion of what dramatic production actually is. While most are at home teaching the cannon of plays and genres of Western theatre, the changes underway have already thrown up a plethora of new forms which fascinate and obsess our students.

5. Increasingly Drama is being changed by multi-platform, cross-promotional means of producing and distributing cultural products.

While most theatre workers focus their energies on artistic production, on the creation of the work for an audience, the current environment challenges artists to pay attention to the way their work will be distributed once it has been created. Increasingly innovative artists and producers are creating opportunities for multi-platform delivery and cross-promotion of their work.

Models of complex and innovative distribution systems are emerging. *Big Brother* on free-to-air TV was only one platform for distribution which was enriched by an interactive website with discussion forums, live streaming via the internet, a host of unofficial sites, radio grabs throughout Australia, SMS updates and telephone voting.

The guiding idea here is that dramatic action created for one context can be re-versioned for another. The play can be seen as the root property, to be re-versioned for different audiences and different media. So the performance of the play can be more than just that. It can use the enabling technologies of a digital environment to connect with larger and technically savvy audiences everywhere.

Implications for Drama Education

The changes to drama which are emerging out of the new cultural context need to be addressed by drama teachers and preferably sooner rather than later. While it may be comforting in the short term to ignore what is happening, the rate and significance of

change will soon demand our attention. The immediate challenge for drama teachers is to learn about and understand the dimensions of the paradigm shift. Castells warns us of the danger of underestimating what is occurring:

> The prophetic hype and ideological manipulation characterising most discourses on the information technology revolution should not mislead us into underestimating its truly fundamental significance (1996:30).

We need to engage in these speculations about the future and identify the shadowy shapes which lie over the horizon. Books such as *Tomorrow's People* (Greenfield, 2003) will challenge, alarm and excite as we recognise the future holds a special place for those with our skills. We need to be neither rootlessly optimistic nor mindlessly dismissive about the role drama and drama education will play in the future. Drama is, after all, one of humankind's great and enduring art forms and just as it began in a circle of rocks but then jumped onto amphitheatres, proscenium arches, radio waves and colloid, so inevitably it will jump onto the screens of our digital devices. But history has shown that these screens will not contain drama; it will soon be off, back to the live or onto the holodecks which await us around the next corner.

The next challenge is for drama teachers to position themselves as those with the most engaging pedagogy for this new age. We need to 'connect' our classrooms and studios so the creative and research possibilities of digital technologies can be powerfully linked with our distinctive pedagogy. Just as kitchens have been radically changed by technology our teaching and performance spaces need a similar makeover. They demand to be wired with multimedia and projection capacities and our students need to access hardware and software which allow them to digitally manipulate sound, pictures, text and moving images. Our teaching and performance spaces need the flexibility to blend the live with the mediated through enhanced wired and wireless capabilities. As drama students and teachers engage and experiment, it could take only a very short time for the drama studio to become the most exciting laboratory in the school and a model of how teaching and technology can authentically serve learning and build a sense of self-worth and the worth of others.

The final implication of this paradigm shift centres on the way drama educators frame the claims they make for drama, and challenges us to freshly contextualise Drama's potent and longstanding claims for this contemporary moment. In our information-rich age many assumptions about education are turned up side down. For example a recent report into youth voting in the UK began with this observation:

> This is the first time in history that any parents get educated by their children. Everyone in their thirties and above has been told how to work computers by children.
>
> (Pile, 2003)

When 'children teach their parents' and 'googling' promises instant facts for everyone, when the cost of information is falling to zero, we have entered an age which is answer-rich but question-poor. Never before has it been so important to pose thoughtful and relevant questions which enable learners to turn information into knowledge. And yet Drama prides itself on doing just that. Perhaps the most eloquent statement of such knowledge-making remains Dorothy Heathcote's five possible resolutions which arise when 'reflective power comes into action' (Heathcote and Fiala, 1980:39). These resolutions, expressed simply as statements from learners, capture the insights made possible through our transformational pedagogy:

1 'I'll never again think that about people like that.'
2 'Oh, it feels a bit better now.'
3 'I could leave it for a bit now. I understand it a bit, enough to know a bit about it.'
4 'There's a new start to be made.'
5 'There's something I haven't conceded before.'

(Heathcote, 1976:115)

Conclusion

It is reasonable to conclude that the summarising argument of this paper would go something like this: 'In a world where everything is new, where revolution and the whirl of fashion rule through media of unparalleled power, then education must renew itself'. It is true this paper does take up that challenge written by John Fines and Raymond Verrier over thirty years ago (1974:14). Then, as now, drama educators recognise we can make a pivotal contribution to education's urgent need to renew itself but we cannot do it by re-rehearsing the established and reliable arguments as if it is still 1974. Instead, we must renew and renovate these 'old' arguments for our 'new' age.

For drama teachers to go powerfully in 2004, we must return to that which is authentic in teaching and learning. 'Cooking in the globalised kitchen', with all the fads, gimmicks and fusions of the day, neatly illustrates just how difficult it is to hold that which is authentic — to nourishing, hearty fare. For Drama teachers, authenticity is found through a primary commitment to the symbolic capabilities of drama — an aesthetic language with the power to animate the imagination and reframe the future. Then, with all the world our stage, the entire content of life is made available for learning, critique and change.

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GLAMOROUS THINKING – POSITIONING DRAMA AS A MEANS TO ENHANCE DIFFERENT THINKING PURPOSES

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Abstract

This paper aims to position drama experiences as a vehicle to enhance and develop a variety of thinking purposes. In line with current curriculum trends, thinking has become a central component of teaching and learning in contemporary classrooms. Taking Dewey's definition of thinking, the paper describes and discusses the types of thinking developed through educational drama that include thinking creatively, aesthetically, empathically and socially.



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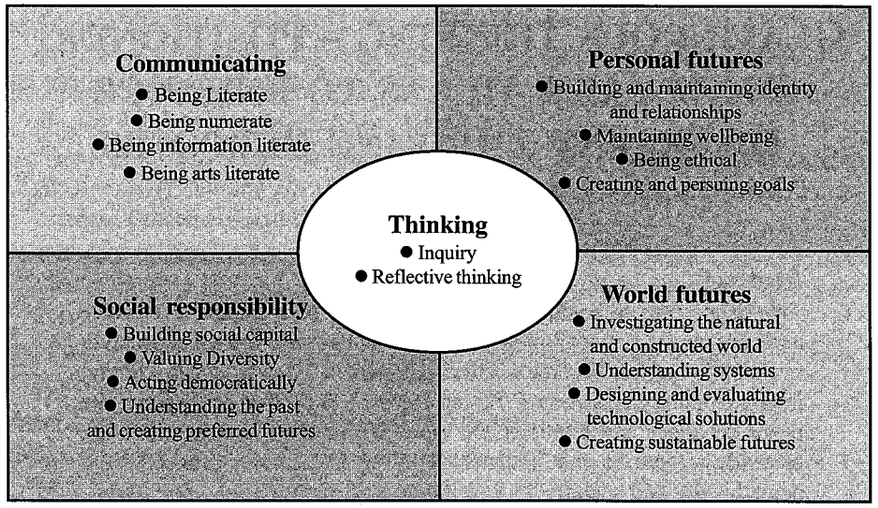
Keywords: *LEARNING THROUGH DRAMA; MODES OF THINKING; CURRICULUM REFORM.*

According to Donmoyer (1991:91), Sir Laurence Olivier defined drama as 'the first glamouriser of thought'. When discussing Olivier's definition, Donmoyer focuses on drama's influence on human thought processes, describing its potential to add a visceral and feeling dimension to our thinking. Educational drama can provide opportunities for intensity and passion to become a part of intellectual activity through a complex web of thinking purposes. This paper will discuss current curriculum trends in Australia and, in particular, the focus on thinking in these curriculum innovations. Dewey's (1933) definition of thinking will then be used to examine ways in which drama provides significant opportunities for students to enhance their thinking purposes.

Contemporary curriculum reform throughout Australia indicates moves to create a curriculum that is relevant to schools in the 21st century. As Wright (2003:37) states, these current trends are about seeking 'knowledge that will help children acquire the holistic background necessary to cope with the demands of contemporary society'. An example of a contemporary curriculum document that provides a pedagogical framework for teachers in the 21st century is the *Essential Learning Framework 1* (Department of Education in Tasmania 2002).



Department of Education Tasmania (2002:7)

The four curriculum organisers, Communicating, Personal Futures, Social Responsibility and World Futures pivot around the central theme of Thinking. In this model, thinking lies at the heart of the curriculum. Morgan and Saxton argue that in a contemporary world we will need 'thinkers-in-action' (1996:234). Therefore teachers need to ensure that future generations can contribute to a global existence by providing students with opportunities to engage in a wide range of inquiry and reflective thinking practices.

Dewey (1933) argues that we are always in the process of thinking. Thoughts constantly flow through our head — the enjoyable and the confused. This kind of thinking, often referred to as day-dreaming, is automatic and lacks regulation. Dewey goes on to suggest that the most effective mode of thinking is what he terms 'reflective thinking' (1933:3). Reflective thinking links thoughts together, moves towards a conclusion and involves imagining experiences not directly sensed. Arnheim (1969:231) defines thinking in images as 'visual thinking' and acknowledges the connection between perceiving and thinking. Bruner (1986) argues that people 'perfink' — that is, they perceive, feel and think all at once. Drama strategies invite students to imagine experiences and to think about emotions and feelings in the process.

For true reflective thinking, Dewey maintains three attitudes are present: 'open mindedness, wholeheartedness and absorbed interest' (1933:33). So much of our work in drama is student-centred as we invite students to display initiative and take risks. Students are encouraged to remain open minded as opportunities to create multiple solutions to a single problem are welcomed. Rarely are our students tentative about a drama task; most often there is a wholehearted approach to their work. All these factors lay bare the opportunities for truly reflective thinking processes in a drama classroom.

Dewey goes on to state that thinking begins with a 'perplexity, confusion or doubt' that is followed by an investigation to bring to light facts to corroborate or nullify the belief (1933:15). This definition resonates very strongly with drama techniques. When we begin a process drama with a pre-text for example, students are offered a perplexity

or challenge. As O'Neill (1995:20) states, 'A pre-text will invite a task to be undertaken, a decision to be made and a puzzle to be solved'. Through this approach we immediately encourage our students to begin the thinking process by considering possibilities and investigating solutions by using a wide range of drama strategies.

The investigation or search undertaken in the reflective thinking process is always guided by a purpose. As Dewey explains, 'The nature of the problem fixes the end of thought, and the end controls the process of thinking' (1933:15). If the purpose for thinking is guided by the nature of the problem, is it possible to articulate different types of thinking undertaken in the quest for a solution in the drama classroom? Do we direct our students to think creatively, empathically, aesthetically and socially as we set them dramatic tasks? Can we state that such is the complexity of the drama experience that sometimes students may have more than one purpose for their thinking at any given moment?

Imaginative or creative thinking is described by Greene (1995:5) as a 'mode of utopian thinking' and offers students the opportunity to see beyond the known to exciting ways of being in the world. Wright (2003) supports this notion of creative thinking as global in nature and a style of thinking that encourages novel solutions to a problem. Drama encourages creative thought as students explore new possibilities in dramatic contexts. For example, in O'Neill's process drama of *The Seal Wife*, students are encouraged to move from the original pre-text and create new narrative events, moving from 'the known' to the imagined (1995:86-89).

Another thinking purpose initiated through drama experiences is empathic thinking. This mode of thinking 'encourages us to experience feelings beyond those immediately accessible' through the 'dynamic interplay between feeling and thought' (Arnold 1998:116). Empathic thinking requires an ability to think about others with compassion, from a distance. This is a level of thinking that can only be reached through understanding and objectivity. When we ask students take on a role, we are requiring them to actively empathise with others. To be able to adopt this role, students move into an empathic mode of thinking — an ability to temporarily think like a given character. As Cusworth and Simons (1997) suggest, students move their thinking to the perspective of another and then explore the consequences of this way of thinking and feeling within the context of the drama.

Drama also encourages experiences that involve a personal response to an art experience or aesthetic thinking. This type of experience is usually linked to both the emotions and the senses. Csikszentmihalyi (1990:9) explains that an aesthetic experience creates a state of mind where events are 'more clear and focussed than everyday life'. Moreover, Greene believes aesthetic experiences require 'energy, an ability to notice what is there' (1995:125). Greene encourages teachers to develop an aesthetic mode of thinking by providing many opportunities for students to participate in the arts as well as providing 'intentional efforts to foster increasingly informed and ardent encounters with artworks' (*ibid.*:137). Educational drama provides a myriad of opportunities for students to both participate in art experiences as well as respond to each other's work. Sharing and critically reflecting on each other's work is a natural adjunct to the classroom drama routine. Cusworth and Simons support this view stating students develop more refined skills as 'aesthetic theorists' as they grow in understanding the art form (1997:69).

Another outcome of the rich tapestry of drama purposes is the opportunity to enhance students' social thinking. Social thinking and drama can be viewed at two levels — the thinking required for social competence and the thinking that is part of the social construction of knowledge. Social competence or the 'art of living' (Ten Dam and Volman, 2003:117) refers to the ability to adjust one's behaviour and thinking to facilitate cooperation within a group dynamic. This mode of thinking encourages positive social interaction through an ability to confidently read and interpret social signals while at the same time be able to reflect and respond to ones own and other people's behaviour. Gardner (as cited in McInerney and McInerney, 2002), defines this manner of thinking as interpersonal intelligence — an ability to 'discern and respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments, motivations and desires of other people' (*ibid.*:54). Because drama is primarily a social experience, students' competence in social thinking is enhanced as they regularly work in groups, engaging in cooperative ventures and, in doing so, learn to respond appropriately to others as they strive to reach a shared goal.

The second approach to the development of social thinking through drama relates to Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, 'the unfolding of cognitive understandings of social beings within social contexts' (McInerney and McInerney, 2002:45). This view of the social construction of knowledge is supported by Bruner who states that 'negotiation is the art of creating new meanings by which individuals can regulate their relations with each other' (1986:149). Through drama experiences students provide a framework for their peers to reach a new level of understanding — as Morgan explains, the kinship developed through drama experiences positions students so 'those who know or have more and different experiences "pull" those who do not know or who have had different experiences "up" to a more complex level of operation' (1998:68). A variety of drama experiences can offer unique opportunities for students to engage in shared social thinking processes and purposes.

As drama educators we can feel confident that we are adding glitz and glamour to our students' thinking. Our pedagogical approaches in a drama classroom are innovative and support contemporary curriculum initiatives in rich and exciting ways. Our practices are embedded with Dewey's (1933) notion of reflective thinking as we encourage our students to link thoughts using both verbal and non-verbal imagery. The purposes of thought in drama experiences can be varied and complex as our students seek a solution to a puzzle or task. The work undertaken in a drama classroom may include imaginative, empathic, aesthetic and social thinking purposes. Our work as drama teachers supports Bruner's central concern of education — that we 'create in our young an appreciation of the fact that many worlds are possible, that meaning and reality are created and not discovered' (1986:149).

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DRAMA FUTURES: POSSIBILITIES FOR RESEARCH, ADVOCACY AND POLICY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Michael Anderson
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Abstract
The environment for drama education researchers has shifted in the last five years. Several key initiatives nationally and internationally have provided a strong advocacy base and a solid foundation for further sustained and systematic research in the arts. This paper reviews some of the relevant documents with implications for drama research in Australia. Some suggestions are made for the development of a sustainable drama education research culture that includes analysis, description and advocacy of our practice into the 21st century and beyond.



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Keywords: *DRAMA EDUCATION; ARTS EDUCATION; RESEARCH; ADVOCACY; NETWORKING, EDUCATION POLICY.*

> *In drama above all you can't make vague promises . . . When you say something like, 'Drama is good for their language', get rid of it. It doesn't tell anybody how it does it because it's too vague. 'Drama is good for their personality and all that' — get rid of it because it does a great deal of harm. It doesn't point to what we really have to consider, which is — how does it do it?* (Heathcote, 1984:6)

Heathcote's challenge is still as relevant today as it was twenty years ago. Beyond the vague promises of change that drama education might provide, we are being called more and more to account for our claims by a community of educators who are interested in 'evidence-based practice'. In a world full of claims, how we marshal our resources and state our case will be crucial for the maintenance and strengthening of drama's place in the education of Australia's children. We are also entering a phase in the history of our subject as we inch in from the fringes where arts education is being examined with renewed vigour nationally and internationally. The challenge for us is to use that interest to create and sustain a body of research that describes, analyses and advocates our position to many audiences and overcomes new and old challenges.

The looming challenges

As we are all aware, there is currently a generational shift occurring in education. The looming teacher shortages present in schools are on us in drama education. Many of the established researchers in the area are approaching retirement or have retired, with many to follow in the next decade. We have a limited time to learn from them or miss the opportunity to gain from their immense corporate knowledge. The other change that has taken place is the position of drama in the curriculum. There is now some recognition by most states that drama is an important, if not essential, part of the curriculum. This has been a long time coming and has depended upon strong and rigorous advocacy from drama educators everywhere. Perhaps now it is time to shift our energies from advocacy to a research rich culture that includes advocacy as one of its aims. This approach builds on the excellent foundations of research in the discipline but looks to productive collaborations among drama educators to provide further and deeper reasons for the inclusion of drama education in the lives of all Australian children. This is not an invitation for drama educators and researchers to relax in complacency but rather for us to provide evidence to those who will continue to question our place in the curriculum. I would like to set the scene by exploring the current context nationally and internationally for the current situation.

The research context — International

At the moment there is a great deal of action around the Arts Education agenda. Since 1999 there have been significant reports from the United States, the United Kingdom and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on the value of the arts in education. The move seems to be on to recognise and utilise the Arts Education agenda to enrich the lives of young people.

Champions of Change and *All our Futures*

The American report, *Champions of Change* (Fiske, 1999) published by the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) made several findings that support the centrality of the arts in an effective education for all young people. The report found that the arts reach students who are not otherwise reached, the arts transform the environment for learning and provide challenges for those students already considered successful. The British report, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999), had an ambitious aim also — to change the current education system to incorporate 'cultural education'. This is not seen as an end in itself but rather a way to equip a new workforce. The authors of this report comment:

> If we are to prepare successfully for the twenty-first century we will have to do more than just improve literacy and numeracy skills. We need a broad, flexible and motivating education that recognises the different talents of all children and delivers excellence for everyone . . . This report argues that a national strategy for creative and cultural arts is essential to that purpose. (*ibid.*:5)

The importance of both these documents lies in the impetus they have produced internationally for arts education. For many experienced arts educators its findings do not seem so shocking but their ability to make the case to policy makers has been crucial in creating change. In the conclusion of *Champions of Change* the authors say:

> These *Champions of Change* studies demonstrate how involvement in the arts provides unparalleled opportunities for learning, enabling young people to reach and attain for higher levels of achievement. (Fiske, 1999:xii)

The value of the document lies in its research-based advocacy that seamlessly links with a call for policy makers to respond to the findings. It calls for the arts to be a meaningful part of each child's life. This plea to policy makers lies at the heart of this document's effectiveness.

There are several difficulties with these studies for an Australian audience. The largest issue facing Australian researchers is the parochial nature of the research. For obvious reasons it refers to an American context and to American researchers and research. For other art forms that may mean a shift of context but for Australia and the UK, the traditions in drama education are quite different. There is a strong theatre arts bias throughout this work that speaks of the American context of creative dramatics and theatre productions. While many of the same effects will be present in our own practice there is an urgent need to confirm some of our intuitions about our own similar but different practice through home-grown research.

Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development

The *Critical Links* document (Deasy, 2002) is an impressive mapping of the field. It reviews twenty research studies in drama and similar numbers in dance, music, visual arts and multi arts. The essays at the end of each section provide a clear and valuable guide for the strengths and weaknesses of the research area and suggest where ongoing research might take place. At the end of the drama section, the essayist James S. Catterall remarks:

> An unquestionable omission in the body of work on drama presented here is substantive attention to many potential outcomes beyond reading and language development. The foremost candidates among these would seem to be any learning that results from the interpersonal and intra-personal qualities of assuming characters and interacting to perform narrative scenes. Theater professionals have long concentrated on the importance of character study in order to perform genuinely on stage or in film. Learning about characters with worldviews, beliefs and assumptions different from one's own would be expected to lead to skills or traits valuable generally such as increased empathy and understanding of others' views — a student's personal character affected by studying dramatic characters. (Deasy, 2002:61)

While there is some merit in these observations, it seems that much Australian research has been ignored or missed. A cursory glance at ***NJ*** alone over the past few years indicates the narrowness of this view. Beyond 'reading and language development', which does have a prominent place, there is a wealth of Australian research on diverse topics. The significance of role, gender, sexuality, aesthetics and empathy have all formed a healthy part of the research debate in this country but have been excluded or escaped the gaze of this compendium with one exception[1]. Perhaps the selection procedure may be at issue here as well. The authors do not specify how the studies were

1. The one exception to this is Megan Schaffner, Graham Little and Heather Felton's report: *Nadie Papers No.1, Drama, Language and Learning.* Reports of the Drama and Language Research Project, Speech and Drama Centre, Education Department of Tasmania

chosen except to say that, 'the decision, made with the advice of the Compendium Advisors, was to do the former, in part to identify strong arts education research that would make a contribution to the national debate . . .' (Deasy, 2002:ii). Whether by chance or design, the research in this volume favours quasi-experimental studies. Hopefully, the implication is not that these types of methodologies are the only sources of 'strong arts education research'.

The *Critical Links* document has failed in some ways to cross its borders and draw from the wealth of international practice in Australia and beyond. This is not necessarily a criticism of the American authors — they are, after all, being funded from the US and their brief is for an American audience. It is rather a challenge to Australian arts researchers to map their practice in similar ways to better communicate the research story in this country.

***The Arts and Education: New Opportunities for Research* (AEP, 2004).**
This is, perhaps, the most relevant of the AEP documents. Again, the trademarks of the Arts Education Partnership are present in this document. This is an easily read, accessible and useful document squarely based in an American context for a mostly American audience. The document will be very useful for those looking for external validation of the importance of their research area. This will prove helpful in making our case for arts education research to external funding bodies. And again, the document has been devised with one eye on the policy makers:

> With this agenda, we also hope to engage education policy makers in a fresh conversation about the contribution of arts education in order to provide a more robust set of school reform strategies for achieving the nation's educational goals. School reform initiatives grounded in a full range of teaching, learning and assessments are much more likely to be successful than those based on narrow conceptions of the learning process. If researchers across the disciplines take up the challenges of this agenda, arts and education research could provide additional and even more compelling foundations for education reform. (2004:2)

In Australia we would do well to learn from the AEP example. We have a body of knowledge that is known well in our own community but seems rarely to make it out into the wider educational field, let alone into the hands of policy makers. The gift that the AEP gives is to offer a model for moving research into advocacy and, ultimately, policy.

These influential reports have seemingly stirred interest at an international level as well. Since 2001 there have been several regional meetings on education and the arts. There is a major international arts education conference planned for Portugal in 2006. A recent UNESCO report said:

> At a time when family and social structures are changing, with often adverse effects on children and adolescents, the school of the twenty-first century must be able to anticipate the new needs by according a special place to the teaching of artistic values and subjects in order to encourage creativity, which is a distinctive attribute of the human species. Creativity is our hope. (UNESCO, 2001:40)

One of the tangible and exciting outcomes of these conferences has been several useful publications. O'Farrell and Meban's (2003) *Arts Education and Instrumental Outcomes: An Introduction to Research, Methods and Indicators* is a particularly useful tool for

researchers and deserves a wide audience. It reviews the kinds of qualitative and quantitative research undertaken in arts education and calls for an expansion in the approaches and methodologies undertaken to support the ongoing needs of the international arts education research community.

The research context — Local

Australian policy makers seem to be noticing and, to some extent, catching the Arts Education wave. The Australia Council had been disinclined to engage with the education sector until recently. Two years after the initial overseas momentum, a change occurred in policy on the local scene. The then head of the Australia Council, Dr. Terry Cutler, made these admissions about the role the Australia Council had in education:

> The most important programme, in my mind, to come out of the Council's *Promoting the Value of the Arts* exercise has been the new action focus on education and the arts. This has been for far too long a neglected area. In fact we have failed for 25 years. Way back in 1974 the Council bemoaned the lack of progress.
>
> Many people in the Council feel that the key to long-term success in its objectives lies with education. So far, no systematic research or planning in this area has been possible.
>
> We now have the opportunity to redress 25 years of underachievement and really try to make some things happen in this pivotal arena. This is an especially important mission at the start of the 21st century within the context of a knowledge economy where creative people are at a premium in all walks of life and where the interface between creativity and industrial innovation is becoming ever more prominent. (Cutler, 2001:2)

This rhetoric has become more tangible in the years since. In March 2004 the Australia Council released a *Draft National Education and The Arts Strategy*. The actions outlined in this draft strategy were fourfold. It committed the Australia Council to the development of:

1. A national statement on the arts and education
2. A comprehensive communication plan for education and the arts
3. Effective models for arts-rich education
4. Contribution to an international education and the arts research network.

The Australia Council commissioned several significant research studies which are due to be completed through the course of 2004.

> The purpose of the research is to measure the impact of creative arts education in schools in order to develop the body of Australian Research that will inform future strategic development in education and the arts throughout Australia. (Australia Council, 2004:1)

Another important part of this strategy is for Australian educators to be part of an international research network. Drama Australia's Director of Research, Robin Pascoe, is on this group. The research network is one way of providing a two-way communication channel between arts education researchers in Australia and overseas.

> The aim of the network would be to move beyond one-off research partnerships and projects between single universities, arts companies and/or schools, thereby enabling rich and long-term information sharing between countries and regions. The network

> would seek to encourage sustainable research structures that acknowledge existing highly effective practice in arts-rich education and the innovative and effective approaches already being taken in some arts-related research. (*ibid.*:12)

To create dialogues between arts educators, researchers and policy makers the Australia Council has set up the National Arts Education Network (NEAN)[3]. This network is inter-governmental and includes over twenty policy makers from state, territory and Commonwealth arts and education bureaucracies. This network has the potential to provide the missing link between arts practice, research and education policy. It may also provide a useful forum for researchers to communicate their findings and influence policy.

As an early career researcher, one of the most frustrating elements of the process is my inability to reach a wider audience to share the findings arising from my research. For instance, one of the findings from my doctoral study was that there are several practical strategies that systems could employ to enhance professional development for drama teachers (Anderson, 2002). These recommendations have had a good airing within the drama education community but have not made it to the policy gatekeepers. I am sure every researcher in this area has a similar story to tell. Perhaps the NEAN is a place where researchers and policy makers can meet to communicate the findings of their research in the hope that policy reform might take place on the basis of research.

There is currently some national and international momentum for the recognition of the value of the arts in the educational programs of young people. These reports strongly argue that the emerging community demands the skills that the arts can offer. This will come as no surprise to arts educators who have been making these claims for years. There are challenges that come with this exciting environment. The following are suggestions that might assist us to capitalise on the momentum and create a sustainable and creative future for drama education research.

Challenges for Drama Education Research

In the relationship between drama education research, advocacy and policy there are some important challenges. Some of the methodological challenges are significant for a body of researchers who mostly understand and enjoy working in qualitative methodologies. In order to influence policy we may have to become bilingual, speaking in our own qualitative language and adopting another to make our points most effectively to those who do not speak our language.

Methodological issues: beyond dichotomies

There has been a strong and useful argument in drama education about how we should examine the questions that arise. Habitually the arguments have usually fallen into a dichotomy — the qualitative and the quantitative. As Carroll argues (1996:74), we should be mindful that all methodologies are human constructions and therefore have inherent political, historical and gender bias. Having accepted that objectivity is a myth, we can then discuss the more important question — what methodology will suit the needs of the question? In some cases it will suffice to run a quantitative analysis; in

3 Further information on the principles and the membership of the National Education and Arts Network can be found at http://www.ozco.gov.au/council_priorities/education/ .

other cases a more complex design will be necessary. Sometimes both will be required to adequately explore an issue. As with the process versus product argument, there seems little to be gained by taking sides and waging war. We should rather be looking to strengthen our case by making the question drive the methodology and respecting responses derived from either approach for what they are. We do face a sceptical audience and policy makers often want easily digestible research responses.

Findings with 'hard edges'

Within the double speak that sometimes passes for discussion in bureaucracies, there is often a call for findings with 'hard edges'. What I think this means is findings that can show significance in a statistical way. For instance:

> *X% of students have grown taller because of their exposure to process drama.*

There is of course an inbuilt discrimination in a call for 'hard edged data' as it presupposes that anything important can be demonstrated in an empirical way. Most drama educators would agree that it is difficult to show much of what occurs in the drama classroom with quantitative methodologies. Our praxis is so based in experience, intuition and the immediate that we almost always rely on the reflections and experiences of the practitioners to demonstrate our research.

This reflection does not always come with hard edges. We should continue to examine qualitatively and report the depth of what goes on in drama learning and search for new methodologies that represent the complexity of drama learning. Performance ethnography and brain-based research represent two of the recent candidates but they are not without their methodological or ethical issues. Whichever methodologies we choose to use, we must be aware of the audience we are attempting to persuade. If our aim is to advocate our case to policy makers, perhaps we will need to speak the language of statistics to make our point. If we are striving to describe drama practice, we should continue using existing and new methodologies where they suit our research question and are able to describe the multidimensional nature of drama learning.

Research opportunities

I admire the Arts Education Partnership for publishing *The Arts and Education: New Opportunities for Research.* It is no easy task to identify potential areas of research at the risk of leaving important questions out. This document will provide fruitful research questions for many drama educators. It serves as a useful guide seen within its own political and social context. The following reflections refer more closely to some of the opportunities that arise because of the prevailing situation in this country — namely, the growth in research in the area, the new interest in arts research from policy bodies like the Australia Council and the generational change that has already seen some of our senior drama educators retire. These are by no means the only strategies but they may begin to provide more effective support for drama education researchers.

An Australian Arts Longitudinal Study

It seems that we often get stuck with policy makers on the question of what effects the arts have on student learning. Even though the last six years have seen a systematic and methodological review of studies throughout the arts, there still seems to be little that can influence policy makers. There is currently a call for more studies to assess

whether the arts do facilitate transfer of learning and contribute to other beneficial effects (Deasy, 2002; O'Farrell and Meban, 2003). If nothing else, a longitudinal study of this kind might allow us to respond to some of these questions, allowing us to focus our attentions on other issues.

The main questions a study like this could ask might be:

1. What levels of participation in each arts form exist in the lives of Australian children?
2. Does an arts-rich education improve students' social outcomes?
3. Does an arts-rich education improve schooling outcomes beyond the arts?
4. Where arts education is strong, what strategies are being used by schools and teachers to create this culture?

Of course, a study like this can only explore in very surface ways the participation rates and the effects the arts has on the lives of children. The role of qualitative research is perhaps more important because it can explore the complexity that is such a feature of learning in the arts.

An Australian Drama Education Research Network

One of the most impressive features of the drama education landscape in Australia, unlike drama communities elsewhere, has been its ability to cohere in the face of ideological differences. This cohesion has allowed for perhaps the strongest drama advocacy body anywhere — I refer, of course, to Drama Australia — and a rich tradition of collegiality. With the same collegiality in mind, it may now be time to work collaboratively in our research with other drama researchers and arts researchers generally. There seems now to be a burgeoning of activity in drama education research with the trickle of research undertaken through higher degrees turning into a steady stream. Another indicator of activity in this area is the upcoming Drama Australia monograph to be coordinated by John O'Toole. This will provide an important opportunity for senior researchers in the field to record and reflect on their practice and explore the practice of others. This is an important and exciting initiative that will hopefully preserve corporate knowledge and share it with the growing number of drama education researchers in this country.

Much of the research in drama education has seen teams of teachers, researchers and artists working together to explore issues of interest to all. Of course the nature of drama praxis ensures that we must connect with drama educators to examine practice, whether that be exploring our own practice or examining the work of others. This has the effect of grounding most of our work and making it relevant to the needs of those involved in drama education. This is an exciting feature of drama research in this country that we should strive hard to retain. Furthermore, there are significant funding grants being awarded to drama education researchers exploring issues related to conflict management, students at risk and participation in the arts. All this means that we have now, for the first time in our history perhaps, an opportunity to collaborate, to examine the pressing research issues. The obstacles to collaboration remain the same as always. Geographical and institutional barriers create difficulties. However, the pressing need is to pass on the corporate knowledge before the present pioneers of drama education move on.

Concluding reflections

We have reached a moment in the history of drama education like no other before. For the first time in living memory there are international and national calls for a renewed examination of the role of arts education in the lives of young people. Discussions are occurring with policy makers about the place of education, and UNESCO is taking notice of the power that arts education provides. There are now several documents outlining the areas where research might be undertaken and there is a new generation of drama education scholars gaining their metaphorical wings. The time is right for drama researchers to examine our strong research heritage and plan for the future in partnership with other drama and arts educators in schools or hospitals or youth outreach centres throughout the country and the world. We now have the potential to influence policy makers and make the arts a priority in the learning of every young Australian through a sustained, creative and relevant drama education research culture. We may not have this chance again in our lifetimes.

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UNPACKING THE DRAMA PROCESS AS INTELLECTUALLY RIGOROUS — "THE TEACHER GIVES YOU THE BONES OF IT AND WE HAVE TO ACT THE MUSCLES"

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Abstract
This paper demonstrates how drama can be a rigorous and intellectually demanding learning medium. It reports initial findings from a research project in which specifically designed drama strategies helped Primary ESL (English as a Second Language) children read a novel. These drama experiences fulfilled all pedagogical criteria within the 'intellectual quality dimension', as described in documents such as the *Quality Teaching in NSW Public Schools Discussion Paper* (2003a).



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Keywords: *ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE; LEARNING THROUGH DRAMA; LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT; QUALITY TEACHING; RESEARCH.*

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to provide specific details of a drama teaching/learning experience and show how it fits the criteria of a 'quality teaching learning model'.

Debating what quality learning means is not new in education, but in recent times the work of American researchers Newman and Associates (1996) has been influential in sparking new thinking about this concept within the Australian context. Queensland initiated this exploration with its *Queensland School Longitudinal Study* (Lingard *et al.*, 2001) that examined Education Queensland's *New Basics* Model (2000). New South Wales (NSW) has used these two models to develop its own variation and in 2003 released the *Quality Teaching in NSW Public Schools Discussion Paper* (2003a). Teachers have begun to use this model to examine, reflect and refine their curriculums.

* **Acknowledgement:** The author wishes to thank the co-researchers and school students in this project — Melissa Manga (ESL teacher), Kerrie Foord (Year 6 class teacher) and all the children in her class of 2003.

Because this document is based on both national and international research, it makes the concepts and issues within this paper transferable to other educational contexts. Nevertheless, because my research is in NSW, I refer to this document in my analysis of how educational drama pedagogy fulfils the requirements of 'Quality Teaching'. The challenge emanates from work with my co-researchers. As classroom teachers they requested we match data from the integrated Drama/English plans to this document so that their programs could be seen as contributing to the prescribed dimensions — these being 'intellectual quality', 'quality learning environment' and 'significance'. Another concern was that some educators view drama as a soft option — less academically rigorous. This article reports the findings from an integrated Drama and English plan to illustrate how educational drama methodology can be used to develop language and literacy skills and, in so doing, match the criteria within the 'intellectual dimension' of the *Quality Teaching in NSW Public Schools: Discussion Paper*.

Does Drama enhance language and literacy skills?

Research in this area has continued to grow (for example, Booth and Neelands, 1998; Wolf, 1998; Koa and O'Neill, 1998; Wagner, 1998; Fleming and Baldwin, 2003; Hertzberg, 2003; O'Mara, 2003; Hertzberg, in press). But what do arguably the most important stakeholders say — that is the students? A lot! (Hertzberg, 2000). And their views cover many areas of literacy; but this discussion is confined to two major aspects — affective and cognitive learning within talking and listening activities.

Most of my research studies include semi-structured interviews with students. A question always asked is, 'Do you think the drama activities helped you with your [talking/reading/writing]?' whichever the focus had been.

The reply is often 'yes', so I follow with 'why?' to which invariably the students say, 'it is fun'. And so the conversation continues with me saying, Well it might be fun but are you learning anything?' Without exception students say 'yes' and usually state explicitly yes because it makes them ***feel*** the situation so they have more understanding and/or opinion about the topic at hand.

For example:

> *Because it, like, helps you in reading, writing. Helps you understand heaps of stuff that you never understand, as well as if you don't do drama. Usually, like, when you read books you don't understand it but when you're doing drama you understand why they're feeling and how.* (Robert)

> *You can understand it 'cause you're the one who's like in the shoes sort of and you're the one who's doing it, so you understand it.* (Ruby)

Perhaps this is due to drama's ability to connect the lived experiences of the child to the fictional world of drama. Bolton's (1992) concept of metaxis (seeing two worlds at the same time) is I believe fundamental to this process. Children either make connections with their own experiences and/or imagine themselves in real world situations, but within a fictional context through the process of enactment, and so both the affective and cognitive domains are activated. This is an aspect which, for example, Vygotsky (1976), Bruner (1986) and Eisner (1998) view as optimal in the learning process.

Or as one child put it:

> *Like, isn't that the whole idea [for doing drama] because even though you're not really doing it because it's pretend, you can feel what other people are feeling and learn more.* (Ida)

Furthermore, and particularly in the rehearsal and reflective stages of the drama process, students engage in talking and listening about the how, what and why of any given activity. For ESL students and other students with poor English, talking and listening is an essential component of any literacy event and should precede reading and writing in order to 'build up their field knowledge' (Cummins, 2000). Based on sociolinguistic theory, this procedure is common in ESL pedagogy and is now gaining a dominant focus in mainstream literacy pedagogy in many countries. For example, in my state a document titled *Focus on Literacy: Talking and Listening* was released in late 2003 by the NSW Department of School Education to prepare teachers for the 2004 literacy focus for Government Primary schools — talking and listening. Using a sociolinguistic framework, this document states that 'talking and listening are crucial tools for clarifying thinking and reflecting on learning . . . as students actively transform information into knowledge' (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003b:9).

Talking and its importance in literacy development

Drama educators are well aware of the type of critical and reflective talk that accompanies drama, but we need to articulate this to teachers in other fields. So much of drama talk is what Vygotsky (1976) terms 'outer speech'. Outer speech is an external dialogue ***with*** others that assists the development of 'inner speech' — inner speech being the abstract thoughts/mental sense units between self and self that promote and/or are the functions of thinking and problems solving. The word ***with*** is highlighted intentionally. Traditionally, much of the talk in classrooms is directional (Gibbons, 2002) and teacher/student status and its expected etiquette is the norm. However, in drama talk, the talk is ***with*** other people and often surrounding circumstances that require problem-solving based discussion.

Furthermore, the traditional role of the teacher changes. Although the teacher is often responsible for initiating the task and providing scaffolding throughout, subsequent discussions while planning a drama or reflecting on a drama are often student-led and in small groups without necessarily a teacher present. Even when the teacher is present in large group discussions such as the drama circle, the typical classroom discourse cycle ('teacher initiates, student responds and teacher evaluates') that linguists such as Cummins (2000) discourage, is minimal or non-existent. This is because the major aim of any drama experience is to encourage students to think about and probe issues and relationships more carefully for themselves, rather than second-guessing what the teacher or other students think is the 'right' answer or response.

Primary students (and in particular those with poor English skills) may not be able to sophistically articulate these concepts but do express them in their own way. For instance, the following comment is representative of students' opinions about the drama circle:

> *Well I didn't like it [drama circle] because you [teacher] didn't make comments so I never knew if I was right or wrong, but now I do [like it] because I've got used to it and I just say what I think and it's fun when other people join in.* (Fatima)

Because students frequently say that they like discussing issues in drama, I usually respond by saying, "but we need not have done drama to have that sort of discussion". Children invariably disagree with me. For instance:

> *No, but then you don't understand or you don't often listen to anyone else [in class discussions] because it's just work, but in drama — well it is work, but it's different because you know what you think and they know what they think and then you talk about it and then it helps you to think better about your ideas.* (Mario)

How drama helps children think better about their ideas and by implication assist in their literacy development has been the focus of my current research.

Research context

This project is ongoing and is part of a larger research study — *The Fair Go, Fair Share, Fair Say, Fair Content Project (FGP)*. Based on the premise that student engagement is a critical condition for improved student outcomes, the project defines engagement in learning as something more than 'compliance' or 'on task behaviour. It examines the types of pedagogical approaches that might achieve the long-term belief that educational achievement is a realistic aspiration for students from socio-economic and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

The project is a partnership between the NSW 'Priority Schools Funding Program' and the University of Western Sydney's 'Pedagogy in Practice Research Group'. Six academics are involved and co-research with teachers from five government schools in the Liverpool area of south-west Sydney. My research is at one of these schools and my co-researcher for the following plan was the ESL teacher, Melissa Magna. Melissa was not familiar with educational drama methodology before the research began.

My specific research focus within this project is to:

- Explore, evaluate and describe in detail how educational drama methodology corresponds to the 'NSW Quality Teaching Model of Pedagogy';
- Find out what the children thought they were learning during drama lessons, specifically in terms of literacy development;
- Find out if students felt engaged in academic work during drama experiences.

For one and a half hours each fortnight over one school year I worked with two classes — one composite Years 5/6 and one Year 6 (10 to 12 years old). The students are from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds and it is a low socio-economic population, thus attracting Priority School Funding. In both classes more than 50% need English as a second language assistance. Further, it could be argued that most children's language and literacy skills irrespective of language background need extra support. Therefore, and corresponding to ESL pedagogy, the emphasis of the teaching program was on talking and listening activities prior to reading and writing. Using a combination of case study and action research, a co-researching ethnographic methodology was used.

Data was collected through observation and discussion between the university-based researcher and the classroom teacher-based researcher, and from student written work samples, video, photos, field notes and focus group semi-structured audio interviews with students and staff.

Analysing data

To analyse how the integrated Drama/English plans fulfilled the requirements of the 'NSW Quality Teaching Model of Pedagogy', the implemented teaching/learning experiences were matched to the elements within this model. To find out if children thought they were learning during these sessions, data collected from children's work samples, photos and video footage and audio interview transcripts with both students and teachers were coded, based on emergent themes as they pertain to the three dimensions of the 'NSW Quality Teaching Model of Pedagogy'.

Reporting findings

Space limitations do not allow all the findings to date to be presented in this paper. As a sample, the findings from one sixty-minute integrated Drama/English plan are set out. They demonstrate its intellectual rigour. First a sequential detail of the plan is provided with a brief explanation about the purpose of each activity. Following this, aspects from these activities in general are matched to the 'intellectual dimension' within this model, since this dimension is deemed to need most attention in terms of positioning drama as intellectually demanding.

Drama plan for the beginning chapters of "I am Jack"

The children were reading *I am Jack* (Gervay, 2000) as a class novel. This award-winning book is about an 11 years old boy being bullied at school. In the first chapter entitled 'Mum will you listen?' the reader is introduced to Mum, Nanna and Jack, all of whom have a close relationship. The scene opens with Jack lamenting that his Mum and Nanna are gong to be talking for a long time so he can't talk to his Mum in private. It transpires in the following chapters that Jack has been trying to find a way to tell his Mum about being bullied at school. That he was unable to talk to his Mum at this point is significant to the subsequent story, so it is important for students to comprehend the tension set up in this opening chapter.

To do this the following drama activity was planned:

Activity One: Explaining the outcomes we were working towards during this lesson

The following outcomes from the *K-6 English Syllabus* (Board of Studies, NSW, 1998) were displayed on an OHT and explained.

- Interacts productively and with autonomy in pairs and groups of various sizes and composition, uses effective oral presentation skills and strategies and listen attentively (*ibid.*:20).
- Critically analyses techniques used by writers to create certain effects, to use language creatively, to position the reader in various ways and to construct different interpretations of experience (*ibid.*:33).

This activity was necessary to alert children to the purpose of the lesson and not to second-guess what we as teachers had planned. In ESL pedagogy this is termed 'noticing' (Swain, 1995). Although each point was paraphrased in presentation, it was intentional to quote directly from the syllabus to help demystify these documents.

Activity Two: Sculpting

As a pre-reading exercise and in pairs, one child of a pair sculpted the other to see what it's like when you want to talk to someone who is too busy to give attention. We viewed these sculptures and discussed how the facial and body language conveyed a message. Then one pair volunteered to remain in pose; the rest of the class provided words to describe the message and these were scribed on the chalkboard. Words suggested by students included 'annoyed', 'frustrated', 'upset' and 'irritated' and then others were added by the teacher ('bothered', 'perturbed' and 'discouraged').

The purpose was to activate the children's prior knowledge because communication is a major theme in this novel. As many of these children are ESL, there was also a deliberate focus on vocabulary building. In ESL pedagogy this is termed 'building the field'. Not only were the words spoken, they were also written on the chalkboard — an important principle to adopt with ESL students (Gibbons, 2002).

Activity Three: Discussion of grammatical features to glean meaning

We read Chapter One and focused on the following excerpt displayed on an OHT:

> *'Is Nanna going home now?'*
> *'Soon Jack. Do you want Nanna to leave?'*
> *That's such a mean question. As if I would hurt Nanna's feelings like that. Luckily Nanna didn't hear the question. I told you she's a bit deaf.*
> *'No Mum. I want Nanna to stay' but just* NOT NOW. *Oh no, Mum makes another cup of coffee.*
> *They go back to their endless talking. It's about Rob. This could take hours.*
> (Gervay, 2000:4-5)

The teacher reads it and then asked the children to identify what Jack ***said*** and what he ***thought***. This was difficult for most children. Initially most believed incorrectly that Jack verbalized 'but just NOT NOW'. In fact this is what Jack was thinking and thus did not speak unkindly to Nanna.

As a result we discussed the use of speech marks in written texts — a concept they all knew but had difficulty applying in this context. We ascertained what Jack ***said*** and ***thought***, using the picture reprinted opposite, by inserting a speech and a thought bubble and wrote the appropriate text for each.

Activity Four: Still image

In groups of three, students depicted this scene above which they brought to life with Jack saying, 'No Mum. I want Nanna to stay' and then turning away from Nana and Mum and freezing at this point to show how he was feeling as he is thinking . . . 'but just NOT NOW. Oh no Mum makes another cup of coffee. They go back to their endless talking. It's about Rob. This could take hours'.

Concentrating on this moment was deemed important, because the tension in this scene is pivotal to the rest of the book. It is the first of many and varied occasions when Jack tries to tell someone about his predicament. Unless children fully understand Jack's dilemma, the poignancy and ensuing tension of the story is diminished. The photo opposite depicts one group's interpretation.



'No, Mum. I want Nanna to stay,' but just NOT NOW. Oh no, Mum makes another cup of coffee.

They go back to their endless talking. It's about Rob. This could take hours.

'Rob changed the oil in my car on the weekend.' I can do that too, Mum.



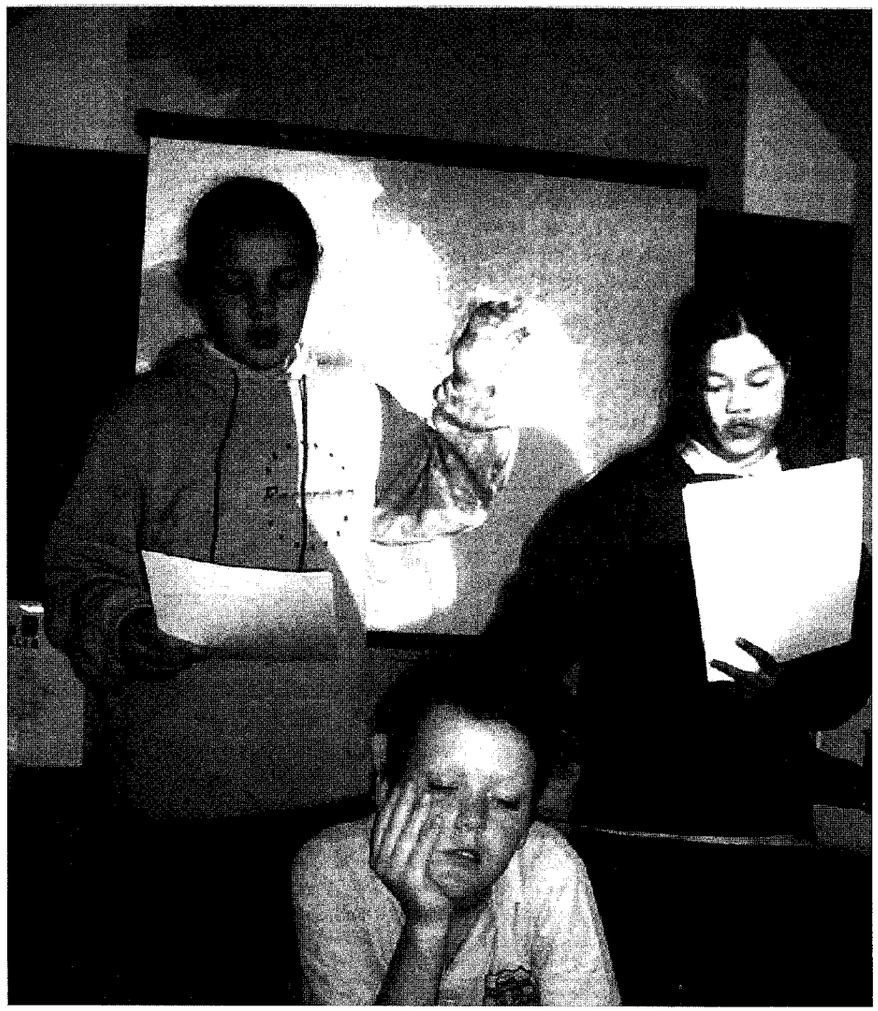
Activity 5: Readers' Theatre

As the children were unfamiliar with Readers' Theatre, the teacher wrote the script for the scene where Jack is bullied (*ibid.*:26-29) because the focus was on reading and not script writing. This scene is seminal to the bullying theme throughout, and Gervay releases the tension but at the same time heightens the imagery through the use of humorous similes and colloquial language. For example:

> *George Hamel is a rugby player. He's a front forward. A big front forward with muscles that stick out of his chest like hamburgers. He's a real meathead. Joke, joke. Do you get it? Hamburger. Meat.* (*ibid.*:26).

For many ESL children, written English jokes are hard to get, often requiring explicit explanation. Listening to a good model reading aloud (in this case the teacher) followed then by small group dramatised readings is just one way to assist understanding. This is the sequence we used. When the teacher modelled the Readers' Theatre script, many children laughed and were asked to explain the humour. They found this difficult to articulate but knew, for example, that the reference to hamburgers was a joke and at the same time telling the reader that George was deemed to be strong and tough. Before continuing this discussion, all children were asked to stand and construct a still image of themselves to look like a George Hamel. In this way students were able to share their understanding using non-verbal language. The concept of simile was then discussed further before children split into small groups to practise the script. After the initial practice we returned as a large group to discuss other linguistic features. For example, the use of another simile: '[George] looked like a hyena leading a pack of hyenas' (*ibid.*:28).

The children then continued to rehearse in small groups. By now it was evident that most children understood the linguistic nuances and were articulating these in their reading. Of particular interest was the amount of discussion that occurred whilst rehearsing. For example, children helped one another with the pronunciation and/or word recognition of words such as 'ignorant'. They also discussed how to read specific lines. For example Rona said, 'I reckon you should say it real sad and frustrated like you know how we did it before for the line "Oh boy, Mum knows nothing"'. Similarly, after the initial giggling of saying 'Bum Head' in the classroom, one group suggested that for the text 'Go on. Run away. Run away Bum Head, Bum Head, Bum Head', they start off softly as if from a distance and, by the third time, say it really loud but slowly.



The photo above shows one group in action. Each group performed its readings in front of an overhead transparency displaying the book's cover picture that illustrates the bully looming larger than life over Jack.

To justify this plan as intellectually rigorous and thereby fulfilling the requirements of many Australian and international curriculum documents, this paper now addresses this issue with reference to one such example—the 'NSW Quality Teaching Model of Pedagogy'. To explain this a discussion in table format follows. In this table, aspects of the drama plan are matched to all elements within the 'intellectual dimension' category. The first and second columns of the table quote from the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET, 2003:11), and illustrate how DET views each element in practice. In the third column (under the heading '*What did it look like at C... school'?*), I elaborate on the previous description of this plan and also refer to data from interviews and field notes to further justify this form of drama as intellectually demanding.

Intellectual quality dimension

Element	What does it look like in classrooms?	What did it look like in 6F at C...School?
Deep knowledge	The knowledge being addressed is focused on a small number of key concepts and ideas within topics, subjects or KLAs, and on the relationships between and among concepts.	It was evident that children understood the concept that the linguistic structure of a story helps convey the meaning. Children's knowledge about point of view, first person, narrator, simile and metaphor were, for example, enhanced. Whilst we did not formally test their knowledge, the researchers' observations at the time indicated that the majority of children understood the key concepts for as my co-researcher Melissa stated: *Now there was a purpose for understanding how direct and indirect speech helps . . . [to convey the author's meaning].*
Deep understanding	Students demonstrate a profound and meaningful understanding of central ideas and the relationships between and among those central ideas.	Although students understood at 'surface level' that this book was about a boy being bullied, the drama enhanced their understanding of issues from multiple perspectives. *In drama I understand more about how a person is feeling (in a story) 'cause I am that person (Nanna) and I feel sorry for Nanna as well as Jack.* (Shayne) And on a more general note another student said: *If you're acting it you can be a little more passionate about it. Like if you act it, then you'll get more of a picture of what you're actually doing ...If you write it, it doesn't stay for long. But if you act it, it's a memory, you still remember it.* (Ida)
Problematic knowledge	Students are encouraged to address multiple perspectives and/or solutions and to recognise that knowledge has been constructed and therefore is open to question.	The notion of critical interpretation of multilayered events is fundamental in artistic creation. One such example was the debate children had during the rehearsal of their Readers' Theatre about the degree to which Jack may have incited George's cruelty to him: *. . . well Jack's not all that right either, he bragged about beating him and told that joke.* (Sam) In addition, this highlighted independent problem solving for as Melissa noted: *we're not there telling them what to do or how to think about something. We've provided the material and it's up to them as to how they interpret it.*

Higher order thinking	Students are regularly engaged in thinking that requires them to organise, reorganise, apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate knowledge and information.	Higher order thinking was ongoing. For example, to construct the still image to depict Jack wanting to tell his mother that he was being bullied required children to analyse and evaluate the linguistic discourse. All stages of the Readers' Theatre sequence required students to organise, reorganise, apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate knowledge and information in order to construct their interpretation of this script. For example, and as one child said: *well we have to understand the way the funny bits help to show how sad it is and read it like that* (Nathan).
Metalanguage	Lessons explicitly name and analyse knowledge as a specialist language (metalanguage), and provide frequent commentary on language use and the various contexts of differing language uses.	Each drama strategy emphasised explicitly a range of vocabulary and grammar concepts. For example, the role of the narrator, point of view and the use of simile and metaphor to enhance imagery as explained previously. Moreover the technical terms were both used and explained. In my field notes I wrote that: *children were not just identifying features they were analysing how to interpret them in their Readers' Theatre to portray meaning.*
Substantive communication	Students are regularly engaged in sustained conversations about the concepts and ideas they are encountering. These conversations can be manifest in oral, written or artistic forms.	Each activity required sustained conversation about the concepts and ideas. Importantly the majority of this time was in pairs or small groups. Not only did this enable all children to have more time to talk, it broke the traditional cycle of teacher initiates-student responds and teacher evaluates. For many children working in small groups helped them to both formulate and then articulate ideas for as one child said: *If you are working by yourself it's not like when you work with other people you can think more because they have more ideas and maybe you can change your view. If you've got your ideas together you can make all your ideas into one.* (Huong) Melissa also noted: *All this talking and listening is so essential for ESL children and they are all on task even if we're not there—well most of the time. Of course sometimes they wander off the topic, but don't we all! But most of the time when I go near a group they're chatting about how to show what is happening—how to interpret it.*

Conclusion

This drama plan took one hour to implement, and it might be argued that there are quicker and more efficient ways of accomplishing the same learning outcomes. This query was put to Melissa who said:

> *No. No way, I don't think so. Yes, it's much longer than giving a very expository lesson and saying, 'OK, we've read this passage and now I want you to go away and write your opinion about Jack and why you think he finds it difficult to talk to his Mum'. Or 'OK, now let's look at how the author has used direct and indirect speech' and then have a teacher-directed question time. But drama [OK, it did take longer], but all the kids are involved and I really think they are learning more and more deeply and that's for me what quality teaching is about. It's not how long or short the lesson is that matters — it's whether they are learning anything substantial. Which comes back to the point I made about risk taking earlier [in this interview]. I said many kids here don't like to take risks. They don't want to do anything wrong. They are so scared of getting it wrong. They would rather just do tick and flick stencils, but drama takes them outside that box, out of that comfort zone, and they have to really think about the content which leads to deeper understanding.*

Using just one drama plan from our research, this article illustrates what the intellectual dimension of the 'NSW Quality Teaching Model of Pedagogy' looks like in action. While the teachers initiated the task, it was planned so children took the challenge — and, by implication, the risk — of providing the substance, or as one ESL child put it:

> T*he teacher gives you the bones of it and we have to act the muscles.*

Analogy has not been taught explicitly to these children, so it cannot be argued in this case that this child has the metalanguage but, boy, does he understand the process!

Our research is ongoing and the challenge is not over for, as Gordon Wells wrote:

> It is only by subjecting one's present behaviour to critical scrutiny, that one can see clearly how it might be improved in the future. (1994:24)

Our aim for next year is to write drama plans that integrate English and Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) around the topic of Antarctica, because the crowded curriculum necessitates finding sensible ways of integrating key learning areas so there is ***time*** to delve beneath surface meanings and attain intellectual rigour. Can these kids from South West Sydney tackle Samuel Coleridge's epic poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*?—we'll find out.

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COMPETENCY IN AUSTRALIAN DRAMA TEACHERS: MAPPING THE TERRAIN

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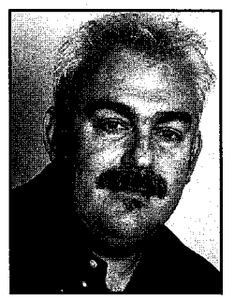
Abstract

This paper describes a study where the notion of competency was explored with drama teachers as a way of revealing the complex nature of their work. Six conceptions were identified that help illuminate the multi-faceted dimensions of drama teaching. These experientially based conceptions have implications for pre-service teacher education and the professional development of drama teachers.



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Keywords: *DRAMA TEACHERS; RESEACH; TEACHER COMPETENCIES.*

Introduction

What does it mean to be a good drama teacher? And how would we know in a field that is shaped by ephemeral teachable moments (Stanfield, 2002) and aesthetic notions of play (Macintyre Latta, 2001)? These are simple but profound questions in times of increasing accountability, government control and performance review. This article reports on an Australian investigation of drama teachers' own experiences of competent drama teaching and uses these experiences to name and describe what this might mean.

In Australia, drama is now available in each state and territory as a tertiary entrance subject and is increasingly, though often spasmodically, taught by primary teachers who have a commitment to the arts in education. Most universities mandate compulsory primary arts education curriculum units in their initial teacher education programs and there are a number of well-established specialisations in secondary methods programs for those who choose to be specialist drama teachers. These elective offerings are often well subscribed and reflect the healthy nature of drama education in Australia, generally speaking.

Competency is a notion that continues to attract attention both in the development of Government policy and in education in particular (Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003; National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning, 1996; Senate Employment Education and Training References Committee, 1998). This reflects an interest not only in outcomes, and pedagogies that might support them, but also an attempt more broadly to understand the complex work of teachers (Brock, 2000).

There is a debate about the utility of competency as applied to teaching generally. On the one hand, competency implies a series of standards that might be used as basis for registration and professional advancement of teachers (Australian College of Educators, 2002; Wallace, Wildy and Louden, 1999); alternatively exists the potential for these 'standards' to be used a tool to look for and 'assess' measurables that define, and potentially delimit, the multi-dimensional nature of teacher's work.

While the competency/standards approach has been seen as potentially empowering (Ingvarson, 1999) and is increasingly being adopted both in Australia (Jasman, 1999) and abroad (Music Educators National Conference, 1996), it has not been explored in relation to the teaching of drama specifically. This exploration is important as quality drama education has much to contribute in developing those attitudes and competencies in young people highlighted as important in an increasingly complex society. These attitudes and competencies include being 'well-educated, flexible, responsive, creative, self-confident and adaptive' (Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003:7), notions long held to be developed by competent drama teachers themselves (Wagner, 1998).

Qualitative research methodology provides a framework through which such issues may be investigated. This framework draws on an individual's experience of the world as an important paradigm in the construction of knowledge, and values and honours that experience as important building blocks in the development of understanding and theory. In short, following Cumming's call: 'what does it mean to be a professional educator?' (2002:3), asking teachers about their own experience of competency provides a way of understanding the phenomenon more broadly.

Aim

This research project sought to establish an understanding among Australian drama teachers on the phenomenon of competency in drama teaching. This understanding can be used to inform the content and methodology of teacher education courses and further the debate on what constitutes an accomplished drama teacher.

This project used a phenomenographic approach to examine the variations and qualitative differences in Australian drama teachers' conceptualisation of competence. Phenomenography is a research specialisation developed by Marton (1978) and others (Dall'Alba and Hasselgren, 1996; Hasselgren, 2001; Marton & Booth, 1997; Säljö, 1979), where learning and awareness are linked to reveal the qualitatively different ways in which ***people*** see, experience, understand and conceptualise various phenomena in their life-worlds — in this case, competency as it relates to drama teaching.

Methodology

The research was conducted in two phases. In Phase One, a questionnaire was distributed at a Drama Australia conference with thirteen participants volunteering to provide data in this study. Respondents were asked to supply information about their teaching experience and the nature of school where they taught, for example, Private or Public, Primary or Secondary. The participants were asked to write an answer to the following open-ended question:

'In your experience, what does a competent drama teacher do?'

Respondents returned their statements during the conference. These narratives where then analysed using a phenomenographic approach described by Dahlgren and Fallsberg (1991). This seven step process consists of familiarisation and condensation of the data, selecting the most representative and significant statements, comparison across the data for variation or agreement, grouping into categories followed by a description of the essence of this similarity, labelling the range of conceptions and, finally, a contrasting across the categories in relation to similarities and differences.

In Phase Two a mail-out was used to send a copy of the questionnaire to each registered participant. In this phase the data collected from phase one was used to extend the original question, adding another two in order to better contextualise the results. These subsequent questions were:

'How do you develop competence as a drama teacher?
And, based on your earlier responses, briefly write a paragraph that describes your understanding of the concept of competence in general'.

Twenty written responses to these answers were then mailed back to the researchers in a pre-paid envelope. These narratives were analysed as for phase one. In both phases of the data collection, emphasis was placed on encouraging respondents to:

- provide a *fullness* of description,
- document the use of *specific* cases or instances as evidence, i.e., an experiential approach, and
- describe the *variations* across this phenomenon.

Results

The analyses of data revealed a rich understanding in the experience of competence by these 33 Australian drama teachers. These respondents had a range of teaching experience — 10 in their first years of teaching (0-5 yrs), 14 experienced (6-15 yrs), and 9 who were very experienced (16 yrs +), including one teacher with 40 years experience. Of these respondents, one identified as an early childhood teacher, 6 as primary, 15 as secondary and 9 as tertiary educators. It is interesting to note that 4 teachers worked across a range of ages such as in regional schools where classes range from beginning primary to school leavers. Five of Australia's seven states and territories were represented in the data.

The iterative analysis of data revealed six varying conceptions of the experience of competence. These conceptions vary across respondents and one teacher may hold more than one of these conceptions depending on his or her understanding of their experiences. The six conceptions are:

1. Competence in drama teaching as being 'tuned in and turned on'.
2. Competence in drama teaching as risk-taking or experimenting in a creative environment.
3. Competence in drama teaching as empowering learners and adding value.
4. Competence in drama teaching as sharing skills and networking.
5. Competence in drama teaching as being a considerate reflective practitioner.
6. Competence in drama teaching through being an ambassador for drama and the arts.

Each of these conceptions will be described in order to elaborate the richness of their contents.

1. Competence in drama teaching as being 'tuned in and turned on'

According to respondents, the highly competent drama teacher is 'tuned in and turned on' in a complex manner. Such complexity is based on the views that these drama teachers are experienced, well-trained and proficient, knowledgeable about their field and craft, caring, good listeners, excellent teachers and inspirational educators, and current in their practice. They are attuned to different thinking and feeling states within themselves and amongst their students. The strength of their relationship with their students is based on their intellect, professional education and desire to work closely with groups of learners to produce excellent results.

The knowledgeability of these teachers is grounded in their capacity to 'view life and its experiences as an ever-enriching process which can be crafted as learning experiences for her students. EVERYTHING counts!' (Teacher 19) Such knowledge is itself a complex phenomenon. Not only does it include a deep understanding of the place of drama in the formal curriculum but also an understanding of the art of drama, knowing the content of drama, understanding contextual frameworks and knowing what to teach. Knowledge of the place of drama in the curriculum involves understanding how drama fits into different levels of the curriculum and being able to explain the role of drama education to different groups of interested parties. As Teacher 3 notes:

> This teacher will have an understanding of the place of drama in the curriculum (whether that is at Secondary, Primary or at University), and be able to explain and justify the place to a range of people (students, administrators, parents etc.).

Understanding the art of drama was viewed as important for the competent drama teacher because it offered him/her ways by which the art of drama can be used to contribute to student's knowledge and understanding. From this understanding, teachers can derive models for student learning. In Teacher 14's words:

> I think that competent drama teachers have a sound understanding of the art from its many aspects and draw on that understanding in their work . . . and they understand ways in which it could contribute to children's knowledge and understanding.

For some of the teachers, knowing the content of drama teaching, i.e., the strategies and methods for best practice, is essential for them being deemed to be competent. By this content, one teacher emphasised the need for the drama teacher to have learned 'everything' that is associated with the study and teaching of drama — lights, costume,

voice, improvisation, acting, directing and so on. In some ways, these ideas overlap with the idea of knowing what to teach because s/he has experienced most of the key aspects of dramatic performance and how to achieve it.

Further, the knowledge that the competent drama teacher possesses must include a thorough understanding of the contexts or artistic frameworks in which drama operates in wider society. Teacher 1, for example, identified cultural, social, political and artistic frameworks as being the key contexts in which dramatic performances succeed. This teacher sees this knowledge as being important when relating drama to other art forms in our society:

> A competent teacher also understands the relationship of drama to other art forms with regard to artistic processes. These are seen as those which particularly facilitate the development of sign systems and methods of representation.

Armed with this knowledge, the competent drama teacher has developed an extensive record of experience in dramatic performance and education. For example, different participants referred to: experience in the performing arts (Teacher 12); conducting successful dramatic events (Teacher 12); being educated in drama (Teacher 11); and successfully learned dramatic skills (Teacher 9). Furthermore, they need to be proficient in all facets of teaching, including the basic skills of teaching (Teacher 23), the capacity to be a competent assessor of student performance (Teacher 2), and a role model who is a leader in shaping the school curriculum (Teacher 2).

As such, the competent drama teacher is an inspiration to all of his/her classes. As one teacher (No. 19) noted: 'A competent drama teacher becomes an inspiration to her classes to each and every student in a personal way. There is no doubt in this person's mind that they would not teach anything else'. Whilst being inspirational, these teachers are observed to be caring as they develop learning activities for different groups of students (Teacher 20) and actively involved in dramatic practice — largely because they were personally skilled in theatre practice (Teacher 17). They frequently demonstrated the skill of being a good listener to students. As Teacher 25 noted:

> Listening to students can give insight into what they feel about what they have learned so that one can build on past lessons, clarify the intended goals or tighten the program if necessary. Also, recognising why certain things did not work and being prepared to change approach is important.

This means that the competent drama teacher uses current best practice to further drama education in his or her educational context. According to Teacher 22, this means that the teacher must be a member of the relevant professional association, read current published materials, have a good relationship with local theatre companies and be attuned to current vocational opportunities for drama students.

2. Competence in drama teaching as risk-taking or experimenting in a creative environment

A range of teachers highlighted the skill of the competent drama teacher in making risk-taking a positive force. This was expressed in different forms that ranged from experimenting with the drama learning environment, exploring the boundaries of

practice, being flexible and extending the student learners beyond the norm. Consequently, the feeling of being brave in taking these risks was valued by these practising drama teachers.

The idea of experimentation occurred for some teachers by their using of 'hit and miss' approaches with different groups of students. The idea was to establish, through being flexible and adaptive, the best methods that would achieve the goals of the drama curriculum. With the risk-taking comes the possibility of satisfaction for the drama teacher of doing a job very well and achieving excellent results. Teacher 27 makes this point in this way:

> Competence for me as a drama teacher just did not happen over night but rather after a series of 'hit and miss' years of teaching. To be able to truly understand the philosophy, benefits and goals of drama teaching and to live and breathe these goals was when I felt I was competent. I certainly feel I am a better person for pursuing this path.

For some teachers, this means exploring the boundaries of their own practice as they question the assumptions underlying the dramatic performance and exhort students to do likewise. As Teacher 24 notes:

> The competent drama teacher continually explores the boundaries of their own understanding of theatrical practices. They question assumptions about performance and encourage the students to do the same.

Being flexible is one way in which drama teachers can experiment in their classes to maximum effect. As Teacher 12 states, the idea of acting flexibly has a number of facets including being able to respond to a variety of signals from students in order to be able to respond most effectively to their needs. This results in the teachers being able to choose the best strategy for learning in a particular context. She notes:

> Competence means building a range of strategies to meet existing teaching conditions in the 'here and now'. This experience enables flexibility which is critical to competency. Competency demands skill in reading signals — verbal, non-verbal, external — and being able to prioritise the most immediate needs of a group of students, eg. socialisation, self-esteem, gender issues and, subsequently, structuring drama to meet the particular needs. It also requires a variety of strategies to contend with situations whereby students' needs and administrative needs clash.

Teacher 12 has found that this involves drama teachers moving beyond familiar dramatic structures to extend their students in both form and content. The teacher will ask 'real questions' (i.e., questions that relate to either practice or pedagogy) to understand broader conceptual issues. She notes that the teachers:

> . . . will be willing to take risks from familiar drama structures and extend students in both form and content. (S)he will ask 'real questions' and be able to build on particular situations to gain understanding of broader conceptual issues.

Consequently, the competent drama teacher is seen to act bravely by 'trying out new ways, finding new meanings' (Teacher 19). In fact, this person believes that this is all a part of the competent drama teacher 'loving your work' and to become a 'dramatic risk-taker' (Teacher 17) in preparing units of work that will extend one's imagination, being flexible in the classroom and methodical in creating 'firm teaching structures'.

3. Competence in drama teaching as empowering learners and adding value

As with many excellent teachers, competent drama teachers know their learners thoroughly so that they are able to empower them in drama education and add value to their educative experience and so that they can be more effective citizens. Empowerment is achieved by becoming attuned to the thinking and feeling states of the learners; being able to tap their imaginations and challenge them; being a mentor and a facilitator; negotiating the learning with the students; and instilling clear learning goals with the students to challenge them to improve their dramatic ability. In short, they are able to develop an excellent rapport with these students.

Teacher 17 made the point that, for the drama teacher to achieve empowerment, she must become attuned to both her own and her students' states of thinking and feeling. The principal reasons for making this observation focus on distinctive and creative approaches to learning. As she notes:

> A competent drama teacher is attuned to their own and their students' thinking and feeling states. Their teaching revolves around the spiral dynamics of affective and cognitive learning and engages students in imaginative and creative pedagogy.

This teacher sees that this is the way to tap into the students' imagination and to challenge them. She sees this happening by weaving together the affective and the cognitive domains to maximise the collective creativity of the people involved. As she notes:

> Competency in a drama teacher means the ability to weave together affective and cognitive domains so that creativity is pooled, interpreted, shaped, tested and evaluated within the classroom and the drama staff room.

The use of the techniques of mentoring and facilitating has been demonstrated to be very important in the actions of competent drama teachers. Teacher 20 spoke of mentoring through the use of trusted or valued colleagues as 'models of drama practice'. Teacher 19 employed the use of the concept of facilitation as a critical process for passing some of the responsibility in drama classes to the group of students to validate their experience, and to shape it.

An important component in the empowerment process is for the teacher to negotiate the learning with the students. For Teacher 20, negotiation focuses on the idea of challenging the students with innovative learning strategies so that students can feel motivated. It involves creating learning situations that would not sit well in the 'traditional' classroom, for example, sharing power and status. She notes:

> The drama teacher needs to develop a range of competencies in implementing negotiated learning strategies in a learning environment which would ***threaten*** many traditional classroom teachers.

For Teacher 22, the negotiation would be mainly with teaching colleagues and school management to achieve the quality teaching environment that was necessary to implement exciting drama lessons. This teacher says:

> The competent drama teacher will also have excellent negotiation skills and great determination to stand up and advocate Drama in the school, fighting battles with executive members wherever necessary.

To facilitate empowerment, these teachers are able to instil in their students clear learning goals so that all people involved in the learning process are clear on what Drama can do for them. This includes learning how to work better in a group and improving self-confidence in their own performance. Teacher 28 makes the following statement:

> [The competent drama teacher] instils in students a clear learning goal so that they (and the teacher) are clear about what Drama can do for them — co-operative skills, self-awareness, understanding group dynamics, confidence in performance, use of empathy in making sense of global, community and interpersonal existence.

The main purpose for making explicit the learning goals to the students is to challenge them in a meaningful manner to improve themselves and their dramatic ability, to develop a sense of ownership in the outcome of the dramatic experience and become more assertive in their advocacy of drama in the school curriculum. Teacher 28 notes:

> The competent drama teacher gives students an awareness of how they improve in the goals that they set themselves and the improvement may be articulated by the students themselves or given as assessment feedback. Asking students to challenge themselves within Drama gives them a sense of invested ownership in the outcome, e.g., a student may want to be more assertive in group decision-making and make this his or her personal goal. It is also a Drama goal.

A goal for teachers in such empowerment is the improvement of students' dramatic ability. An important outcome of such an empowerment process is the development of an improved rapport between the drama teacher and his/her students. As Teacher 30 noted, this involved the understanding by students of the process of collaborative learning. Once students felt this improved rapport, they were more inclined to want to explore their thoughts and feelings about a topic and the different ways for expressing themselves (Teacher 10).

4. Competence in drama teaching as sharing skills and networking

This conception of competence draws on the notion of the collective competence of the group. By this we mean that, as the result of the empowerment process, the drama teacher finds that s/he and the class work best when they collaborate in the learning experience. They strengthen each other by: sharing key dramatic skills; attending dramatic performances as a group; discussing the outcomes of the dramatic learning experience; and functioning as a team wherever possible. In addition, the drama teacher will maintain a strong dramatic network to engage in a sharing process with other drama educators, actors and directors.

The idea of working as a team seems natural in drama classes because of the collaborative nature of the work. Teacher 30 saw this sense of teamwork as the basis that 'builds up a working relationship with disparate students (attitudes, class values

etc.). This becomes a team — teacher to student; student to student.' For Teacher 25, this concept of teamwork is initially developed through a series of preliminary activities including games and regular warm-ups. She says:

> I believe that a sense of teamwork is good in a drama group and is generally promoted through early games and regular warm-ups. As well as allowing freedom of expression, a teacher does also need a clear idea of what the students need to learn and develop and often this will involve a certain amount of teacher direction, students frequently imagining that drama is merely getting up and acting centre stage.

Some teachers focused on these experiences where skills are shared and practiced. Teacher 24, for example, described how the drama teacher and the students would share new skills through different forms of communication, thereby enhancing participation. This involves the sharing of 'good habits' about drama that may be used by the students in later professional lives and grounding drama education in the real world of the students. This teacher notes:

> In general it means 'good habits' — which simply mean practice that is backed up by a professional life beyond the classroom so that the knowledge and skills that the teacher is attempting to share/impart are firmly rooted in the real world of the particular subject. This is not just about 'job preparation' or vocational education but helps bridge the divide that students often feel exists between the teacher and the 'real' world as they understand it.

In addition, for the teacher, it is important that s/he develops and maintains a strong network amongst colleagues and theatre professionals to enable the teacher to demonstrate credibility with the students that s/he is up-to-date and abreast of the latest developments in the drama profession. Teacher 25 states these sentiments as follows:

> I feel that a competent drama teacher needs to keep interacting with others to keep ideas fresh, needs to experience forms of theatre as much as possible to communicate the potential to students and needs to be flexible and open to the students' own ideas. My preferred teaching method is to allow students a lot of freedom and self-direction while being a sounding board and guide with suggestions.

5. Competence in drama teaching as being a considerate reflective practitioner

According to respondents the competent drama teacher engages in a continuous process of action learning. S/he maintains a regular regime of reflecting on his/her own performance to engage in continuous self-improvement. Such reflection may occur as the result of students' views and opinions or may arise from the teacher evaluation. By being critical of one's own work methods, the teacher searches for ways to suggest and implement alternative, more relevant teaching approaches. In this process, the teacher continues to be a student of drama.

Being a reflective practitioner also means being able to respond to the works or performances of students in a critical and reflective manner. As Teacher 1 indicates, the process of reflection on student performance is important for it conveys to the students that their works are valued for their own 'inherent aesthetic appeal'. Such an approach draws the students and teacher closer together as collaborators. As Teacher 1 notes:

> . . . understand the importance of being a reflective practitioner, i.e., of responding to works of students so that they are valued for their own aesthetic appeal.

Teacher 15 added that the reflective drama teacher must recognise his or her own strengths and weaknesses by understanding the physical, emotional, intellectual, political and reflective characters of the performance experience. By understanding these aspects and by applying them to oneself, the drama teacher is able to consider with a degree of objectivity just how useful s/he has been in making the dramatic experience relevant to students' lives.

In addition, such reflection should be about the methods that the particular teacher uses to maintain a high level of interest by the students in the drama classes. As Teacher 10 indicates:

> It helps to be critical of one's own work methods and to constantly evaluate relative success or failure of lessons, strategies and techniques. Keep learning and doing more, e.g., teaching, performing, studying, directing, designing, etc. Stay involved.

By engaging in these approaches the drama teacher will remain a student of drama throughout his or her professional life.

6. Competence in drama teaching through being an ambassador for drama and the arts

Drama teachers who are regarded as competent are the ones who act as powerful advocates or ambassadors for the subject. Through their advocacy roles these teachers demonstrate a passion for the subject, act as political advocates and have a heightened awareness of the theatre. Without them the profession would not have some of its most ardent support.

The concept of an ambassador may be construed simply as someone who speaks up for the subject. However, Teacher 24 seeks a more complex role. For example, he believes that the competent drama teacher is one who speaks for the subject by productions they complete and the dramatic process that they develop in the students. He states that these teachers are 'good ambassadors for the subject, not just by PR but by product and process'.

The competent drama teacher also exudes and articulates a passion for drama that enthuses others — this passion often being developed from regular attendance of live theatre. It is then transferred through personal challenges to the students to achieve quality results from their own performances. What this models is enthusiasm, advocacy and the work ethic required to be successful in theatre. Teacher 18 makes the following comments in this regard:

> A competent drama teacher instils in the students a passion for attending live theatre. This enables the students to learn valuable skills and techniques about the craft of acting and production elements. A competent drama teacher is serious about the subject and demands that the students share the same attitude. Drama as a subject is not a bludge or a soft-option. The students realise when they walk in the door that there is work to be done.

Discussion

This study revealed six experientially based conceptions of a competent Australian drama teacher. These included knowledge of the syllabus, discipline-specific knowledge, pedagogy and students, the ability to and commitment towards risk-taking, networking, negotiation, advocacy and being self-reflective as a tool towards growth, attributes of flexibility, innovation, responsiveness, creativity and adaptation and, finally, being collaborative and embodying those values and attributes that s/he teaches.

What is clear from these conceptions is that movement towards competency as a drama teacher is experientially based and develops over time. This development is the result of immersion in aesthetic environments, intellect and a high degree of professionalism, acting as a reflective practitioner, being open to a variety of forms of collaboration and remaining a student of drama.

Interestingly, these conceptions are similar to notions of competency suggested elsewhere (Chadbourne, 1999; Ingvarson, 1999; Northern Territory Department of Education, 1998), including using and developing professional knowledge and values; communicating, interacting and working with students and others; planning and managing the teaching/learning process; monitoring and assessing student progress and learning outcomes; and reflecting, evaluating and planning for continuous improvement.

What these general notions of competency address are broad areas that can be applied equally to a variety of curriculum areas. The development and use of ***specific*** notions of competency, however, are much more problematic. For example, what these respondents highlight are more of the 'human' and social qualities not foregrounded elsewhere — that is, the social dynamic in drama teaching is paramount. Furthermore, in the area of drama education — and reflected in the notions of competency already articulated — diversity of response and flexibility to work within a process implies a dialogic relationship not only with participants but also materials and the work itself. In addition, teaching within the arts generally has the added complexity of working with a sensate aesthetic dimension that adds another layer of intricacy to this already sophisticated field. This level of specificity, while it describes the work of competent Australian drama teachers, remains challenging in terms of assessment and certification.

Conclusion

This study has identified six conceptions of competency that can inform our developing understanding of what it means to be a competent Australian teacher of drama. These conceptions can be seen to be similar in nature to other frameworks for competency either recently, or currently under development. While drama teachers are undisputedly in one of the best positions to help reveal this developing understanding, this knowledge, if used to shape and delimit the work of teachers rather than enhance and enrich teacher's professionalism, has the potential to be reductionist in a way that does harm to our profession, discipline and the young people we seek to serve.

Finally, we would like to extend this study and our developing understanding of this phenomenon by considering how and in what way a competent drama teacher is experienced internationally. Any interest in collaborating in such a project should be directed to Peter Wright (p.wright@murdoch.edu.au).

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OBITUARY

CHILD DRAMA PIONEER: PETER SLADE 1912 – 2004

Peter Slade was one of the most significant figures in educational drama in the twentieth century. His life's work was dedicated to three intersecting areas: 'Child Drama' — a philosophy that produced pioneering theatre education and drama work in schools; 'Dramatherapy' — a field of therapeutic drama that he founded; and 'Natural Dance' — an approach to expressive movement and dance for children and adults.

Slade began his working life in the theatre as an actor and director in London in the 1930s. In 1935 Slade started his first theatre school, training actors for theatre in the round — a form that he advocated for children's theatre. In 1945 he founded an innovative children's theatre company, The Pear Tree Players. With his 'actor/teachers' he took drama into schools and youth clubs and began to experiment with audience participation. He began to use drama to facilitate therapy for patients in hospitals and set up a succession of arts centres where his drama methods helped under-achieving and unhappy children.

Slade's appointment as Birmingham's Drama Adviser in 1947 was the most important drama position in UK at the time and he held this position for the next thirty years. He became recognised as a leader in the field of educational drama both within UK and internationally. In 1948 he was a member of the UK government's first Education Working Party on Drama in Schools. In 1964 he chaired the creative drama section of the first world conference on theatre for children in London. He founded the Educational Drama Association in 1946 that produced *Creative Drama*, the first journal specialising in educational drama; a second journal, *Theatre in Education*, focused on drama in schools, colleges, tertiary institutions and youth groups. In Birmingham he established the Rea Street Centre providing drama workshops for local children and teenagers, theatre for children by adult actors and courses for teachers. He used his drama methods to develop personality and communication training for adults from industry and retail trades. For thirteen years he ran special drama sessions for 'delinquents' and people with disabilities. His annual Child Drama summer schools at Rea Street trained decades of teachers from around the world.

Slade developed an extensive body of theory and practice that was first elaborated in his seminal book *Child Drama* in 1954. His philosophy of Child Drama evolved from his observations of children's play that began when he walked the streets as an unemployed young actor. He documented children's absorption in dramatic play, their use of space and objects and the 'universal' themes in their dramatic narratives. Slade urged adults to respect the unique aesthetic qualities of children's dramatic play and to recognise its essential role

in human development. He argued passionately against imposing adult conceptions of theatre form on children. He saw Child Drama as an art form in its own right. 'The child creates theatre in its own way, own form, own kind. It is original art of high creative quality' (1954:83).

Slade defined two categories of children's play activity — projected play and personal play. Projected play, involving objects, enabled the child to develop concentration; personal play, involving the whole body and use of role, enabled the child to develop sincerity, confidence and mastery. For Slade, both types of play were essential for balanced and healthy human development. In the context of the formal classrooms of the 1940s, Slade argued for creative and expressive drama activities in all schools in order to facilitate children's personal, social, educational and aesthetic development. He proposed a sequential model of drama curriculum, introducing children to theatre forms appropriate to their age and dramatic development.

His book *Experience of Spontaneity* (1968) demonstrated the application of his drama methods to people with educational, recreational, social, therapeutic and artistic needs. His last book, *Child Play: Its Importance for Human Development* (1995) was written for parents, teachers and therapists with the hope that it 'might make some children more happy'. In 1997 Manchester University made Peter Slade an Honorary Companion for his development of educational drama. The Slade Archives are housed at the University's John Ryland's Library.

As a young teacher in 1973, I studied with Peter Slade at his Drama Centre in Birmingham. Here I learnt about his philosophy of Child Drama and its associated practices. I worked in the over-crowded and impoverished secondary schools in the area, sometimes alongside Slade, where I applied his methods of child drama with kids who at that time were categorised as 'delinquents' or 'educationally sub-normal' or 'new arrivals'. At nights I attended the Rea Street Open House drama sessions where young people from the slums of Birmingham came voluntarily to 'do drama' with Peter Slade and his colleague Sylvia Demmery in the old hall of a former primary school — complete with the bomb crater in the asphalt outside.

Peter Slade was a remarkable person and an extraordinary educator. He was a gentle, compassionate and courteous man who brought a quiet charisma to his teaching and artistic work. His drama practice drew on his calm and focused physical presence, his theatre skills, his intense respect for the creativity and expressive resources of the diverse people he worked with and his delight in the imagination and artistry of children.

Peter Slade died on June 28th 2004, aged 91.

Kate Donelan
The University of Melbourne

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OBITUARY

LOWELL SWORTZELL: PIONEER IN EDUCATIONAL THEATER DIES AT AGE 74

Lowell Swortzell, who co-founded the nation's first program in educational theater at New York University in 1966, died 9 August 2004 at Long Island College Hospital from complications of a stroke. He was 74.

Swortzell spent nearly 40 years at NYU's School of Education, renamed the Steinhardt School of Education in 2001. There, he helped its educational theater program to become a top-rated center for the training of scholars, administrators, performers and designers, committed to advancing theater as an educational art form. He co-founded the program with his wife, Nancy. The Swortzells' commitment to theater was also evident in the surrounding Greenwich Village area. Lowell Swortzell's 'Young Eugene' — a play about the night Eugene O'Neill's 'Emperor Jones' had its Provincetown Playhouse premiere on 20 November, 1920 — marked the 1998 re-opening of the playhouse, which had closed its doors in 1992. In addition, Swortzell directed the 'New Plays for Young Audiences' series held at the playhouse, beginning in 1998. The playhouse 'will carry on that same tradition of developing new voices in American theater', he told *The New York Times* in a 20 April 1998 story. 'But our mission is also to look at how we can serve the community here. It is to be a performing arts center which will bring the community in'. Swortzell was the lead author of seven books and twenty plays, receiving *The New York Times* 'Outstanding Book of the Year Award' for his compilation, *All the World's a Stage: Modern Plays for Young People* (Bantam Dell, 1972).

A Fulbright Scholar, he also was inducted into the College of Fellows of the American Theater at the Kennedy Center and was given the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Children's Theater Foundation in 2003. Many will fondly remember Lowell's tour of various Australian universities in 1995. He was one of the major presenters at the inaugural International Drama in Education Research Institute in Brisbane and he formed great alliances with numerous colleagues while on his Australian tour. He was a towering mentor to hundreds of doctoral students and was a powerful advocate for them and his beloved field. In May 2004, Swortzell received the Steinhardt School's 2004 Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award. There will be a day long celebration of Lowell's career in March 2005. Swortzell earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the George Washington University and his doctorate from NYU in 1963.

Swortzell is survived by his wife, Nancy.

Philip Taylor
New York University

REVIEWS

REVIEW EDITOR: KATE DONELAN
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Carole Miller and Juliana Saxton (2004)
Into the Story: Language in Action Through Drama
Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH
ISBN: 0 325 00628 8

Joanne O'Mara
Deakin University

Into the Story: Language in Action Through Drama is an easily accessible and thoroughly researched book that I unequivocally recommend to all teachers of drama and children's literature, regardless of their experience in using drama. The book presents a well-argued approach to the value and uses of story drama structures followed by ten examples, each one based on a different picture story book. Each of the structures is clearly outlined as a detailed lesson plan for the drama structure, complete with a rationale for story choice, key understandings and questions, details of possible extension activities, resources and materials needed for the drama. To run each drama you need a copy of the stories, which are easily accessed in Australia from libraries and book stores.

Miller and Saxton have been working on this book for five years, testing and re-testing the structures with different groups of students and student teachers. It is no surprise, therefore, that the text itself is as flawless and beautifully crafted as the drama structures the book contains. I have been fortunate enough to be a participant in several workshops run by Miller and Saxton and each time have been struck by the power of their high quality, masterful teaching. Their work delves to the depths of the stories that they work with and drives to the heart of what it might be to be human in the 21st century. What is most impressive to me about *Into the Story: Language in Action Through Drama* is that it captures the quality of their teaching and thinking and makes it accessible to other practitioners.

This book is generous in its sharing of these teachers' collective wisdom as Miller and Saxton position the reader as colleagues and discuss their process for each stage of the drama development and implementation. A good illustrative example of this is their rationale and discussion of how and why they chose the stories that they did. In their opening chapter they give their reasons for picture book selection. They seek texts with 'rich and evocative language and illustrations' with 'something in the story that [they] know will engage their students'. They look for texts that 'expand or deepen learning' and those which they 'feel some personal attachment to the ideas, themes and underlying human issues'. At the beginning of each story drama structure they develop their discussion of text choice with a list of the specific reasons in the section they call, 'Why choose this story?' To illustrate this I have copied the reasons given for the choice of *The Tunnel* (Browne, 1992) in the unit, 'Still as Stone':

- *The Tunnel* looks at family relationships in terms of siblings and their mother. For those students in single-parent families, this story validates their experience.
- The story celebrates personality differences and breaks down the typical stereotyping that occurs in most children's perceptions of boys and girls. It is also a story about the power of love, overcoming fears and discovering courage.
- The story is very familiar in structure and themes. By not romanticizing the brother-and-sister relationship, the book makes it possible for students to easily identify with the protagonists. At the same time, the scenes that are not written allow students to enter and access the story by exploring the ideas based on their own experiences.
- The illustrations by themselves provide innumerable possibilities for exploration both by what is included, what is omitted, and what is subtly indicated.
- There are many literary references to familiar fairy and folktales and novels and stories by contemporary authors and illustrators (e.g., C. S. Lewis, Maurice Sendak).
- *The Tunnel* can be seen as a resource for curriculum integration. There are plenty of opportunities for artwork, storying (both oral and written) and author study.

The range of reasons cited by Miller and Saxton cover a breadth of sound educational reasons for selection of this particular text. In this list they are working for critical literacy development, developing the students' awareness of intertextuality, engaging students with an exploration of themes and issues that are commonly experienced by them, opening up the possibilities for action held within the text and exploring the open spaces in the text. This text is valuable to use in the classroom in terms of developing drama skills, aesthetic awareness, literacy skills and values education. Miller and Saxton also state that 'One of the most important reasons and one of the most neglected, is the delight (*aka* 'fun') in the shared experience of an apparently simple story accompanied by often powerful illustrations' (p.3). It is unusual, but refreshing, to see the reasons for text selection highlighted in this way, and the reasons given are explicit and clear. This provides a very useful model for teachers, particularly as reading/teaching the unit one can see how these reasons for selecting this particular text play out in the classroom action.

I trialed one of the units — 'A Wealth of Knowing to be Reaped' which is based on *Josepha: A prairie boy's story* — with my undergraduate literacy student teachers. The structure itself was a great success — it was fun, the story itself was evocative and the structure drew on experiences and that my students were currently facing. When I ran the structure there was a strong sense from the participants that they had all learned something of life, something about teaching and had had a great time — what more can you ask for? As an experienced drama teacher, I gained new insights and ideas

about drama from running the structure. For instance, it struck me that the rhythm of the work was very different from how I normally work and led me to think more deeply how I am pacing the structuring work that I do — there were several new ways of using drama conventions that I had not used before and a very clever usage of a game as a warm-up, which introduced the students beautifully to the themes of the story. Several of the student teachers taught the structure when they were working in schools and they all had a very successful experience. One of them commented that she found the instructions very easy to follow, and I had a discussion with another about how some of the different drama conventions were used for different effects within this drama structure. The students felt very confident after this experience but the thing that struck me most was that, despite the structure being given in detail, they had modified the work in their own classroom, albeit slightly, to reach the students that they were working with. This is the power of this book — it provides a wealth of knowing to be reaped but the teacher herself must do the reaping and decide when and what to harvest.

There is great attention paid throughout the book to the power of the teacher's language and the usage of questioning. Given the authors, this comes as no surprise — Saxton's earlier work (with Norah Morgan), *Asking Better Questions* (Morgan and Saxton, 1994) remains the best book addressing the much neglected but vitally important skill of teacher questioning.

Miller's work in teaching drama across the curriculum has paid particular attention to the usage of drama in Language Arts. Each drama workshop has a section 'Key Understandings and Questions', making explicit the underpinning questions as well as those that the teacher may directly ask at the end of the drama. Miller and Saxton explain that these understandings and questions 'lie at the heart of the story and provide the direction of the drama and the reference points for reflection'. The questions that stimulate the most effective thought are open, 'allowing students to contribute their own ideas and appreciate the ideas and perspectives of others'. They believe that 'drama works best when the affective and the effective are integrated as universal understandings or questions; these may differ, depending on a person's experience, interests, or culture' (pp.6-7). The units can be used as models for teachers to write their own dramas, most powerfully I believe in terms of the fine way that the questioning shapes the work and the teacher's language is so carefully considered.

It is not very often that a drama book is produced that has such wide-ranging applications that I feel that I can recommend it without any hesitation. However, as I said in the opening, I unequivocally recommend *Into the Story: Language in Action Through Drama* — I am sure that there is something in it for you!

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Maryrose Casey (2004)
Creating Frames: Contemporary Indigenous Theatre
University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Queensland
ISBN: 0 7022 3432 X

Angela O'Brien
University of Melbourne

Maryrose Casey writes that the intention of *Creating Frames* is to 'add to the written record more detailed information about the theatre practice of Indigenous Australians in the years from the 1960s to 1997' (p.267). As she indicates, despite the fact that there have been hundreds of productions of plays and performance texts by Indigenous Australians, to date the written record is sparse. *Creating Frames* provides the first substantial social and cultural history of Indigenous theatre and for this reason it is a significant publication.

In compiling the text, Casey has drawn from a wide range of sources — archival documents, theatre company records, ephemera, critical reviews, newspaper articles, reports and Government publications and, most importantly, the oral histories and commentaries of many key players in Indigenous theatre. As a theatre historian who has had some involvement with Indigenous theatre makers, I find it of interest that this significant work about Indigenous theatre has been written by a non-Indigenous person. Casey's approach is culturally sensitive in that she has been careful to ensure that the voices of Indigenous people are privileged in the history. The words of Bob Maza, Wesley Enoch, Gary Foley, John Harding, Ningali Lawford, Justine Saunders and many others enliven the text. It charts the way in which Indigenous theatre has operated to reframe the social history of Australia and contest colonial representations of Indigenous people for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences.

Casey quotes Indigenous actors Jack Charles as saying of political activism, 'I'd rather fight through the theatre'. While *Creative Frames* is essentially a theatre history, underpinning the text is a presumption that Indigenous theatre has been socially and politically motivated by the marginalisation of Indigenous people in Australia since white settlement. Casey identifies three stages in the development of intercultural policies in Australia: 'apartheid', which ensured segregation and isolation, separate administration and legal restriction on jobs; 'assimilation', which meant a loss of identity for Aboriginal people and absorption into a monocultural society; and 'multicultural', where 'ethnic differences are recognised, tolerated and hopefully valued' (p.151).

The text is divided into three sections that illustrate the theatrical interrogation of these changes in policy. Part 1, 'Framed by Assimilation', identifies the early individual and collective efforts to establish Indigenous theatre. Casey charts the history of the 'first Australian play', Kevin Gilbert's *The Cherry Pickers* and offers detailed accounts of the establishment of two early Indigenous theatre collectives, Nindethana in Melbourne and Black Theatre in Sydney. She locates the emergence of Indigenous theatre on the world stage with the success of Robert Merrit's *The Cake Man* at the Colorado World Theatre Festival held in Denver in 1982.

Part 2, 'Framed by Multiculturalism's Authenticity', analyses the cultural impact of multicultural policy and focuses on the plays produced in Western Australia, specifically those by Jack Davis, and Jimmy Chi's *Bran Nue Dai*. She identifies new collaborations with non-Indigenous companies and early efforts to establish a national network and infrastructure through the first Black Playwright's Conference in 1987 and the establishment of the Aboriginal National Theatre Trust.

Part 3, 'Framed by Reconciliation', investigates the period from 1990 to 1997 which Casey describes as a 'period of intense and high profile activity both artistically and politically for Indigenous Australians' (p.199). During the 1990s a range of legislative developments offered some hope for improved social justice for Aboriginal people. These included the establishment of ATSIC (1990), the Mabo decision (1992), the Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody (1991) and *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Enquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and their Families* (1997). Theatrically this period was a period of consolidation for Indigenous theatre and included the establishment of key regional companies — Ilbijerrie in Melbourne 1990, Kooemba Jdarra in Brisbane 1993 and the Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre in Perth, initially formed as a youth theatre company in 1993 and expanded to the broader community in 1997. Festivals emerged as a significant means of raising the profile for Indigenous theatre. In the 1990s a number of festivals focused on indigenous work including the 1990 Fremantle Festival, the Nambundah Festival in Sydney (1994) and the Festival of Dreaming, the first of the Sydney Olympic Arts Festivals.

In addition to providing a history, *Creating Frames* picks up on a number of theatre related issues. The first of these relates to various critical responses to Indigenous theatre. Casey digresses from the history to investigate the positioning and impact of the theatre reviewer. While I found this was the least integrated part of the book, and the section which most indicated that the book emerged out of a PhD thesis, it offers student readers an excellent starting point for a discussion about the place of criticism in theatre reception and some of the specific challenges for non-Indigenous critics in reviewing the Indigenous works. Of particular interest is her discussion about the choice of the form of naturalism by many Indigenous theatre artists and its impact on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences, including the emergence of new stage languages and Aboriginal Englishes.

Casey also draws attention to the strength of Indigenous Women's writing which has become more evident during the last decade and was given an boost through the 'Wimmin's Business' part of the Festival of Dreaming. She traces the emergence of the autobiographical monologues, characterised by *Box the Pony*, *Seven Stages of Dreaming* and *Ningali*, and questions whether the use of the autobiographical voice operates as an empowering decolonising act or whether it operates as reduction of agency, as so-called 'victim art'.

Creating Frames is a well researched and much needed coverage of a neglected aspect of Australian theatre history. It is written in a simple and engaging style that makes it very accessible to middle upper secondary school students. The framing of the theatre history by the socio-political context extends the value of the text to students studying broader humanities subjects including history and the social sciences. Of particular use to teachers are the excellent appendices. Casey includes an excellent

chronology that includes all the major play productions and publications. She also includes a very useful 'Who's Who' section that offers short biographies of all the key players in Indigenous theatre. The bibliography is extensive and includes many newspaper articles, useful not only for social and theatre history purposes but as background material for students wanting to use them as source material for play building.

Creating Frames fills a gap in publications on Australian theatre history. It is a useful text for drama teachers and also for teachers working in Indigenous studies, civics or history. It is highly recommended for school libraries.

Louis Fantasia (2004)
Instant Shakespeare: A Practical guide for Actors, Directors and Teachers
A & C Black Publishers Limited, London
ISBN: 0 7136 6853 9

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It is extraordinary to think that in our education system no other playwright has received as much 'airplay' as William Shakespeare. Why are his plays more popular today than ever before? Why does he appear in the school curriculum in countries on both sides of the Atlantic? Shakespeare has somehow managed to position himself in our educational consciousness. Paradoxically, there is always an underlying premise that Shakespeare is 'hard' and, for educators dedicated to the cause, there is always a constant search for ways to minimise the 'hard factor' for the students. That given, it is no wonder that 'how to' and 'step-by' guides keeping appearing on our bookshelves. With *Instant Shakespeare* Louis Fantasia, director of the American Shakespeare Globe Center, offers us another such text!

Instant Shakespeare is an eminently practical set of ground rules for 'plumbing the meanings in Shakespeare's texts' (p.172). It is a result of what the author describes as his own 'very personal Shakespearean odyssey' (p.3), claiming that everything he knows about Shakespeare was written on two torn worn index cards that have travelled with him for over the past twenty years.

Drawn from his time teaching and directing Shakespeare, Fantasia's book is most readable and the practical activities are quite do-able. But you do have to *read* it! It is not a 'flip to the exercise that will be useful for this class' sort of book. Personally, I found myself drawing from this text before I wrote this review. Reading Fantasia's text affirmed my own practice. He reminds us that Shakespeare tells great stories and part of the process for the actor, teacher or director is to first unpack the language. Let's face it, Shakespeare's language is not our common vernacular and, therefore, it is not surprising that our students are willing to dismiss it.

Fantasia offers a systemic approach that in some respects is quite unique and is also very accessible. He has developed a simple and efficient process for the demystification of Shakespeare's language. For the purposes of the book his approach is divided into two sections. Part One is devoted to the pre-performance process and is about the reading of the text. In this section Fantasia imparts the necessary tools and techniques

required for a deeper textual analysis. He emphasises the importance of reading with a 'growing understanding of a play's three dimensional nature' (p.17) and describes the play as 'a blueprint for performance' (p.17). Part Two is mostly concerned with interpretation and the subsequent application of his techniques for performance.

Writing in a very direct and humorous style, Fantasia manages to convey a sense of collegiality in this book. His anecdotes, handy hints and other funny recollections will appeal to those who like their theory grounded in genuine practice. For example, in Part One, he suggests that 'frog overlays', used in early biology classes to understand the anatomy of frogs, can similarly be applied to the study of Shakespeare. Frog overlays are transparencies of frogs, one for each of the systems in the frog anatomy, and when the transparencies are overlayed the frog comes alive. Fantasia's point is that a dead play, a play 'that is not yet living or breathing on stage' (p.20), is like a dead frog. To breathe life back into the play, like the frog, one needs to complete a thorough examination of the subject. Fantasia's *instant* approach to the analysis of the language is built on five of these so-called 'overlays'.

The first of Fantasia's 'overlays' is upon the use of the noun — 'make the nouns sound like what they mean' (p.20). This resonates very strongly with me as I often think about how difficult Shakespeare is for anyone to understand if the names of persons and subject are not repeated often enough in the text. The *who* and the *what* are so critical to our understanding of the narrative. And, if we apply Fantasia's four other 'overlays' to our study of the language, we would 'push the verbs, leave the adjectives and adverbs alone, play the I/thou and I/it relationships and repunctuate for breath'.

Essentially, these five basic principles provide the foundation for Fantasia's practice. In Part Two of the book he offers an example of this process in a detailed analysis of a scene from *Love's Labour's Lost*. Applying the 'frog overlay' approach to this scene, a walk-on character with no more than three lines is discovered to have an enormous impact on the play. In this example of the transition from reading to performance, we learn how careful analysis of the text does not necessarily provide answers but, in fact, raises questions: 'Why does this particular character say these particular words, in this particular order, at this particular moment?' (p.196). Fantasia constantly reminds us that the reader and performer must take responsibility for their own interpretation of the play and that a 'this, not that' choice-making process lies at the heart of analysis and interpretation in performance' (p.90).

The book is full of carefully labelled practical gems like these. Although, in the last section, Fantasia drifts into a more academic and philosophical discussion about 'presence' in performance accompanied by an anecdotal re-telling of Sam Wanamaker's dream for the re-building of The Globe, he does pose an alternative view of Shakespeare. He suggests that we derive our 'respect for Shakespeare's creative force through a deep and genuine encounter with his work, not his image or his reputation' (p.180).

Instant Shakespeare will be a very useful resource. For me, this book has instant appeal, and like a *good* recipe book it lists the ingredients, walks you through the process and *doesn't* provide a picture of the end product. I imagine for those whose exposure to Shakespeare has been limited, along with those more experienced in the field, Fantasia's methods will be welcome. To use culinary parlance, I give it *three hats*!

Susan Wright (ed) (2003)
Children, meaning-making and the arts
Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, NSW
ISBN 1 74103 108 7

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Artist Pablo Picasso proclaimed, 'Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up'. In my fifteen or so years of experience of working with students in Queensland primary schools, I have witnessed a curious phenomenon. As students progress through the early childhood and primary years, the classroom environments in which they work gradually become less and less outwardly creative. Colour, artwork and examples of writing seem to disappear. Perhaps, as the business of schooling becomes more focussed upon reporting of test scores, the classrooms become less visually exciting, as if to say to students that we don't want them to become distracted. I know, of course, this is a generalisation and that there are many upper primary school educators who build stimulating learning environments. However on many occasions I have entered an upper primary classroom that is a creative wilderness and I instantly wish that I could be transported to an early childhood learning space awash with colour and life. *Children, meaning-making and the arts* provides a reminder of the importance of the arts in the lives of children and, ultimately, how early experiences will inevitably shape attitudes and engagement with the arts later in life.

This collection of writings, edited by early childhood scholar Susan Wright, focuses on the creative interests of young children, The text is written by acknowledged experts in the field of early childhood art experiences who provide theory and evidence about young children's use of multiple modes of communicating, learning and knowing. Susan Wright introduces the text with an eloquent reading of Gardner's *Multiple Intelligences* as they apply to arts learning environments. Each of the five art forms adopted by most state and territory Arts Syllabuses are represented. Interestingly, chapters on experiential contexts such as museums and collective experience have been included and these provide the reader with new lenses with which to view multi-sensory experiences.

Susan Wright and the other authors recognise that children represent more than 'the future'. 'Early childhood' is a relatively recent construct but it is recognised as a period that has the potential for rapid kinaesthetic, cognitive and aesthetic development. Children represent a part of the population who will continue to navigate and develop within a society of shifting boundaries and borders. The arts can provide pathways for valuable cognitive and emotional development and provide safe contexts for children to explore feelings, ideas and symbolic languages. Resulting higher order thinking and creative problem solving skills equip children with the ability to better understand themselves, other people and their worlds.

Australian children are increasingly multi-literate and can interpret meaning and content across a variety of forms. Many art workers and teachers undertaking projects recognise children as artists and creators in their own right and as sophisticated readers

of cultural forms. The text certainly supports this stance and, through example and photographic evidence, demonstrates the creative potential and expertise of young children.

Two chapters stand out for the drama educator — *Linking Drama Education and Dramatic Play in the Early Childhood Years* by Dr Julie Dunn and *The Child Audience* by Cassandra Weddell.

Dunn's chapter revisits the divide between 'child-structured dramatic play' and 'teacher-structured drama'. Dunn ponders upon how this divide has occurred and what the ramifications of the division are for the classroom-based drama practitioner. Dunn repositions the argument by concluding that each perspective has something to offer. She states it is not a schism but an impetus to explore opportunities for a linked and complementary approach.

Cassandra Weddell's article interrogates the concept of the 'child audience' through the genres of theatre, film and TV. Weddell argues that children are not passive recipients of these genres but active consumers and makers. Weddell's article dispels commonly held views about children as audiences, including such gems as 'children have short attention spans', 'live performances for children should require them to shout out' and performance texts for children must have action, quick entries and exits and lots of character changes'. I know from watching my three young god-children that these assumptions are far from the truth. Contemporary children's performances, like those seen recently at Out of the Box in Brisbane, did not uphold any of the myths listed by Weddell. The performances were deeply thought provoking, required attention to detail and usually raised more questions than they provided answers. One section that I did find difficult in Weddell's article was her five categories for children's' responses to theatre performances — technicians, narrators, mystics, dramatists, spectators. Whilst it appears that Weddell is arguing that children fall into one of these categories, I would argue that children are able to move in and out of these responses throughout a performance, depending on the child's prior knowledge and experience of live performance and the type of performance.

The appeal of this book lies in its melding of theory and practice. It is accessible in its use of language and terminology, provides practical examples and ideas for practice within educational settings and, at the end of each chapter, offers an extensive listing of follow up readings. If you are working with early childhood and primary school aged students in arts-based learning contexts then this text is definitely one for your bookshelf.

W.B. Worthen (Ed.) (2004)
The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama
Thomson Wadsworth, USA
ISBN: 0-8384-0750-1

Richard Sallis
University of Melbourne

With over seventeen hundred pages, *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama* is a weighty tome. Costing eighty American dollars, the cost may appear prohibitive but this is more than a theatre history book. It contains nearly sixty full-length plays covering the categories of Classical Athens, Classical Japan, Medieval and Renaissance England, Early Modern Europe, Modern Europe, The United States and World Stages.

Each category or section of the book begins with a description of the cultural context for the play scripts that follow. The information presented is concise yet it encompasses a breadth of detail. Following several scripts from each era there are articles covering a range of related and thought-provoking topics. For instance, Sue-Ellen Case discusses Greek theatre through the lens of contemporary feminist theories; Homi K. Bhabha critiques how power relations are presented in contemporary theatre, focusing on post-colonial literature. Some of the articles are written by theatre playwrights and directors about their own works — these include Aristotle, Zola, Stanislavski, Brecht, Artaud and Miller. Often these accounts have been taken from the preface to their plays or from their best-known theoretical texts.

There are also perspectives of leading practitioners, past or present, associated with each theatre era. Peter Hall provides an insight into his directorial approach to Pinter's *The Homecoming*; actor Hippolite Clairon describes how she approached her various roles in the Comédie Française; playwright Zeami Motokiyo offers advice on the discipline required to become a Noh actor; and Fugard makes available his working diary from early in his playwriting career.

There are a number of performance reviews including the now famous review by Bernard Shaw of *A Doll's House,* when it was staged at The Globe Theatre, London in 1897, that championed the plays of Ibsen. Most reviews however are by contemporary critics and are not nearly as historically pertinent or noteworthy.

A highlight of the anthology is the number of plays by women playwrights that are reproduced. The anthology includes plays by Elizabeth Robins (UK), Susan Glaspell (USA), Caryl Churchill (England), Judith Thompson (Canada) and Manjula Padmanabhan (India).

As comprehensive as it might appear, the anthology is not without its omissions. Scripts from notable theatre forms are absent, such as *commedia dell' arte*, the Roman and Jacobean theatre movements and Comedy of Manners. Some eastern theatre forms are included but the text is weighted towards western theatre. There are notable playwrights who fail to rate a mention including Wilde, Fo, O'Casey, Stoppard, Wertenbaker and Albee. Regrettably, Australian plays are under-represented — Jack Davis' *No Sugar* being a worthy yet solitary entry.

The editors are to be congratulated for the design and layout of the text and for maintaining the quality throughout such a large publication. At times, however, some editorial decisions are curious. Why, for instance, is the term 'actress' used when in contemporary theatre literature the gender inclusive term 'actor' is now the recognised form of address? Also irksome is the way the editors use the term 'drama' as if it is synonymous with 'theatre'; perhaps more thought could have been given to the text's international readership. Overall, this volume provides a useful introduction to theatre as literature and as a mode of performance. Omissions and quibbles aside, the anthology stands as a useful introduction to the theatre for secondary school students and undergraduates.

Christine Hatton and Michael Anderson (Eds.) (2004)
The state of our art: NSW perspectives in educational drama
Currency Press, Sydney
ISBN: 0 8681 97459

Robin Pascoe
Murdoch University

In the opening chapter of what is the third volume in a series entitled *The State of the Art*, Michael Anderson contextualises educational drama in New South Wales from its beginnings. Acknowledging the 30th anniversary of the founding of EDANSW, he sketches in a rich though sometimes frustratingly slow journey from early pioneers to the current situation where Drama is finally to be officially recognised in NSW primary schools from 2006. Links with developments in the United Kingdom and shifts from earlier dominant themes stand alongside visits from seminal figures such as Dorothy Heathcote. The tortuous story of the pulped 1988 syllabus through to the 2000 Board of Studies version is a salutary lesson about the civil wars raging in curriculum. His description of the development and implementation of the Higher Certificate Drama course is more up-beat though not without its hiccoughs. Throughout these battles, the role of the EDANSW has been significant, even vital. His conclusion that 'Drama education in NSW has developed in spite of systemic indifference' (p.18) is both a celebratory but sobering perspective.

The other chapters provide multiple perspectives on drama and education. Julie Martello argues for positioning 'drama within the dominant discourses of education' making positive links to the 'productive pedagogies' movement and the 'Quality teaching in NSW public schools' discussion paper. In addition, she highlights the role of drama in developing multiliteracies in students. The role of drama in integrating and extending literacies in spoken, written and visual modes and its powerful links to the lives of students are celebrated.

Robyn Ewing's chapter focuses on the role of story in the lives of students and the capacity of drama to enrich narrative and imagination. Again the theme of the role of drama in enhancing literacy emerges — an indication of how strongly literacy has taken the world of school by the throat. Ewing's warm descriptions of her extensive study of using drama and story are a taster for further reading.

In her chapter on Children's Television and Process Drama, Kathleen Warren draws together the threads of her long experience with early childhood and drama. Her work with The Wiggles and the provocative linking of process drama and children's television provides another fascinating perspective.

The cross-currents of technology and changing perceptions of drama are taken up by John Carroll and Mary Mooney in their respective chapters. The challenges faced by drama teachers in 'postmodern classrooms where technology and digital platforms expand the processes and products of drama learning', remind us all of the shifting and dynamic nature of teaching and learning. It is appropriate to highlight John O'Toole's warning — 'perhaps *The State of the Art* is not such a good title, where the word suggests static, and the metaphor of a 'stream' may be a truer analogy' (p.vii).

Through the publication there is a sense of looking inward and also looking out. In his generous introduction, John O'Toole comments on the 'importance of New South Wales to the art form we practise throughout Australia; all the contributors have made their mark on drama education in NSW and all are acknowledged among Australia's most distinguished practitioners and writers — the usual suspects indeed and justifiably so' (p.v). There is a sense of looking forward, looking back and critiquing the present.

This third edition has sent me back to re-consider the richness of the earlier editions as well as provide valuable insights on the current text.

One of the gifts of IDEA 2004 in Ottawa was Margaret Burke's *Canadian Drama Mosaic: A Historical Perspective of Canada's Theatre-in-Education* (Burke, 2004). While it deserves a review in its own right, it is presenting a parallel universe to the *State of Our Art*. While a good deal of *Canadian Drama Mosaic* is a nostalgic celebration of past pioneers and victories, it also signals the importance of recognising how what we do now is shaped by our collective and personal past. One of the lasting impressions I take from IDEA 2004 is a sense of a generational change that is taking place — and a reminder that what happens 'over there' can follow here (though not, I hope, inevitably!).

It would be interesting to see other state and territory associations publishing in a similar vein to EDANSW — and it is possibly time for a Drama Australia wide survey. What would be the balance between contextualised local perspectives and themes that reach across time and place? What do we need to take with us into the continually reshaping new world? What (if anything) must we leave behind?

This collaboration with Currency Press is a striking example of finding effective partners and we should encourage more such collaborative ventures.

Reference

Burke, M. (2004). *Canadian Drama Mosaic: A Historical Perspective of Canada's Theatre-in-Education*. Vancouver: Theatre Canada.

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contents

Editorial	*Prue Wales*
Illuminated texts: From Home to the Home-Page	*John OTToole*
Cooking Drama and Drama Education in the Global Kitchen	*Brad Haseman*
Glamorous Thinking – Positioning Drama as a Means to Enhance Different Thinking Purposes	*Julie Porteus*
Drama Futures: Possibilities for Research, Advocy and Policy in the 20th Century	*Michael Anderson*
Unpacking the Drama Process as Intellectually Rigorous – "The teacher gives you the bones of it and we have to act the muscles"	*Margery Hertzberg*
Competency in Australian Drama Teachers: Mapping the Terrain	*Peter Wright and Rod Gerber*

obituaries

Peter Slade: Child Drama Pioneer	Kate Donelan
Lowell Swortzell: Pioneer in Educational Theater	Philip Taylor

reviews

Review Editor: Kate Donelan

Title and Author	*Reviewer*
Into the Story: Language in Action Through Drama *by Carole Miller and Juliana Saxton*	*Joanne O'Mara*
Creating Frames: Contemporary Indigenous Theatre *by Maryrose Casey*	*Angela O'Brien*
Instant Shakespeare: A Practical Guide for Actors, Teachers and Directors *by Louis Fantasia*	*Deborah Field Farago*
Children, meaning-making and the arts *Susan Wright (Ed.)*	*Sandra Gattenhof*
The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama *W.B. Worthen (Ed.)*	*Richard Sallis*
The state of our art: NSW perspectives in educational drama *Christine Hatton and Michael Anderson (Eds.)*	*Robin Pascoe*



drama australia journal (nj) Volume 28 No. 2, 2004 Editor: Prue Wales